

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 30 October 1980

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

FIRE ALARM

The **SPEAKER:** Members are advised that the fire alarm system was activated yesterday afternoon as a result of a boiler malfunction in the plant room. The Fire Brigade attended in response to the alarm, and no damage was caused. The effectiveness of the heat detection system has been proven, and members can be assured that the measures taken to safeguard life and property are adequate.

In response to a request that a fire drill be arranged, this matter is in the hands of the Joint House Committee and the Presiding Officers; such action will be taken at a convenient time in the near future.

PETITION: RETAIL MEAT SALES

A petition signed by 45 residents of South Australia praying that the House urge the Government to oppose any changes to extend the existing trading hours for the retail sale of meat was presented by Mr. Lynn Arnold.

Petition received.

PETITION: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

A petition signed by 71 residents of South Australia praying that the House urge the Government not to allow any construction work to begin in the Upper Spencer Gulf region without an environmental impact statement being supplied by an independent scientific body and made available for public debate before the Government makes a decision was presented by Mr. Schmidt.

Petition received.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT: TRANSFER OF SENIOR STAFF TO COUNTRY SCHOOLS

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

Leave granted.

The **Hon. H. ALLISON:** Members will have been aware of a headline in today's press indicating a threat of strike action on the part of teachers in South Australian schools. I am concerned by this statement and I wish to inform members of the House concerning the facts behind this headline and the steps which have so far been taken by the Education Department.

Let me say at the outset that I and officers of the Education Department are well aware that there is some morale problem among teachers in South Australia as a result of steps which are inevitable because of a decline in the numbers of students in schools in South Australia. Accordingly, the Education Department is doing all in its power to handle these matters as sensitively as possible, but it has to be stressed that the department has to manage the appointment of staff responsibly and in the best interests of the community as a whole.

The difficulty stems from the fact that in 1981 there will be a number of vacancies for seniors in country schools. These total 22 and are at the following schools:

Karcultaby Area School
Port Lincoln High School
Wudinna Area School
Ceduna Area School
Augusta Park High School
Booleroo Centre High School
Jamestown High School
Leigh Creek Area School
Woomera Area School
Stuart High School—2 vacancies
Coober Pedy Area School
Port Pirie High School
Eudunda Area School
Minlaton High School
Clare High School
Meningie Area School
Karoonda Area School
Allendale East Area School
Millicent High School
Lucindale Area School
Naracoorte High School

Because of promotions, secondments, and so-on, there could well be other vacancies, some of which may be filled by ordinary transfers. At the same time there will be a number of subject fields where there will be a surplus of teachers in the metropolitan area. Obviously, it is necessary to require the movement of some metropolitan seniors to the country and, accordingly, a set of criteria has been developed in order that this can be done sensibly and fairly.

A letter has been sent to principals of secondary schools inviting seniors who are currently teaching in the metropolitan area to volunteer to teach in country areas in the immediate future. Those seniors who volunteer to transfer will be given a firm undertaking that the Education Department will guarantee their return to the metropolitan area after three years of country service. This undertaking will be given in writing and filed in the teacher's personal file for future reference.

If it is not possible to fill these senior positions in country schools using normal transfer rules, coupled with the responses to the circular offering transfer, then the Education Department will proceed to fill vacancies according to the following criteria:

1. Normal transfers will be processed as outlined in the circular to all schools dated 3 October 1980 and headed "Outline for the major considerations in the transfer, displacement and placement arrangements for 1981."
2. All metropolitan seniors in a particular subject field (including those in schools where there is no senior above entitlement) will be ranked using the criteria below taken singly and in order:
 - 2.1 Seniors who have been displaced and currently have not been in their present school against a permanent vacancy for three years by the end of 1980 are exempted.
 - 2.2 Total country service with the South Australian Education Department weighted according to the area of service as per transfer points—least will be considered first.
 - 2.3 Country service as a senior with the South Australian Education Department—least will be considered first.
 - 2.4 Total service with the Education Department—least considered first.
3. Where seniors are identified, the senior will be given the opportunity to express a preference for any

of those vacancies, or request demotion and hence be placed as a teacher, other than as a senior staff member, or request a year's leave without pay. I emphasise "request".

In regard to the last of these criteria, I must make it plain that the Education Department is not proposing to demote any seniors, but that it is simply saying that, if a senior who, under these criteria, is appointed to a country school does not wish to go, then the department will consider sympathetically a request for demotion.

Finally, I should say that the Government has made available funds to assist in cases of extreme hardship by providing for schools to maintain seniors over the establishment which would normally apply.

I hope that this statement will assist all members of the community to understand the actions which have been taken by the Education Department to overcome the difficulties resulting from a down-turn in enrolments in schools in South Australia.

QUESTION TIME

PUBLIC SERVICE VACANCIES

Mr. BANNON: Can the Premier inform the House whether any instructions, formal or informal, have been issued to the Public Service Board concerning the advertising of vacancies in the Public Service weekly notice, and the general question of the filling of vacancies? If so, is the effect of these instructions to restrict the number of vacancies advertised each week, irrespective of urgent need to fill them, so that the Government's financial position can benefit by maintaining a maximum number of unfilled vacancies?

The Hon. D. O. TONKIN: Not to my knowledge.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Mr. SCHMIDT: Can the Minister of Health advise the House of the results to date of the energy saving campaign instituted by the South Australian Health Commission last year? During the Estimates Committee examination of the health budget the Minister identified reduction in costs in cleaning, energy use and water use, as areas in which savings could be made in the health budget, without affecting the quality of health care or the standard of patient care. Can the Minister indicate the extent of savings in the energy area?

The Hon. JENNIFER ADAMSON: Yes, I am pleased to be able to advise the House that savings of \$212 000 have been achieved through a 6 per cent cut in energy use at 12 major metropolitan hospitals. If these savings are applied similarly throughout the health system (and we have not yet received the facts as to whether they are or not), we could expect that total saving to be in the region of a third of a million dollars. That, of course, is a considerable sum and demonstrates how careful use and management of energy can be used to achieve savings in the health budget which savings do not in any way adversely affect the standard or quality of patient care.

Members might be interested in some of the details, namely, that savings of 5 per cent in the use of electricity and savings of 9 per cent in the use of gas have been achieved in these 12 major hospitals. The most significant savings (and this will be of particular interest to the member for Mawson) have occurred at Flinders Medical Centre, which has achieved a 25 per cent cut in energy usage, and at the Home for Incurables, which has achieved

a 24 per cent cut in energy usage. That, overall, which is a very large percentage, was the target which was believed to be an achievable target in many areas, that is to say, a quarter or a fifth reduction in energy use. I am advised by the officer who is responsible for co-ordinating this campaign throughout the Health Commission that further savings can be expected in future years in respect to improvements to air-conditioning, heating, lighting, and other energy consumption equipment.

I should point out that other factors may have assisted the Health Commission to achieve this aim during the past 12 months. One factor may possibly have been the milder weather during the summer and winter. Another is the general increase in community awareness of the importance of energy savings. I have been interested to see, when I visit hospitals and am invariably invited to use the stairs rather than the lift, notices in the stairwells encouraging staff to use the stairs. In fact, it is interesting to see at Royal Adelaide Hospital that—

Mr. Hemmings: Are you encouraging patients to use the stairs?

The Hon. JENNIFER ADAMSON: No, we are not encouraging the patients unless by chance it happens to be therapeutically useful. Staff are also taking the opportunity to use this as part of a fitness campaign, and so they are achieving two useful aims. Some energy conservation programmes have been undertaken by hospitals of their own accord. I believe that publicity has already been given to the achievements of Memorial Hospital, which has made considerable cost savings. I think the fact that we are succeeding is in itself an incentive to further effort in the hospitals to save energy, and I believe that publicity given to these achievements will be of tremendous encouragement to the staff and management of the hospitals and the health services.

TEACHER TRANSFERS

Mr. TRAINER: Notwithstanding the Minister of Education's earlier statement on this subject, will the Minister concede that the industrial trouble in the teaching profession, foreshadowed in today's press, arises from the recent Budget cuts? As a result of the reduction in the numbers of primary teachers, secondary teachers, administrative personnel and release-time scholars, the Education Department finds itself with 135 release-time scholars who should return to the schools in 1981 but for whom it seems there are no positions. Many, I am told, are seniors.

Yesterday, a letter, which was alluded to by the Minister in his earlier Ministerial statement, was sent to senior teachers seeking volunteers for country service, since there will be a demand for about 20 seniors in country positions. The volunteers have been guaranteed a maximum of three years country service, after which they will be relocated in the school or in a similar school near where they are currently teaching. If this is not successful, section 26 of the Act will, I am told, be used to bring about compulsory transfers. The criteria that will be used to determine who goes first are all already in hand. Paragraph 3 of the document circulated to teachers states—

Mr. MILLHOUSE: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I have a Question on Notice, No. 623, which covers this matters. I even used the word "criteria".

The SPEAKER: In conformity with the undertaking that I gave to the House on an earlier occasion, I will review the question that has been posed by the honourable member, along with that which is contained within the

Notice Paper, and I will call the member for Ascot Park at a slightly later time this afternoon.

LOTTERIES

Mr. GLAZBROOK: Will the Premier say what is the chance of further pairs of identical lottery tickets being printed and the consequences if such a pair proved to be the winning number? Last week in the *Advertiser* an article headed "Another pair of identical lottery tickets found" stated that identical Instant Money tickets were bought at Edwardstown last Tuesday week. The article reported that the Hon. Mr. Foster had said in the Legislative Council that the South Australian Lotteries Commission was ripping off the public. Further, a question was raised by the purchaser of the identical tickets in the following terms: "What if I had bought a \$1 000 000 lottery ticket? I hope there would not be more than one with the same serial number."

The Hon. D. O. TONKIN: The chance of there being identical lottery tickets printed in one series is exactly nil. There is no chance at all of there being duplication in any particular lottery series. The misunderstanding which, I think, was first raised about two years ago in another place and which was followed up by the Hon. Mr. Foster recently came about because there is a misunderstanding of the two principles of the Instant Money Game and of the lotteries system.

Each series of tickets in each lottery has a consecutive series of numbers. There is no duplication and the draw is made on those numbers, so that, when the winning number is drawn out of the barrel (and there is a marble for each number), there can be no possible duplication. However, the Instant Money Game is designed so that, in response to certain combinations of figures, together with a master number on the top of the ticket, instant prizes of \$2 and \$5 may be paid on the spot, and larger prizes may be collected from the Lotteries Commission.

It is quite apparent that, in the printing of a large number of Instant Money tickets, there will, of necessity, be a repetition of the various combinations of eight figures on the area to be rubbed out and of the master figure. In any one of those series, there may well be a repetition of that series and, indeed, that is understandable.

Mr. Bannon: How does the super draw operate?

The Hon. D. O. TONKIN: Hold on. The whole point is that it does not matter whether 500 000 Instant Money tickets are printed or 1 000 000 tickets are printed: the proportion of winning combinations in each group remains exactly the same, whether or not the combinations are repeated. The proportion of winning numbers remains exactly the same regardless of how many tickets are printed. The super draw is worked not on a number basis but on the ticket itself.

Members will know that the ticket, when a winning ticket, must be turned over and that the details of purchaser, address, and so on, must be filled in. That ticket is retained by either the agent or by the Lotteries Commission, and the ticket itself goes into the draw. I am not too sure what is the total number of tickets in each draw. As soon as that total number is reached by the winning tickets which come back to the commission, they go into the barrel, and that is the basis for the draw.

It is a matter of some regret that concern has been raised, because of a misunderstanding, but I assure members of the House and of the public that there is no cause for alarm that there may be a duplication of winning numbers in lotteries: that is just not on. For the Instant Money Game, it is in order if one buys two identical

tickets in the one series and there is as much chance of winning each one as there is of losing each one. Actually, there is rather more chance of losing than winning, but there is nothing wrong with the situation I have described.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Hon. R. G. PAYNE: Has the Premier already gone back on his promise, repeated a number of times, that there had been too much "talking up" of projects during previous Labor Governments and that "We do not intend making premature announcements of grandiose projects of one kind or another, until we are positive they are feasible and likely to go ahead"? The Premier is already on record in recent times as saying, "South Australia is on the threshold of one of the most exciting decades of development in its history," a statement that seems to be contradictory to the promise I quoted. In respect of the question I am raising now, I refer to a statement attributed to him only this morning in which he is reported as saying, in the *News*:

South Australia's Great Australian Bight area could become a bigger producer of oil and gas than Bass Strait. Although exploration in this area has not yet begun, the Premier is also reported as saying (by Stephen Middleton in the *News*):

Mr. Tonkin said it looks as though it will provide considerable returns.

Would the Premier like to amend the promise he has made on a number of occasions that he would wait for results before boasting, by adding the saving clause that he would not boast unless it was politically expedient to do so?

The Hon. D. O. TONKIN: The attitude displayed by the Opposition for over 12 months since becoming the Opposition has been one (I have not had to bring this up lately, and I had hoped that the Opposition would overcome this) of bitterness and continual carping. The attitude which the honourable member has demonstrated again today is one of knocking South Australia. I challenge the honourable member to outline in detail any announcement I have made of a specific project, which is the source of an agreement between a company that is exploring or expanding and which has been prematurely announced by this Government. I think that he will find that no such announcement has been made. There is a wealth of difference between talking about specific projects, and announcing details of them, and the need to stand up for this State to promote its prospects and the potential it has and, indeed, to be proud of it. If the honourable member is not proud to be a South Australian or to get up and advertise the potential of the mineral wealth that we have, all I can say is that South Australia does not want him, and he can go to Queensland, New South Wales, or somewhere else.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D. O. TONKIN: South Australia is on the verge of a remarkable development. That has been well recognised by very many financial, mining and industrial experts throughout Australia, and indeed throughout the world.

An honourable member: They're kidding you, or you're—

The Hon. D. O. TONKIN: Why is it that members opposite continually run down their own prospects in this State? The potential is there; it is recognised by very many people, and certainly by the Liberal Party, but quite clearly it is not recognised by the Labor Opposition. This one factor shows beyond any doubt that South Australia,

thank God, is in the best possible hands for the future when it has a Liberal Government at the helm.

TEACHER TRANSFERS

The SPEAKER: I call upon the honourable member for Ascot Park to repeat his question and to continue his explanation.

Mr. TRAINER: The question I originally directed to the Minister of Education was as follows:

Notwithstanding the Minister's earlier statement on this subject, will the Minister concede that the industrial trouble in the teaching profession foreshadowed in today's press arises from the recent Budget cuts?

Part of my explanation, as I gave it a few moments ago, did impinge on Question on Notice 623 by the member for Mitcham regarding the subject of transfer criteria. What I wish to stress is the aspect of possible demotions of senior masters in schools, an extremely significant matter to them, and the connection between that and the overall Government expenditure on education. I will not continue to quote from paragraph 3 of the document that I was using earlier, because it did overlap Question on Notice 623, but paragraph 4.3 states:

Any senior so identified either accepts, in which case he fills in an application form giving preferences for known vacancies or,

- (a) Requests demotion and is placed as a displaced teacher,
- (b) Is able to be granted a year's leave without pay (no more than one year's leave will be forthcoming).

A similar paragraph appeared in the Ministerial statement delivered earlier this afternoon. Paragraph 3 of the Ministerial statement states:

Where seniors are identified, the senior will be given opportunity to express a preference for any vacancies, or request demotion and hence be placed as a teacher, or request a year's leave without pay.

The Minister then said:

In regard to the last of these criteria, I must make it plain that the Education Department is not proposing to demote any seniors, but that it is simply saying that if a senior who, under these criteria, is appointed to a country school does not wish to go, then the department will consider sympathetically a request for demotion.

This raises the possibility that a displaced senior could find himself at the same school as previously, but as an assistant. Will the Minister say how voluntary such a request for demotion would be, and how he believes that there is no causal relationship between this move and the restrictions placed on overall education expenditure?

The Hon. H. ALLISON: The honourable member asked me to make an admission or an acknowledgement which is certainly based on very false premises. In the first place, he knows as well as the rest of the members of the House do after the subject has been repeated continually, not just over the last year, but the last several years that, since 1975 (five years of the former Government's regime), the student population of South Australia has been in a state of decline. Let us relate this decline more specifically to the last financial year, or the last school year, the one we are in, and the projected school year 1981. We have 5 000 fewer students in the current school year than we had last year. Next year we are looking at a decline of between 5 000 and 5 700 students. The impact of that has been that we have had in two years a reduction of approximately 5.1 per cent in the school student population.

During the current school year there was no reduction in staff numbers; we pegged the staff population. During the

next financial year we will be forced to put some staff reduction in train but that will be about 2.1 per cent as against the 5 per cent overall reduction over the two years in student numbers.

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD: Why bother to do it, then?

The Hon. H. ALLISON: Let us carry it a little further. How big is the problem currently before us? We have about 1 750 senior staff members in South Australian schools at present. The schools which I read out a few minutes ago in the Ministerial statement number 22. Out of 1 750 staff, we are first of all requesting that somewhere among that senior staff population there will be 22 who will voluntarily look towards transferring to one of those not unattractive schools, let us face it, which were listed in that Ministerial statement. That is the first premise.

If there are not 22 volunteers, obviously the criteria which were read out by myself and repeated by the honourable member will be considered for selectivity; staff will be identified in line with this criteria from the senior staff and it will be suggested to them that they make themselves available for transfer. The question of whether or not the cuts in education are responsible is specious; there is so little substance in it. For 1979-80, the sum provided for education was \$324 750 000, and in 1980-81 it is \$370 000 000.

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD: Oh, come on! What about manpower!

The Hon. H. ALLISON: Well, we went through the whole of this in eight hours at the Budget Estimate Committee stage. There was a 15 per cent increase in cash terms at the time the Budget came out. Since then an amount of almost \$1 400 000 of additional funding has been made available to the Education Department to help soften a number of emergency situations. This is a measure of the Government's co-operativeness. That means that more than 15 per cent has been allocated to the Education Department in cash terms. In real terms, it works out at an increase of over 2 per cent.

There has been some transfer of thrust partly towards new initiatives, partly in recognition of the fact that the teacher salary line within Education consistently increases and it is standing at about 90c in the dollar. It is a feature which we are unable to avoid. The incremental creep alone for the aging teacher population means that an increased amount has to be made available, even without the salary increases dictated by tribunals each year. These are the factors which have to be considered, but something else is important.

At one metropolitan high school alone 30 classrooms are standing idle. Is it a suggestion from members of the Opposition and others that teachers should be allowed to remain in over-complement schools such as that and not be transferred to the outer metropolitan rapidly growing suburbs or to country areas where there is still some growth? Does that mean that the Education Department, which, I suggest, is the major industry in South Australia with 21 000 staff and a \$420 000 000 Budget, should not be allowed to operate in some way as other major industries do, and that is to transfer staff to where the work is, to where the need has been established? We are not doing this viciously, we are doing it because it is necessary. I make that quite clear. In this case 20 people are involved out of 15 000 professional staff, and I am excluding the 6 000 ancillary staff. Let us get the size of the headline more closely allied to the present size of the problem. I put it to the House that probably for the time being we are approaching the matter with sensitivity. The Government has already allocated considerable funds to allow secondary school senior staff to be retained in schools over establishment.

The Hon. D. J. Hopgood: Will we be able to get that figure?

The Hon. H. ALLISON: You already had it in the Budget Estimates Committee. It was the very figure which members of the Opposition spent about an hour trying to have inserted, along with the \$200 000 funding for migrant education. One was \$400 000 and the other was \$200 000 for migrant education. It was in the first five or six minutes of the Budget Estimates Committee debate. What short memories members on the other side of the House seem to have.

That is the position: the department is handling the problem with sensitivity. We appreciate that there is obviously some lack of promotion prospects within the Education Department, but how does that differ from industry and commerce not only in South Australia but across Australia? For the last 10 to 15 years there has been a decline in the requirement for solicitors, dentists, doctors and bankers. Young people have been promoted to fairly senior positions and the promotion prospects for those beneath them have diminished.

I am being asked to view education in isolation, and obviously it is related to the whole economic situation and to the whole promotion prospects for people in industry, in commerce, in professional and para-professional occupations right across Australia and the Western World. So let us put these 20 people so far involved in perspective.

RAINWATER TANKS

Mr. BLACKER: Can the Minister of Water Resources advise the House what plans the Government has developed to encourage a greater usage of rainwater tanks in residential homes? The Minister would be aware of the water conservation benefits of rainwater tanks. In reply to a question I asked last session, the Minister replied that the Government was examining a number of alternative ways of encouraging the installation of tanks. Apart from water conservation, a significant spin-off of any scheme to install tanks would be the fillip it would give to the plumbing industry, the sheetmetal industry and, of course, the P.V.C. plastics industry.

The Hon. P. B. ARNOLD: The Government is well advanced in the preparation of its booklet for release to the public providing information on the installation of rainwater tanks and how to maintain them. The booklet will contain a great deal of information in relation to the roof area that is required, the given rainfall area, and the size tank that matches up with the given rainfall and roof area. The booklet is reaching the stage where the draft has been completed by the Engineering and Water Supply Department and referred to the Department for the Environment, which has, I believe, completed looking at it. It will now be referred to the sheetmetal manufacturing industry for consideration and also to some of the concrete tank manufacturers, to give them an insight into what the Government has in mind. As soon as that process has been completed, the final draft will be prepared and presented to Cabinet for consideration before being released to the public.

ART AND CRAFT COURSES

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD: I direct a question to the Minister of Education. Is the amount of money available for art and craft courses in the Department of Further Education declining; is this in response to a decline in

demand for such courses; and has the Minister been less than frank in suggesting, both to this House and to me in a letter, that only the advanced art and craft courses at O'Halloran Hill College of Further Education are affected in the rationalisation which is currently the subject of a good deal of concern in my area and others?

I have a good deal on record from the Minister on this matter, both as a result of a letter sent me in response to a letter that I had written to him recently, and also, of course, the Minister's answers to two questions asked in this House by the member for Mawson, one on Tuesday of last week and one on Tuesday of this week. In the reply to the question from the member for Mawson this week, the Minister said:

The situation literally has not changed since the reply I gave to the honourable member only last week on this question. I would repeat that the changes affect only the advanced certificate courses at the O'Halloran Hill College.

Since reading that I have had access to two further pieces of information: one is a tape which was taken during a meeting that people at the college had with Mr. Dennis Seidel, of the Department of Further Education, at the college on Wednesday of last week, and, secondly, some information which has been given to me as a result of some other queries that I made. I assume that this tape was taken with the knowledge and approval of Mr. Seidel, and on it, among other things, he is asked whether the Stanley Street annex of the Croydon College of Further Education would be getting additional resources in order to be able to meet the additional demand that would come upon it as a result of the rationalisation.

Mr. Seidel's answer (and I think I can recall his words, as I heard them only this morning) was, among other things, "I think I can best answer the question in this way. There is currently a decline in the amount of money available to the department for the art and craft area." He then went on to spell out certain specifics. So, that is what the Minister's officer said in the midst of a spirited defence of his department and the Government on this matter.

Secondly, on checking with the college I was told that it is not only the advanced course that will be affected but also the ordinary art and craft certificate as well. It has been suggested to me that in fact O'Halloran Hill might have been prepared to negotiate on the basis of losing two staff members and \$1 000 from its hourly-paid instructors' money. They would not have liked it, but they would have been prepared to cop it.

However, I am told that the Department of Further Education wants four staff out of O'Halloran Hill, rather than two. The inevitable effect of that will be a drastic reduction in enrolments in the general course over the next three or four years, quite apart from what might happen to the advanced course. So, it has been put to me that the Minister has been less than frank in having nothing to say about the general budgetary situation and the impact that it has had, leaving it to others to assume that this is a purely Public Service decision. Secondly, the Minister somewhat misled us in telling us that it is only—

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

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD: I am sorry, I thought that I said that it had been put to me by other persons. Anyway, I am certainly saying that now, because that is the situation, and I was about to finish. First (and I will reiterate in case the Minister has lost the thread), he has been less than frank in not making it clear that this is a response to the Budget situation.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member is doing precisely what I asked him not to do—that is, comment.

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD: Am I in order in rounding off my remarks by saying that it has also been put to me that the Minister misled us in telling us that only the advanced art and craft course was affected?

The Hon. H. ALLISON: The general thrust of inquiries from Government members, and I assume from the other side of the House, seems to have been in response to a cyclostyled publication, which I am not allowed to display, put out by the student body. I shall just read the initial premise upon which this cyclostyled publication was put out. We keep being told that the facts are not available, but the heading of this publication is "Rumours", and it states in part:

Many rumours have been circulating through the art and craft section of the college concerning the future of the college, the staffing, and just what will be the study situation at the beginning of 1981 for the students already attending the college and those intending students.

These rumours are so many and varied that it is almost impossible to list them. Let us try to put these rumours out of our minds—

and that is the last thing that they do—

and look afresh at the situation together. The following hypothesis may be a way of situating the rumours in context—

so they have thrown the rumours aside but now they propose to put them in context—

and thus enable all of us to come up with a true knowledge of the facts . . .

So they hypothesise on the basis of rumour and come up with a true knowledge of the facts. There are another three pages.

The Hon. D. J. Hopgood: Wouldn't it be easier to answer my question?

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I will answer it, but I am saying that this is the way in which pre-election information was circulated.

The Hon. D. J. Hopgood: Come on! I had nothing to do with that.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: But this information was circulated prior to the last election in what was regarded as a critical seat. Perhaps I am too cynical, but I may not be. That was the basis of inquiry. What have we said, time and again, first during eight hours of Estimates Committee debate and then in answer to a question in the House? There was no imputation that the member for Baudin was telling untruths or terminological inexactitudes, as Winston Churchill would have put it. We have said that the art and craft advanced certificate at O'Halloran Hill will be phased out for new students as from 1981; we have also said that intending students who wish to continue to study art and craft at O'Halloran Hill will continue their studies, and that no new students who have the advanced art and craft certificate will be allowed to continue there.

The figures that I was given by, I assume, Mr. Seidel, who has been acting as spokesman on behalf of the department, indicate that some 10 per cent of the total number engaged in the art and craft certificate would wish to go on to advanced art and craft. The advanced certificate was, I was told by Mr. Seidel, to be relocated within the Croydon Park complex. The redevelopment of the Stanley Street School of Art is still the subject of negotiation between the Department of Further Education, the Minister, and the Minister of Public Works and, therefore, the extent to which Stanley Street will be involved cannot yet be determined by Mr. Seidel, or by the Minister for that matter.

The Hon. D. J. Hopgood: It's part of Croydon Park, you know.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: It is part of Croydon Park, but

whether students will be relocated in the Stanley Street section has yet to be determined because of the nature of the redevelopment to be decided upon there. Certainly, there are drawing board prospects, but the final decision has not yet passed my desk. I believe that in total within the art and craft certificate at O'Halloran Hill there would be between 1 600 and 1 700 individual subject courses, but these are spread over about 160 students, of whom, I believe, about one-quarter (that is, 40) would be engaged in what may be considered to be advanced certificate and related work. I am speaking from memory: I did not have the information readily at hand, but I believe that the figures are sufficiently accurate and, if they are not and if there is a major discrepancy, I will ensure that precise figures are provided.

Really, we are looking at a very small proportion of the O'Halloran Hill student enrolment, and a relatively small proportion, about 10 per cent, of the total number of subject allocations. The question then was to what extent the advanced craft certificate is the only area of art and craft that will be affected. Again, in the Budget Estimates debate I made clear that a decision had been arrived at by the present Government that stream 6 courses, which involve not so much the advanced art and craft certificate (which is streams 1 to 5) but enrichment groups, would be scaled down to the extent that we are now predetermining the amount of contract teacher time that will be made available across the State.

The Hon. D. J. Hopgood: You're contradicting what you said on Tuesday.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: This is stream 6, the enrichment. The art and craft certificate, which qualifies for TEAS money, is surely in stream 5, where the honourable member, as former Minister, put it. Therefore, we are looking at streams 1 to 5, which qualify for Commonwealth TEAS subsidies as opposed to the overall art and craft, including enrichment, which is stream 6. That demarcation was not made clear during questioning, and for that reason I am clarifying it now. In the Estimates Committee debate the point was made that about \$500 000 was put aside for contract teacher time, and an assurance was given by the Government that a proportion of pensioners, including age pensioners, those who receive supporting mothers pensions, invalid pensioners, and Aborigines who receive pensions, will be allowed to enrol within that stream 6 section as a result of the Government's fixing a certain proportion of money to be made available to all colleges.

I literally have not made a point of ascertaining precisely how much of that money has been allocated specifically to the O'Halloran Hill college. I assume that it would have been done on a fair basis and that it would have had proportional allocations just as have all other colleges. The stream 6 section, that is the enrichment section, would not have been dealt with any differently from other colleges. In addition, we clearly said to college principals that the degree of autonomy that we expect them to exercise allows them to determine which courses in stream 6 they may fill from fee-paying students who could, therefore, make the course viable and, at the same time, permit some pensioner enrolments from the money made available by the Government specifically for that purpose.

I suggest, therefore, that the furore which has been created as a result partly of alleged extensive rumour because of hypotheses used to elicit facts has now come to rest in the place where it belongs, in the House of Assembly, and that O'Halloran Hill college is being dealt with no better or worse than is any other Department of Further Education College in South Australia.

**SOUTHERN VALES CO-OPERATIVE WINERY
LIMITED**

Mr. EVANS: Is the Premier aware of a report in this morning's press that attributes certain comments, relating to Southern Vales Co-operative Winery Limited, to a Mr. N. F. Dimech, of the McLaren Flat Grapegrowers Association? If he is aware of it, can he say whether those statements are true?

The SPEAKER: Order! This question is inadmissible in the form in which it has been put by the honourable member. I will give him the opportunity, as I have given other honourable members, to rephrase his question in consultation with the Chair, and I will give him the call in due course.

NORTH-EAST TRANSPORT

Mr. MILLHOUSE: Can the Minister of Transport say whether the Government will please reconsider immediately the decision to build this silly O'Bahn system as part of the north-eastern area public transport system? I use the word "silly" advisedly in the confident expectation that it will not be regarded, in the light of the afternoon, as unparliamentary in the way in which it was this morning.

The SPEAKER: Order! Any reflection on a decision of the Chair is out of order.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: I am not reflecting on your decision at all, Sir.

The Hon. D. O. TONKIN: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I would interpret that as a reflection on the Chairman of Committees.

The SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order. I was remonstrating with the honourable member for Mitcham and had started to make a statement to him at the same time as the Premier rose to take a point of order. I indicate to the honourable member for Mitcham, as I do to all honourable members, that, when the Chair is referred to, it is a reference to either the Speaker or to the Chairman who is in charge at any particular phase of the House's activity. I ask the member for Mitcham to withdraw any inference that could be taken against the Chair.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: Of course, I withdraw any inference that can be taken, but I still—

The SPEAKER: Order! Unconditionally.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: Unconditionally, but I still have the hope—

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to continue with his question.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: If Your Honour pleases.

Members interjecting:

Mr. MILLHOUSE: What's wrong now?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Mitcham.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: Oh, I see what I have said. You rattled me a bit, Mr. Speaker, and I forgot where I was. I thought that I was being treated as I normally am at the other end of town.

If I may, I will now continue with the explanation. I personally have always opposed the O'Bahn system, and I was amazed that not one question was addressed on the matter by A.L.P. members during the Budget Estimates debates, but the point of my question and the reason for my asking it is that I have recently, in the past couple of days, had a letter from a man living at North Glenelg canvassing Adelaide's future transport needs, but making a very serious allegation in the course of that letter. With your permission, Sir, I should like to read out a couple of

sentences from the letter to explain it. He said:

This topic was addressed by the Minister of Transport at the annual general meeting of the Institution of Electrical Engineers held at the Adelaide University on 24 October. That is within the last week. The letter continues:

In asking the Minister to explain what 2 kilometres of O'Bahn would do for Adelaide's transport needs, I had summed up what I saw as the advantages of a tramway over a busway. When my wife and I left the function an hour later, we were pursued by a gentleman who said that he had just retired following a long career as an M.T.T. engineer. He asserted that all of my misgivings about O'Bahn were correct, that none of the engineers in the Department of Transport saw merit in the scheme, and that he personally had visited Mercedes, in Germany, and had been told by them that the O'Bahn was the wrong system for Adelaide. Astonished, I asked him, "If the consensus is so clear among engineers in the Department of Transport, why don't they go public on the issue?" To this he replied that they were afraid of losing their jobs, which I am afraid does no credit to my profession.

He then canvassed the advantages and disadvantages of the O'Bahn system, and I will not go into that. Referring to the Germans, he said:

Furthermore, they have so far only established an experimental O'Bahn in Essen, and an independent experiment in Australia must be a godsend to them.

That is, we are going to do their experimental work for them. He then suggested that the economics of meeting Adelaide's future transport needs are peculiarly within the province of my colleague, the Hon. Lance Milne, and asked whether I could arrange for him to visit Essen to evaluate the system over there. The point of my question, which arises out of the letter, is that apparently, according to that, there is near unanimous opposition to the O'Bahn system amongst the experts in the department, and it is for that reason that I put the question, asking that the matter be reconsidered.

The Hon. M. M. WILSON: I am rather grateful to the member for Mitcham for having asked the question, because I shall be very pleased to give him the answer. Before I get into the meat of the answer, I will say that, if the Hon. Lance Milne is to visit Essen, I hope that he will inform me before he goes so that I can make arrangements to see that he is cordially received and given every assistance to ride the O'Bahn, because I know that when the Hon. Mr. Milne rides on the O'Bahn at Essen he will be extremely impressed with the system.

The Hon. J. D. Corcoran: Particularly if you can make the arrangements.

The Hon. M. M. WILSON: Well, I was very happy to recommend to the authorities in Germany that the member for Salisbury, and the member for Price, who is over there now, be accorded every consideration, and I know that they would have enjoyed their trip.

The Hon. J. D. Corcoran: In the hope that they would be duchessed, too.

The Hon. M. M. WILSON: The member for Hartley does not seem to have a very high opinion of them.

The Hon. J. D. Corcoran: I know how—

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M. M. WILSON: I will get to the nub of the question. The member for Mitcham referred to a dinner that I attended last week where I spoke to the Institution of Electrical Engineers. I remember that the person who wrote to the member for Mitcham asked me a question after I had made my speech. He asked an intelligent question, and I think he got an intelligent answer, if I may say so.

I wish to refer in particular to the former engineer mentioned in the letter. That gentleman did approach me

after I had finished my remarks and proceeded to tell me, as he has told me before, that he did not believe that the O'Bahn section itself was warranted in the area in which we intend to place it. He is quite happy for a busway to go there, but he did not think the O'Bahn section was warranted. He told me that I was pandering to the environmentalists. I want to make it quite clear that the main reason why the Government intends to put the O'Bahn track down that section of the river is that we wish to preserve the environment, and it is because we wish to preserve the environment that we want the narrowest possible track. The O'Bahn track has a width of 8 metres, which is almost exactly the same width of an l.r.t. track. I hope that will satisfy the member for Mitcham.

The Hon. Jennifer Adamson: He is always complaining about the environment.

The Hon. M. M. WILSON: Indeed, he is complaining about the environment. The environmental matters in this decision were well-considered. Yesterday afternoon I spoke with the Director-General of Transport, who is now in Stuttgart. At that stage, he had spent a day or so in Essen examining the system mentioned in the member for Mitcham. He is extremely impressed with the system and has a wealth of information to bring back. He has some suggestions which I think will improve the environmental effects even more. He and Mr. Wayte, who is to be the Project Director, are impressed with what they have seen. They believe that Adelaide will have a tremendously exciting transport system to the north-east.

I want to conclude by addressing myself to the accusation that all the officers of the Department of Transport are totally opposed to the O'Bahn system. I deny that emphatically. I answered this question, which was asked by the Deputy Leader in the Estimates Committee and if the member for Mitcham likes to read that answer he will see that I denied it there. When I took over the portfolio of Minister of Transport, many of those officers had been working on the Neaptr scheme (the l.r.t.), and it could be understood that they would be violently opposed to the present Government and the present Government's transport proposals. Those officers have been totally loyal to me and to the Government, as indeed they were to my predecessor, Mr. Virgo, and the former Government. They have acted just as public servants ought to act, and it is absolutely untrue to say that all those officers of the Transport Department are totally opposed to the O'Bahn system.

SOUTHERN VALES CO-OPERATIVE WINERY LIMITED

Mr. EVANS: Is the Premier aware of a report in today's *Advertiser* which attributes certain comments about the Southern Vales Co-operative Winery to Mr. Dimech, of the McLaren Flat Grapegrowers Association, and could he give a report to the House. I believe that in this morning's *Advertiser* Mr. Dimech is reported as saying that the Government delayed yesterday's announcement regarding Southern Vales until after the Federal election, that the growers' first awareness of the Government's decision was from hearing it on television, and that the decision was unexpected. Can the Premier report on that statement?

The Hon. D. O. TONKIN: Yes, I am aware of that report. I must say at the outset that I can fully understand the disappointment that Mr. Dimech and other growers must feel at the fact that Southern Vales Co-operative has reached the stage that it has. Obviously, in considering the report, I am aware of the underlying feelings that may

have prompted the comments. There is no truth in the comments that have been made regarding the timing.

The Government considered the whole matter in great detail, and it was the Southern Vales Co-operative Winery, which was invited to do so, which in recent weeks sent to the Government a lengthy submission proposing several methods which it felt might be employed to attempt to solve the situation. The Southern Vales winery asked the Government to consider each of those proposals before finally coming to a decision to settle the matter. Those proposals were immediately referred to the Treasury, to the S.A.D.C., to the State Bank and to the Department of Agriculture for urgent appraisal and comment. It was only after the receipt of comments and replies on those suggestions, which we felt it was essential to have, that the matter was considered by Cabinet. It was considered by Cabinet at the first opportunity after the reports had been received and a decision was made. The decision was then communicated to the board of Southern Vales Co-operative. There is no truth at all in the suggestion that there was any delay in making a decision because of the timing of the Federal election. If there was any delay, it was because Southern Vales was being asked, and took advantage of the request, to make a final submission on its situation.

As to the suggestion that it was a disappointing decision, I am sure it was, but to say that it was an unexpected decision and not expected by the growers I think is not accurate. I believe that there is a natural tendency for people to be unduly optimistic when hopes are raised, but I must point out that the very reason why the State Bank declined the Government's original request (and I outlined this in a Ministerial statement yesterday) in February to advance funds to the co-operative to process the 1980 vintage was that even at that time, in the commercial judgment of the bank, the co-operative was in an irretrievable financial situation. That judgment was not departed from at any time by the State Bank, and in fact it was confirmed by the S.A.D.C. and the Department of Agriculture in their final assessments of the situation, which were received before Cabinet made a decision.

The suggestion was also made, I believe by Mr. Dimech, that the growers felt that they had been let down by the Government. Again, I can only say that there is no basis for believing that, either. When the Government requested the State Bank—

Mr. Bannon: The Minister of Agriculture's statement—

The Hon. D. O. TONKIN: The Minister of Agriculture was hopeful that the situation could be retrieved, but there was never any secret made of the fact that the State Bank did not believe that the situation was retrievable and, indeed, when the request to the State Bank to extend the seasonal loan to the co-operative under the Loans to Producers Act to enable that processing of the 1980 vintage was made, the Minister was informed that that was not possible, that the State Bank was unable to comply with the request. It was then that the Minister informed this House on 4 March that that was the situation, and that statement was made publicly. The Government was prepared then to make funds available to the bank for advance to the co-operative so that processing of the 1980 vintage could be financed and payments could be made at a level comparable with payments in 1979. This commitment has been honoured, and is in the process of being honoured with those few growers who have not been paid for that vintage. They have been paid at those previous levels, and the Government has stood by that commitment. I do not know how much money is out at the moment, but it is certainly in excess of \$250 000, and it is probably more by now.

I think it is quite wrong to suggest that the growers have been let down by the Government. The Government has stood by the undertaking that it has given. Even when that undertaking was given to stand by the growers for the 1980 vintage, it was clearly indicated to the board of the co-operative—and this again was a matter of public record—that that undertaking was made conditional on every effort being made to return the co-operative to a viable proposition, and every attempt, I believe, was made to bring the co-operative back into financial balance.

The whole point was that the State Bank's original commercial judgment has proved to be quite correct, and I have already outlined to this House all of the measures that were taken to try to retrieve the situation. They have not been possible. We have done everything that it is possible to do, and I cannot accept that the growers have been let down by the Government at all. Indeed, the growers have been carried through the 1980 vintage purely and simply because the Government has put up the necessary funds. Those funds were put up, I repeat, with every warning that there had to be a move back to profitability or at least to a break-even point.

As to the suggestion that the growers' first knowledge of the arrangement came from the television, I must say, as a matter of record, that the Government had informed the Chairman of Southern Vales and the Chairman of the State Bank by hand-delivered letter on Tuesday of this week (in other words, immediately after the Cabinet meeting on Monday), and both of those organisations had been in constant telephone contact with officers of the Government. The board of the co-operative was well aware 24 hours before my announcement to this House of what the situation was. I am not able to notify the growers individually; that is properly the role of the board of the co-operative. I repeat that I can understand the disappointment which the growers in that area must feel that the situation has reached the stage it has. The Government has done everything it possibly can and everything it properly should and, indeed, it has stood behind the growers all the way.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION: O'HALLORAN HILL MEETING

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD (Baudin): I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD: I claim to have been misrepresented. The Premier has just asked the House not to be cynical and assume that the announcement about the Southern Vales Co-operative was deliberately delayed until after the Federal election, while on the other hand his Minister of Education has suggested that somehow I deliberately timed the holding of a meeting at O'Halloran Hill College of Further Education during a Federal election campaign to get some political advantage out of it.

Mr. Becker: Of course you did.

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD: I would ask of the member for Hanson the same thing that the Premier is asking of me in relation to a different matter.

Mr. Becker interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Hanson was one of the members who gave leave to the honourable member for Baudin to make a personal explanation. In conformity with the normal procedures of this House, personal explanations are given in silence, that is, silence by all honourable members other than the person who is making the personal explanation.

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD: While in some ways it

would be perhaps a source of some satisfaction for me to be able to report to the House that in fact I had the organisational ability and contacts and so on to have been responsible for that particular meeting, I have to give the House an assurance that I was in no way involved with it and I am now, in fact, a little confused as to when it took place. My understanding was that it was on Wednesday night of last week, which was after the Federal election and therefore no advantage could have been gained, whereas, if, in fact, it was the Wednesday night before that and I was mistaken in my assumption, that surely is sufficient evidence of the fact that I had nothing to do with this organisation. If the Minister thinks in any way that he can gain some solace out of the fact that this is a political—

The SPEAKER: Order! I would draw the honourable member's attention to the fact that he is making a personal explanation and not debating the issue.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT: DENTAL SERVICES REPORT

The Hon. JENNIFER ADAMSON (Minister of Health): I seek leave to make a Ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. JENNIFER ADAMSON: On Tuesday 28 October, I tabled the report of the Committee of Inquiry into Dental Services in South Australia. I have been asked by the Secretary of the committee to draw the attention of the House to an error on page 49 of the report. The eighth line on page 49 of the report should read "The number of dentists in South Australia has increased by approximately two-thirds since 1970", not 1979, as printed. The erratum slip will be forwarded to everyone who has received a copy of the report.

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

The SPEAKER: Call on the business of the day.

MONARTO LEGISLATION REPEAL BILL

The Hon. D. C. WOTTON (Minister of Environment) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to repeal the Monarto Development Commission Act, 1973-1974, and the Monarto (Land Acquisition) Act, 1972-1973; and for other purposes. Read a first time.

The Hon. D. C. WOTTON: I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill is designed to repeal the Monarto Development Commission and Monarto (Land Acquisition) Acts as well as to make provision for the disposal of the Monarto land. It has been apparent for some time that Monarto is not a viable proposition. The original proposal was perhaps a well-intentioned decentralisation scheme, which recent trends and research have shown was based from the outset on inadequate demographic and economic information. The previous Government recognised this and had accordingly scaled down the affairs of the Monarto Development Commission to some degree.

One of the concerns of this Government when seeking office at the last election was the impact on the finances of this State of the general indebtedness and on-going interest burden being incurred by a project which was being maintained although no longer relevant to the State's needs. We believed that the Government of that time had refused to face facts on this issue and to fully

recognise the impracticality of the scheme, and had made no real attempt to resolve the problem. Accordingly, we announced our policy that on gaining Government we would wind down the activities of the Monarto Development Commission and investigate alternative uses for the Monarto land.

On taking office this Government undertook a review of the Monarto project and concluded that population projections indicate that the Monarto land will not be required for an urban growth centre, and both the State and Commonwealth Governments should cut their losses and recover at least some of the total invested capital.

Negotiations were entered into with the Commonwealth Government with the aim of varying the terms of the financial agreement relating to Monarto and seeking a reduction in the debt interest burden accruing on the loan funds advanced by the Commonwealth for the project. As at June 1980 the Commonwealth Government was owed \$15 000 000, representing a loan of \$9 100 000 and capitalised interest of \$5 900 000. As a consequence of the negotiations, \$9 900 000 of this debt was written off, leaving a liability for repayment of \$5 100 000. This has now been repaid. State Loan funds represented a further liability of \$4 100 000 and debenture borrowing of \$7 900 000. Thus, debts of \$12 000 000 must be repaid.

In order to reduce this debt and return the Monarto land to a state where it can be of greater use to South Australia, the Government has decided to expedite the disposal of the Monarto land. The Department of Lands is to be the agency responsible for disposal and management of the Monarto site, and this Bill accordingly vests the land owned by the Monarto Development Commission in the Minister of Lands, together with the commission's duties and obligations.

The Bill establishes the means by which the Minister may dispose of the land. If necessary he will be able to quickly and simply divide land, amalgamate titles and establish title. Disposal of land will be by various means, including private contract and public auction. The Minister shall also be able to divest himself of land vested in him, and the land thus affected will be dealt with as Crown lands. Although the land will be prepared for sale by the Department of Lands, maximum possible use will be made of private sector services.

In recognition of the dislocation experienced by property owners as a result of the Monarto land acquisition programme, the Government proposes to offer first option on appropriately sized parcels of land to previous owners before placing the land on the open market. The basis of all sale prices will be market value.

Whilst the Government proposes that the majority of the site should be disposed of as agricultural land, it is recognised that there is some land within the site which should be made available for other purposes. Such land includes areas having valuable vegetation, existing commercial facilities, existing or potential community facilities and land which should be set aside to cater for the urban expansion of Murray Bridge.

The Department of Lands is investigating the arrangements to be made in relation to land which should be used or set aside for the above purposes, as well as the arrangements to be made concerning land subject to long-term lease agreements. The small group of Monarto Development Commission staff have been transferred to the Department of Lands where, in addition to the performance of their former maintenance duties, they are assisting in this investigative task.

The site itself will be incorporated into the area of the District Council of Murray Bridge, following revocation of the Governor's proclamation exempting the Monarto land

from the powers of the Local Government Act. Interim development control under the Planning and Development Act is to be introduced over the site, and the District Council of Murray Bridge will eventually exercise all the responsibilities of local government with regard to the Monarto site. Council will make such arrangements as it finds necessary for extending representation to the site area. These arrangements have been discussed with the officers and members of council and have been accepted by them.

I seek leave to have the remainder of the explanation inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

Explanation of Clauses

Clauses 1 and 2 are formal.

Clause 3 provides definitions of certain terms used in the Bill. It should be noted that the "undertaking" of the commission is defined to include the liabilities of the commission as well as its assets. Clause 4 repeals the Monarto Development Commission Act, 1973-1974, and the Monarto (Land Acquisition) Act, 1972-1973.

Clause 5 vests the undertaking of the commission in the Minister of Lands. Because of the definition of "undertakings" the Minister is responsible for all the liabilities of the commission as well as being entitled to all the property and rights of the commission. By subclause (2) the Minister is entitled to be registered as the proprietor of the Monarto land or alternatively under subclause (3) he can deal with the land without first being registered as the proprietor. Subclause (4) enables the Minister, by order published in the *Gazette*, to bring any part of the land under the Crown Lands Act, 1929-1980. Land which the Government intends to retain permanently will be brought under that Act.

Clause 6 empowers the Minister to sell, lease or otherwise deal with the land.

Clause 7 makes provision as to local government. Until the Monarto Development Commission Act, 1973-1974, is repealed the Monarto Development Commission is, by virtue of that Act, the local authority for the designated site. The site is surrounded by the area of the District Council of Murray Bridge and the clause provides for the site to be annexed to the area of that council. Subclause (2) ensures that detailed provisions in the Local Government Act, 1934-1980, for the annexation of an outlying district to an area can be adopted in relation to the Monarto land.

Mr. ABBOTT secured the adjournment of the debate.

LOANS TO PRODUCERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 23 September. Page 1015.)

Mr. LYNN ARNOLD (Salisbury): I want to make a few comments about this Bill. Before starting on that, I think it only fair to indicate that the Opposition will be supporting the provisions of the Bill. They are quite reasonable and sensible in the present circumstances. I shall make some comments on the present circumstances later. The purposes of the Bill as outlined are twofold. First, there is a changing of the means of posting the interest rate for loans made under the Loans to Producers Act, by means of setting a quarterly adjustment time rather than tying interest rates directly to the variations in the Common-

wealth rates that occur more frequently now than on previous occasions. The other aspect of the Bill exempts the previous landholders from the fund from any increases applied under the Act. I want to make quite a few comments about that, because I think it has some significance when considered in the light of other loans issued by the State Bank for other purposes to people within the State. This applies particularly to loans under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, where there is not a similar exemption offered to those people.

The matter of interest rates is significant. We know that over the last decade the question of the cost of finance (the interest rate component) has indeed been considered very important, and there has been much pressure on interest rates forcing up the costs in various areas. If there is any doubt in the mind of members as to just how significant increases in interest rates can be on costs, I would just like to read briefly from an article that appears in the 7 October 1980 issue of the *State of Agriculture*, which is issued by the Department of Agriculture. An article entitled "Interest rates and farm costs" states:

If interest rates increase, farmers pay higher interest on their farm business debts, which adds to costs and reduces net cash income, and pay higher prices for farm inputs. Higher prices result from the inflationary tendency of increasing interest rates . . .

Just as an aside, I might mention that that is a very interesting comment: that increasing interest rates are regarded as an inflationary tendency and not the wage push that is so often referred to. I think that that point is something that could well be borne in mind. The article includes a tabular statement under the heading "Change in total cash costs from a 1 per cent increase in all interest rates." I seek your leave to have that table inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

The SPEAKER: Can the honourable member indicate to me that it is of a purely statistical nature?

Mr. LYNN ARNOLD: It is, Sir.

Leave granted.

Change in total cash costs from a 1 per cent increase in all interest rates.

(Based on 1977-78 figures)

Industry	Percentage increase in cash costs	Absolute increase in cash costs (\$)
Wheat		
Eyre Peninsula	0.75	212
South Australia	1.06	233
Grazing		
South Australia	0.87	202
Australia	0.92	232
Wheat/sheep		
Australia	1.13	315
Dairying		
South Australia	1.06	174
Australia	1.16	231

Mr. LYNN ARNOLD: In conjunction with those figures, the article continues as follows:

From these figures it can be calculated that the 1 per cent increase in all interest rates for farm loans on wheat-dominant farms on Eyre Peninsula would increase cash costs by almost .75 per cent, which in dollar terms is about \$212 a year. For South Australian dairy farms, a 1 per cent increase in interest rates would increase cash costs by 1.06 per cent, or \$174 a year.

I know from experience that the interest rates we are

talking about in the Loans to Producers Act refer to a particular set of activities with regard to producers, namely, facilities to process the products that are produced by primary producers. It does not really refer to loans for carry-overs of stock or the like, though the Act does in fact make provision for that to happen if that were needed. I am referring to this just to give some indication that interest rates are indeed an important cost component in the primary sector and, therefore, because of that, I think that we need to ask why there has been a decision to change the Act with regard to the setting of interest rates. What has been the cause of this?

In the second reading explanation that was presented to the House, it was mentioned that the introduction of a new system for issuing Commonwealth bonds necessitates the setting of quarterly interest rate levels for this Loans to Producers Act. However, I would beg to suggest that there are yet other motives in this new proposal; that it is the relative volatility (upward volatility, it would seem) of interest rates that also is a sleeper in this legislation.

It has been said by the present Federal Government that one of its principal beliefs is that interest rates must be brought down. The Federal Government has said that for the last five years—it is not doing it awfully well, but it has said it. The present Federal Government made many criticisms of the former Whitlam Government, which was in power from 1972 to 1975, concerning interest rates. To discuss this matter, I think it is only fair that we have access to details of the interest rates that applied (or at least a guide to the way interest rates have grown over the years, over the decade) and that we also compare them with some overseas interest rates. I would suggest that we compare them with West Germany and the United States of America. I have some statistical information regarding those interest rates which, with your leave, Sir, I would like to have inserted in *Hansard*.

The SPEAKER: Is it purely statistical?

Mr. LYNN ARNOLD: Yes, Sir.

Leave granted.

	Australia 26 week Treasury Notes Per cent	West Germany Discount rate Per cent	United States of America Treasury Bills Per cent
June 1969	4.91	5.00	6.49
June 1970	5.48	7.50	6.74
June 1971	5.57	5.00	4.78
June 1972	4.66	3.00	3.87
June 1973	5.10	7.00	7.19
June 1974	10.76	7.00	8.15
June 1975	8.01	3.50	5.43
June 1976	7.25	3.50	4.94
June 1977	9.12	3.50	5.02
June 1978	8.75	3.00	6.73
June 1979	9.30	4.00	9.06
June 1980	10.55	7.50	7.07

Notes: May 1980, 11.05 per cent; July 1980, 10.73 per cent.

The Hon. D. O. Tonkin interjecting:

Mr. LYNN ARNOLD: No, I had not.

The Hon. D. O. Tonkin: I think they probably were still.

Mr. LYNN ARNOLD: I do not know whether they are or not. In my calculations I used the United States of America, as that nation is such a large agricultural producer, and of course West Germany is not an insignificant producer of agricultural produce. The figures I am quoting are for interest rates applicable to 26-week Treasury notes in Australia, the discount rate in West

Germany and the Treasury bill rate in the United States of America.

I appreciate that those particular types of loan raisings are not entirely comparative or entirely equivalent, because they do have slight differences in their definition purposes. However, I use these figures as indicators within their respective economies; their rate of growth or decline reflects the general interest rate throughout the respective economies, and I think that is a valid comparison to make. It is an interesting one to make, because some of the points that we can draw out relate to the average interest rate that applied in Australia during the Whitlam years simply by taking the interest rate at 30 June each year and creating an average over the three years. The figure for the Whitlam Government was 7.96 per cent from 1975 to 1980. If we do the same calculation again, we find that this time the average interest rate for that five-year period is 8.99 per cent.

In summary, that means that, in the period of the present Federal Government, on average, interest rates have been higher than during the period of the Whitlam Government and, indeed, figures indicate that the difference is about 1 per cent. I appreciate that it may be a little unreasonable to take averages in that sense. There is some meaning in them, but we could be at the risk of taking the meaning too far.

I would like to draw more information from the tables that is related directly through the level of interest rates in this country as compared to the level of interest rates for West Germany and the United States of America by calculating a ratio of the Australian interest rate each year to the West German rate and the U.S. rate, and then calculating an average. I seek leave to insert another statistical table in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

COMPARISON OF INTEREST RATES

Year	Australia:United		Average
	Australia:West Germany	States of America	
June 1969	0.98	0.76	0.87
June 1970	0.73	0.81	0.77
June 1971	1.11	1.17	1.14
June 1972	1.55	1.20	1.38
June 1973	0.73	0.71	0.72
June 1974	1.54	1.32	1.43
June 1975	2.29	1.48	1.89
June 1976	2.07	1.47	1.77
June 1977	2.61	1.82	2.22
June 1978	2.92	1.30	2.11
June 1979	2.33	1.03	1.68
June 1980	1.41	1.49	1.45

Mr. LYNN ARNOLD: This set of figures is significant, and, before outlining the significance, I point out that I have made this calculation because all economists accept that there are international trends in the economy that have an effect on the local economy and, thereby, they have an effect on interest rates. It would not perhaps be totally fair to compare the interest rates for the 1975-80 Fraser Government period to the interest rates for the 1972-75 Whitlam Government period without reference to international trends. It may be that the 8.99 per cent under the Fraser Government to which I have referred as being higher than the 7.96 per cent under the Whitlam Government may be explicable by international trends, and to ignore those trends would be unfair to the present Federal Government.

Accordingly, I took this calculation one step further, I

compared the interest rates in a ratio form, as I have said, and I find, looking at the figures that have now been incorporated in *Hansard*, that the average of the ratios between the Australian Treasury note rate, the West German discount rate and the United States Treasury bills rate over the three years of the Whitlam Government was 1.35: the same ratio over the years 1976-80 was 1.85, about 40 per cent greater. The point I make is that that indicates that the present Federal Government has not shown a capacity to control interest rates within this economy, because, given the fact that the United States, West Germany and Australia are all part of the same international economy, we could say that they are responding to those international pressures equally and that the impact upon interest rates is about equal for each of those countries. Therefore, other factors must be involved.

That brings us to the other reason why the Bill has been introduced: there is a volatility in the interest rates—interest rates are going up. If there is any doubt in the minds of members that that is so, I draw members' attention to the rate that is recorded in the *Government Gazette* for the Loans to Producers Act over the past few years. The rate as at 30 June is also incorporated in the Auditor-General's Report each year, and we can find some interesting information there. I seek leave to have inserted in *Hansard*, without my reading it, another statistical table.

Leave granted.

LOANS TO PRODUCERS ACT

Rate of interest applicable to new loans as at 30 June of each year.

	Per cent
1972	6.8
1973	7.3
1974	9.0
1975	10.75
1976	10.75
1977	10.75
1978	10.00
1979	10.00
1980	11.00

There has been a steady increase in the interest rate between 1972 and 1980. It cannot be denied that there were significant increases between 1972 and 1975, but it also cannot be denied that between 1975 and 1980 there has been an increase and that consistently the rate has been higher than it was between 1972 and 1975. In fact, the rate as at 30 June 1979 charged on loans under the Loans to Producers Act was 10 per cent: on 30 June 1980, the rate had gone up to 11 per cent. I tie that 1 per cent increase, which many people may not feel is significant, to the earlier table. This gives some indication of what an absolute increase in cash terms is meant by a 1 per cent increase in interest rates. One can see that that 1 per cent increase over the 12-month period is quite significant.

There have seldom been increases of that magnitude in the Loans to Producers Fund in past years. I can find only two other one-year periods in which an increase of 1 per cent or more has been recorded, and that is not a particularly healthy sign for the year that we have just gone through. I presume the Premier will give some indication or a degree of prophecy as to what is expected to happen to the interest rate in the times ahead.

The Hon. D. O. Tonkin: Mr. Willis was unable to do so, except to agree that they were likely to go up in the short term; so was Mr. Howard. I would not presume.

Mr. LYNN ARNOLD: That is a bit disappointing.

Interest rates have been increasing, and I believe that this has a lot to do with the policies of the present Federal Government and, therefore, we must understand that the Bill before us is necessary.

I refer now to the exempting of previous loans. The Bill states that sections 10 and 11 in the principal Act will be altered and that, in relation to any loan made before that commencement, pursuant to an agreement that did not make such provision, the rate of interest fixed by the Treasurer as in force under that section at the time the loan was made will be fixed at that level. That refers to the provision for variation in the rate of interest. Under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, under which people seek to buy homes with relatively cheap finance, there have been changes in the interest rates applicable. I know that, in my own district, a great many people have taken advantage of funds available from the State Bank under that agreement. In fact, I believe a high proportion of my constituents' homes have been bought accordingly.

I also know that, in the past few years, pressures have been put on by the Commonwealth Government to increase the interest rate applying to those loans. People who took out loans in 1975, 1970 or whatever, under that agreement found that the rate of interest that they were paying was increasing. For example, interest at the rate of 5¼ per cent has increased, and interest at the rate of 6¾ per cent increased to 8 per cent. People who previously had loans have not been exempted from these increases. The agreement that they signed has now resulted in higher rates of interest.

I know that the rebuttal will be made that provision exists in the Act for that to happen, and the point will also be made that there are provisions for that to happen within the contract that was signed by the buyer and the State Bank, but the point is that, by giving an exemption, the Government recognises that it is perhaps unfair after the event to increase interest rates suddenly when the expectations were totally different. I make the point that many people who have taken advantage of that funding arrangement, through the same bank, have found themselves facing a much higher interest rate than they had expected, and in many cases they have suffered a financial burden.

I know that there are facilities for that financial burden to be taken into account, but the interpretation of financial burden is a very grey area. While one understands the guidelines used by the State Bank, one can also understand that, if a person's application has been rejected, very real economic pressures can still result.

We have had some discussion today and yesterday in the press about Southern Vales Co-operative Winery Ltd. In a Ministerial statement made in the House yesterday the Premier said that, last February, the Government decided to request the State Bank to extend a seasonal loan to the co-operative, under the Loans to Producers Act.

That has made this whole Bill interesting, because we are now discussing the Bill under which that happened. One of the points that intrigued me about that was that it had also proposed to the South Australian Development Corporation that consideration be given to a three-year to five-year moratorium on the payment of interest on the co-operative's seasonal loans. In other words, it was proposed with regard to this one that, if the loan had been given by the State Bank under the Loans to Producers Fund, it may well have happened that this request for a moratorium was also considered, and the very funds being lent would not receive any interest over that period. The principal Act provides for interest rates not to be paid immediately on the date applicable. It provides that a penalty be brought down on interest not paid at the time it was due. It also

provides that that penalty may be waived by the Treasurer. I do not disagree with that, because it is a sound move. What is interesting is that this moratorium on finance would have been arranged for under that aspect of the Bill.

That brings the question of just when moratoriums on interest or, indeed, the total abolition of interest should be considered important. We have had the question of another type of loan to primary producers under the emergency assistance Act for damage resulting from the storm last year, and we find that they will be charged rates of interest as well (I concede cheaper rates than apply under the Loans to Producers Act), but I do not understand that there is a provision within that Act for the waiving of interest rates. I take this opportunity to make the plea not only that, if such a provision does not exist, such a provision should be introduced and, furthermore, not only to exist, but also that it be put into effect.

I think that we all acknowledge the serious damage that happened to many primary producers in that regard and that they could well benefit from a removal of the interest rate that applies. Again, I acknowledge that the rate is somewhat cheaper than the going rate, and that is, in itself, a concession, but I make a plea for a further concession over and above that.

The Loans to Producers Act provides for loans for various purposes, and they are outlined in the principal Act, under section 5. Essentially, the main purposes seem to be for the construction of facilities, of buildings, or the sale, whether by wholesale or retail, or the preparation for sale, of any rural products, or for any other prescribed purposes. In reality, it appears from the reports in the Auditor-General's Report that most of the funds have been made available for facilities. The most recent Auditor-General's Report indicates, for example, that \$2 142 000 was made available to distilleries, \$25 000 to butter and cheese factories, \$1 266 000 to fruit-packing sheds, and \$1 655 000 to fishing and fish-treatment works. What is significant here (and I am concerned about it), is that I have gone back through the reports for the fund for the last few years and I can find no allocation from the Loans to Producers Act for two areas of agriculture, for example, involved in my area, the market gardening area. I believe that this particular fund may well provide the financial assistance that I think should be given in providing market gardeners with a market place whereby they can sell their produce direct to the consumer.

I hope that the Government and the Minister of Agriculture (even though he is not taking the Bill through the House) will take note of that point, and consider having officers of his department see whether or not it would be possible for funds under this section to be made available in this regard. It concerns me that at no time in the past eight years, as far as I have been able to ascertain, have such funds been available to that sector of the agricultural part of our economy. That is a very great pity. It must also be said, however, that funds made available have, indeed, made a significant contribution to the agricultural economy of this State: \$5 000 000 was lent in the past year, and \$4 300 000 in the year prior to that. For that reason, we do not oppose the provisions of the Bill. We think that it is important.

Mr. Gunn: Then, what about sitting down?

Mr. LYNN ARNOLD: The member for Eyre feels that it is not so important, because he does not want to hear about it. The point I wished to make was why interest rates have increased and why it is necessary to take account of interest rates, and the question of the exemption for loans. That does not mean that we believe that the holders of present loans should not be given that exemption from

further rate setting. Of course, there is the possibility that that means that they lose out by not having a reduction in the interest rates in the future, but that does not seem likely in future, as the Premier indicated earlier. I do not want that to be misinterpreted, and I do not want the member for Eyre to stand up and make that misinterpretation. I indicate that the Opposition supports the Bill, wishes it well through the House, hopes that it passes the other House equally well, with or without the support of the member for Mallee.

The Hon. D. O. TONKIN (Premier and Treasurer): I was fascinated to listen to the honourable member's exposition on interest rates. I make the following points. I repeat what I said, by way of interjection, namely, although he believes that interest rates will go up, that is an opinion which, I agree, is shared by the shadow Minister of Finance and also by the Federal Treasurer. In the short term, interest rates seem to be moving up. Fortunately, however, in Australia they have not reached the very high levels they have reached in other countries and, as long as we can keep that differential, it will continue to work in our favour. In the long term, there seems to be a probability that interest rates will vary and, indeed, may well come down again as in cyclical ways they have done in the past.

Mr. Lynn Arnold: Our interest rates are higher than in many other countries.

The Hon. D. O. TONKIN: They are not as high as those in many other countries. I think the honourable member is talking now about specific rates. I am talking about interest rates in general, as he opened his speech. Our interest rates are higher than in some countries, but they are much lower than in some other countries, where the rate is as high as 20 per cent. What the Bill is all about is the need to find some base reference point for the setting of interest rates for loans to rural producers. Previously, there has been a fairly stable base for the setting of those interest rates in the Commonwealth bond stock. As members know, there has been a change in the terms under which those debentures are issued. It is now called TAP because, literally, the interpretation is that the bonds may be taken up at any time. They are on tap, and available for purchase, and it is not necessary to wait for a particular issue.

The rate of interest returnable by those bonds will depend on the ruling interest at the time, and the flexibility provided by that system has helped quite considerably in raising funds. In those circumstances where there is some fluctuation, from week to week even, in the interest rates, it is necessary to find a firm base rate, and that firm base rate will now, under the terms of the legislation, be struck once a quarter. That is exactly and essentially what the Bill is about. The provision is intended to apply to loans to producers made after the proclamation of the Bill, not before. Any moneys lent before this time will continue to be applied at the same rate of interest. I have taken careful note of the remainder of the honourable member's rather erudite discussion and dissection of the matter, and I am quite certain that one of these days we might find one of his suggestions of use—but I am not sure when.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3—"Treasurer may fix rate of interest on loans."

The Hon. D. O. TONKIN: I think it is an appropriate time to answer one question which the honourable member put forward about a moratorium suggested on

interest rates. The moratorium is a very loose way of describing the arrangement which could be made. Interest is payable, but there would be a remission and a return of interest on a contra basis.

Mr. LYNN ARNOLD: The point was with regard to the penalty that would apply. I note that the Act provides that it can be waived, and that should be applauded. If things had gone well with the Southern Vales Winery, it would have been unreasonable to see a moratorium granted and then, five years later, for it to be in a worse position because of the penalty having been applied. I take it a bit further with regard to another Act where, at another time, I would want to pursue this, and that is regarding interest on another type of loan to producers, under the Emergency Assistance Act.

Clause passed.

Clause 4 and title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

APPRAISERS ACT AND AUCTIONEERS ACT REPEAL BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 27 August. Page 691.)

Mr. BANNON (Leader of the Opposition): This is a short Bill and a simple one. It repeals two Acts, and it is part of the Government's policy of deregulation about which it has had so much to say, although not too much to do, in the time it has been in office. We are all familiar with the campaign launched by the Premier against Government red tape, redundant Acts, and over-regulation of industry and business. I think that we on this side of the House would be the first to say that regulations and Acts of Parliament should be kept under constant review. I think former Premier Corcoran, the member for Hartley, made quite clear, both in Government and in subsequent statements, the extent to which his Government was concerned about ensuring that any legislation in operation was relevant and appropriate. In this complex world, we cannot avoid regulations; to do so would be to revert to some kind of jungle law conditions which would make a nightmare of commercial transactions and the orderly running of our community.

It would mean that those who are economically disadvantaged or less well off would be the prey of those who are able to take advantage of the system. Regulations are needed to ensure that ethical standards, standards of quality, standards of qualification, are all attained and enforced. Far too many industries have claimed the right to self-regulation and have proved, because of the curious laws of capitalism that operate, incapable of regulating themselves in the interests of the public. Others have, but not very many of them, and that is why we have registration requirements for a whole range of professional activities. That is why we register shops and offices and do various other things which certainly, at times, involve irksome filing of forms or the payment of fees, but they are there for the general benefit of the public.

I repeat that regulation in itself is not something to strive for. Regulations should apply only when they can be established to be in the public interest. Therefore, the exercise conducted by the present Government, following the vigorous action undertaken by the previous Government, is to be welcomed. We are glad that these initiatives have been continued. The most recent stage was the deregulation report prepared for the Government by Ms. Dianne Gayler, of the Premier's Department, a comprehensive report, the contents of which have been

misrepresented in the press on one or two occasions, but which provides a useful and interesting overview of the state of regulations and Acts of Parliament. In one of the appendices of that report, appendix 7, there is an initial list of Acts which may be obsolete (and "may" is underlined in the report), and then follows a list of some 17 Acts of Parliament. A quick glance over that indicates that some are dealing with matters that are no longer being pursued, by reason of policy, by the present Government, such as the Monarto development. Others refer to agricultural regulation and control of various insect pests, while others refer to projects that apparently are not going ahead, such as the Stock Exchange Plaza project. At the head of the list of 17 are two Acts, the two before us in this Bill, the Appraisers Act and the Auctioneers Act.

Members interjecting:

Mr. BANNON: Under appendix 7, the Special Provisions Act of 1970 is listed as an Act that may be obsolete. The Minister of Planning indicates that that Act may still be relevant, in which case it could be removed from this list.

The Auctioneers Act and Appraisers Act are in the list of Acts that may be obsolete. We are not suggesting that one should not review Acts of the Parliament, although if their provisions are obsolete and if they are not doing any harm, such as the South Australian Council for Educational Planning and Research Act, for instance, all one is doing by striking them from the list and repealing them is tidying up the Statute Book. It does not have much more effect than that, and it seems a pity when there are so many important measures to be announced by the Government that it is wasting time with a provision such as that. In this case, these two Acts do impose specific requirements on people, the requirements of registration, and so the effect of the repeal of them, while the Government is suggesting it will be virtually non-existent in terms of their purpose, will be to no longer require persons to be registered under these Acts.

One would have thought that if one embarks on a process of deregulation and comes up with a specific measure as part of that programme that a most thorough investigation and consultation has been made into the implications of the repeal of those Acts and indeed the acceptability of that action among those who have been using or dealing with the Acts. These Acts were first promulgated in 1934, and they have been amended at different times since then, although not since 1961, which suggests that in their present form they have not required much attention or much amendment, so that would suggest that they are ripe for review, but the Government has gone further than review and has moved for their repeal. That should be undertaken only if it has been established quite clearly by specific action of the Government in terms of consultation with those involved that there will be no untoward effects or problems resulting from that repeal.

This matter was first introduced in another place on 14 August when the second reading took place, and on 26 August the debate was continued. The Leader of the Opposition in the other place, the Hon. C. J. Sumner, made a number of comments similar in vein to those that I have been making, and raised certain questions about this Bill. He suggested that the Minister had not looked at the arguments relating to the desirability of having at least some controls and regulations governing appraisers and auctioneers. He said that he was not satisfied with the second reading explanation given by the Minister, and he proposed on that occasion, because of his concern that in fact there had not been adequate discussion with the community and with the persons directly affected by the

Bill, that the Bill not be read a second time at that time but that its consideration be deferred for six months. That move was unsuccessful, and the Bill comes before us in its present form. In replying and opposing that suggested procedure by my colleague in another place the Minister said:

The measure has been thoroughly discussed. As far as the industry is concerned, there is very little industry to consult, because almost all auctioneers and appraisers are licensed under other Acts.

He said that the Leader had given no good reason for retaining the legislation on the Statute Book. The Leader was not arguing that it should or necessarily had to be retained on the Statute Book; he was simply arguing that time should be made available for a proper and wide consultation on the matter before any further action was taken and, as a result of that consultation, it may well have been decided that the Acts could be removed from the Statute Book. It may have been felt that those Acts could be removed but it would be desirable to amend some of the other Acts applying to auctioneers and appraisers just to tighten up the situation. There are a number of things that could have been looked at. That was all that the Leader was suggesting. He was not proposing that they be retained and I make that quite clear, but the Minister assured the House that the measure had been thoroughly discussed. Those were the Minister's opening words, and in closing the debate he said:

There is no need to send the Bill back, as it has been thoroughly considered already.

So the matter passed. The Bill went through, and it has appeared before us in this House today.

If one had taken the Minister's assurances at face value and believed the matter had been fully discussed and everyone was happy, one would have been wrong because, after the matter had received some small publicity, it became apparent that the industry had not been consulted, that a number of auctioneers and appraisers were surprised the measure had been introduced, were uncertain of its implications, and were seriously concerned that the Government had not bothered to consult with them about it.

This came to my attention informally. The matter was raised with me at at least two functions following the introduction of the Bill and its passing in another place. For instance, at the Real Estate Institute annual dinner, in discussion with members of that institute, reference was made to the Bill and a number of those there expressed surprise that the action had been taken. They said they were not sure of whether or to what extent it would affect them, but one or two expressed the view that there was indeed value in these Acts and they were surprised that the Government had not seen fit to talk generally to the industry about it. That was the first hint to me personally of concern in this area.

That concern has been raised with a number of other members in the intervening few weeks. It was pointed out to us quite clearly in a letter sent to the Minister, a copy of which was forwarded to my colleague for his information, from a firm of licensed valuers who said that they were concerned about the repeal of the Appraisers Act. Their protest was that no formal approach was made to any appraiser for an opinion; no formal approach was made to the Australian Institute of Valuers; no formal approach was made to the Real Estate Institute of South Australia Incorporated; and no protection was given to the public who might require appraising service if there are no appraisers. This particular firm went on to say that it had two valuers and six full-time appraisers on its staff, together with 11 part-time appraisers. They said that the

Act, rather than being a simple method of raising revenue, should be seen in the light of legislation for the good of the public, namely, control, protection and maintenance of confidence by a public profession.

They pointed out that an appraiser, to obtain his licence, must have two character references and also two references from other appraisers or valuers, a sort of double safety check by which these registrations could take place. They pointed out that the fact that a person holds an appraiser's licence (he can value anything except land and property) does not give him the right to value everything, that they usually specialise in fields covering food stores, hotels and wine stores, drapery and fashions, shoes, service stations, jewellery, and dolls, to name a few areas in their field.

The suggestion being made in that submission to the Minister which was sent to him towards the end of September, because the matter had only just come to the attention of the particular firm concerned, made some fairly grave complaints, that there had not been consultation or discussion, as the Minister had assured us there had been.

I believe this reinforces the move that was made in another place to have this matter deferred in order that that discussion could take place. I am not aware of what sort of reply the Minister gave to this firm in relation to the matter, but he had referred in his letter to the views of the Australian Institute of Valuers and pointed out that there had been no approach to that professional body whose members were governed by this Act, a quite extraordinary admission on the part of the Government.

On 20 October, the Australian Institute of Valuers in fact wrote a letter to my colleague in another place, in which it set out its view on this lack of consultation and confirmed in that letter that the discussions which the Minister had said had taken place had indeed not taken place. I will quote extracts from this letter, as follows:

In respect of the Appraisers Act, the institute offers the following comments. The repeal of the Appraisers Act will enable any person to establish himself as an appraiser without qualifications, training, experience or accountability except by expensive court action. It is recognised that under the existing Appraisers Act there is no provision for complaints to be lodged on an appraiser's conduct and competence, and perhaps this is one reason why a limited number of complaints has been forthcoming.

That is an argument for the amendment of this Act which may tighten it up, rather than an argument for the Act to be repealed and taken off the Statute Book. The letter from the Institute of Valuers continues:

The sale of small businesses is covered by section 91 of the Land and Business Agents Act. This protection and advice to intending purchasers is only provided where the value of the business (including stock and plant) is under \$30 000. Where the value exceeds \$30 000, no statement of particulars is required. Accordingly, with the repeal of the Appraisers Act, any person could value stock and plant for the sale of businesses in excess of \$30 000 with no accountability. In these circumstances, the public is not protected.

This institute, a professional body with ethical standards, naturally, and the concern for the professional standing of its members, makes a very cogent point about its views on the need for an Appraisers Act. The letter concludes:

Having regard to these matters and in the public interest some form of licensing and reference tribunal appears necessary. This may be achieved by an amendment to the Land Valuers Licensing Act to provide for a category of appraisers, and accordingly a further consideration and investigation appears necessary.

I think that is a very valid point made by the Institute of

Valuers. What it is saying is something that I mentioned earlier, that there may be a case for repealing these Acts and then by amendment of another Act (in this case the Land Valuers Licensing Act) providing for some of the desirable matters in the public interest that are covered by, in this case, the Appraisers Act. That ought to be looked at and discussed with those people in the industry comprehensively, not under the threat of legislation.

We have also had response from one or two other bodies which are prepared to say that, after careful consideration, they do not want to take any further action. They are accepting that it is a *fait accompli*, that it will be passed and they will see how they can live with it. That lines up with the remarks made by the Minister (I am not sure whether it was in the House or by way of press statement) that the Bill could be passed and operate for six months or so and then there would be a review of whether or not there was a need. That seems an extraordinary way to go about it. Surely the sensible thing is to maintain the *status quo* while investigating the *status quo* and its effectiveness. That is the sensible thing to do, and it seems very odd that the Government wants to push this particular small measure through in this way. It may have the bad effects that have been pointed out clearly by one professional institute which is involved and which was not consulted. It is extraordinary that the Government is not prepared to let this Bill stand over for a few months while this situation is investigated.

I suspect that what it is attempting to do is set up some kind of propaganda piece, pointing to the fact that it is so intent on deregulation that here is a great list of Acts and another list of regulations, all following the Premier's advertisement in the newspapers addressed to small business, saying he is going to cut red tape out of business in South Australia. By all means let us cut red tape out of business, but let us do it after proper consultation, and let us do it in the public interest, and let us not, as this Bill apparently tries to do, do it on some sort of doctrinaire basis which simply aims at providing a propaganda point for the Government to make much of. It has gone too hastily into it; it has not consulted adequately with the right people, and it is quite clearly a situation where it must reconsider.

It was interesting that an even stronger complaint has gone to the Minister from the South Australian Mixed Business Association. I say that is even more interesting because the Premier's message about deregulation was addressed, as the heading says, to small business. He talked at length about small business and its role and how it did not want petty controls and unnecessary red tape and time-wasting methods which added to business costs. "As small business people", he said, "you know which State Government controls are the greatest barriers to your development; only you can tell us if we are to help." One would think that that means that the Premier is prepared to listen to small business in terms of what it believes are not barriers. Yet the South Australian Mixed Business Association was constrained to write to the Minister on this matter, on which it had not been consulted, on 8 October, in the following terms:

It has come to the notice of the association that there is a motion before Parliament to deregister stocktakers under the Appraisers Act. This association objects to this motion in the strongest terms, numerous complaints are received in this office at regular intervals regarding the efficiency standards of some stocktakers.

With a 25 per cent charge of ownership per annum in our industry, stocktakers play a prominent role, and for those reasons we ask that this motion be withdrawn. Stricter controls should be embodied in this Act for the protection of

our members; also more rigid examination of persons applying for a licence under this Act; we can also envisage the inclusion of penalty clauses.

That is the view of a representative association of small business men saying that they want this Act not in the form that it is on the Statute Books but in fact tightened up and made more rigorous and effective, completely opposite to the line the Government is taking.

If one adduces no more evidence than that, there is a clear case to stand this matter aside. It may be necessary to repeal the legislation, but let us not do so until we know precisely what the implications are, what the attitude of industry is and what, if anything, is necessary to replace it. Accordingly, I move to amend the second reading motion, as follows:

To strike out "now" and insert "this day six months".

Mr. McRAE (Playford): I support the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition. This legislation does come, it would appear, directly as a result of the report to the South Australian Government of Ms. Dianne Gayler of the Premier's Department, and like my Leader, I agree that it is no part of the philosophy of the Opposition that people should be over-regulated. It is interesting to note this quotation from a Canadian source which is given in support, strangely enough, of deregulation. There is an introductory remark by Ms. Gayler which states:

The scope of Government regulations has undergone a significant change in the Western democracies over the last decade, particularly in "social" regulation, as various groups in the community have demanded increased action and intervention, and as government and society have become more complex. The Australian scene mirrors that in Canada.

A quote then follows which apparently is given in support of deregulation, and I find this rather humorous. It is written by a Canadian author and it is as follows:

Canada, like other western industrialised nations, has become a regulated society. In the morning the clock radio awakens us with the sound of music subject to Canadian content regulations. The price, at the farm gate, of the eggs we eat for breakfast has been set by a government marketing board. We drive to work on tyres that must meet federal minimum safety standards and in a car whose exhaust is subject to pollution emission regulations. At lunch, the restaurant in which we eat has been subject to the scrutiny of public health inspectors. The monthly rate for the telephone we use at the office is set by a federal or provincial regulatory agency. Shopping in the supermarket on the way home, we note the unpronounceable names of certain chemical preservatives that, by government regulation, are disclosed to us on a finely printed label. As we turn down the thermostat before retiring, we are confident that a government agency has protected our purse by setting the price we will be charged by the local monopoly supplier of natural gas. Putting on our sleepwear, we are secure in our knowledge that it is not impregnated with a hazardous substance like Tris. If we live in certain cities, we approach our rest reassured that the smoke detector we were required to install will stand on guard throughout the night. In the words of Samuel Pepys, 'And so to bed'.

The humorous thing I find about this is that surely every example that is given there is laudable. For instance, I should certainly hope that all would agree that there should be stabilisation of the price of eggs, and protection to the producer. I would be very surprised if that were not the case. I am sure that a person who drives tens of thousands of miles on country roads would like to be quite sure that Government agencies sought to maintain motor vehicle tyres at a certain standard. Presumably, like myself, you, Sir, are not in a position to test them.

I am a telephone subscriber, and I am glad that the Government watches the activities of Telecom. I am sure that all members are pleased that our children and our wives are not exposed to strange and unusual chemical preservatives that may be in food in the course of selecting goods when they are shopping. The member for Glenelg, I know, was very perturbed, and correctly so, that some items of children's clothing are readily flammable and he introduced some very laudable legislation. The point is that sometimes people who want deregulation can (and I am not saying that that is the attitude of Ms. Gayler) give strange arguments in favor of deregulation.

I do not propose to speak for long. I turn now to the section of the report that worries me most. It is not the section that the Government supports. I am referring to the summary of responses (P.P. 136, page 61f.) received from the Premier's message to small businesses and other people. There are some very interesting ones there and I shall quote one or two examples. On page 63, in relation to the Workers Compensation Act, the report states:

1. It is too easy for workers to claim entitlement and too difficult to prove when the injury occurred.

Somebody in industry wants to remove the workers' rights under the heading of a deregulation authority. I also picked up a response which I am sure emanated from somebody with the philosophy of the Hon. C. M. Hill. This one appears under the heading "Land and Business Agents Act", and it should be noted that there is a relationship between the Bill we are dealing with and that Act. It states under that heading:

1. Unfair that land agents cannot employ licensed land salesmen on the basis of agreement between the land agent and each land salesman.

Those of us who were involved in the consumer protection legislation in the early 1970's know very well that the reason we set up a separate profession of licensed land brokers was to protect the public and stop their being fleeced by land agents. Now, under the heading of deregulation, we are getting these substantive suggestions, and there are many others that one can pick up. I am not saying that the Government has agreed to these things, but it worries me somewhat that people, under the guise of deregulation, can turn to these very substantive matters.

Having supported my Leader in that regard, I refer to comments made by the Minister of Consumer Affairs, in the other place, in defence of his position. Basically he said that these Acts head the list, as it were, of those Acts which, according to the deregulation report, could be done away with. As my Leader said, there is a further comment to be made about the suggestion that those Acts do not contain anything very much anyway, that there is no industry to consult with, and that no harm could be done. The Minister said this was a good example, and other Acts would cover the problems raised by the Leader of the Opposition in another place. The Minister said that this was a good example of the Government's deregulation attitude. I can think of a number of instances, in addition to the cases mentioned by the Leader, straight away of where the comments of the Hon. Mr. Burdett were quite wrong. I do not think that the Hon. Mr. Burdett has ever specialised in the criminal law, and so perhaps he is not to be blamed. One of the things that concerns me most is that, if there is nothing else in the scope of the two Acts that are to be repealed (and which on the weight of the numbers will be repealed) it is this; if, for example, a person wants to be an auctioneer he must go to a court to establish his credit. As Mr. Burdett says, it is true that in certain cases such as car auctions and other types of auctions special Acts of Parliament apply, but there are many other types of auctions of which I can think for all

kinds of goods and services. One that I can pick on at random which I am sure is dear to your heart, Sir, is an agricultural implement auction, and I am sure there are many others.

If this Act is taken away, the end result is that a convicted criminal in relation to fraud, a bankrupt person, or a highly disreputable person could set up business and, if he can con and defraud others, he will get away with it. It is no good any Minister's trying to convince me that that will not happen, because it has. Before the former Government introduced the consumer protection legislation in the land and business agents area the position was absolutely deplorable. The very worst kind of people with the most deplorable frauds to their name were practising continuously in the city of Adelaide and were defrauding people on the grandest scale. That went on for years until our legislation was introduced.

With regard to appraisers, it might be said that they will not cause a great deal of trouble; my word, they will. The ordinary person finds it very difficult to place a reasonable value on his goods, so he turns to a person who can appraise his goods, for instance, a piano, a piece of furniture, or jewellery and put some sort of price on it. This also applies to stocktakings and all sorts of issue, and one could go on and on. I concede that under the present Act there is only a small check, but at least the person seeking to be an appraiser has to go to the Treasury.

We know that Treasury officials are very efficient, and there is no way on earth that they would licence a person who has a criminal record, who is a bankrupt or who is an undesirable person. A person must have references. I am sticking to my word and I intend to complete my remarks, but I believe I have dealt adequately with the matter and, in combination with what the Leader said, I would be surprised if the Minister does not agree to this very fair suggestion, which would protect the public. On this occasion we suggest that the matter be deferred for six months or perhaps less and, in the meantime, the dangers to which we referred could be considered. I am sure the law officers (and I see that there is one law officer in the House today) would support this motion, if the Minister cares to take their advice. I hope that she gets some advice. There will be an opportunity in the period of delay to strengthen other Acts and this will permit the Government to carry out its policy of deregulation, for which it has a mandate (and we do not dispute that) and at the same time the delay will permit protection for people from the evils to which we referred.

The Hon. JENNIFER ADAMSON (Minister of Health): I move:

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

Motion carried.

The Hon. JENNIFER ADAMSON (Minister of Health): I oppose the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition in regard to the question that the Bill be now read a second time, and I would be pleased to explain the reasons why I do so. First, despite the material that the Leader read out, efforts at consultation have been made and there has been consultation with the organisations whose members will be affected by this Bill. To deal with the broad argument that the Leader and the member for Playford raised when they spoke in regard to the question of deregulation, I indicate that the Leader seemed to have a bob each way on this question, alleging that, certainly, we need to keep the Statute Books up to date and to remove those regulations which are outmoded and which serve no useful purpose, but he then went on to say that that is a question of tidying up and does not alter the

situation in regard to those who will be affected.

Mr. Bannon: I said there was some legislation that doesn't affect people and some, such as this, that does affect people. I made a distinction.

The Hon. JENNIFER ADAMSON: Whatever distinction the Leader might have made, he implied that removing from the Statute Books Acts that were no longer operative was little more than a tidying up exercise.

Mr. Bannon: No, I didn't say that.

The Hon. JENNIFER ADAMSON: That is the way in which I interpreted it. I suggest that a Government that allows outmoded regulations to lie on the Statute Books when they serve no useful purpose is a Government that allows the society that it governs to become clogged with legal cobwebs which impede progress and which have a stultifying effect. The Appraisers Act and the Auctioneers Act, which were based on English Statutes, appear to have been enacted for no other purpose than to raise revenue. They have no regulatory or disciplinary function, and there is no provision in either Act for disciplinary action.

Mr. Bannon: That's not the view of the institute.

The Hon. JENNIFER ADAMSON: It is certainly the legal view that neither Act performs any regulatory function and, more importantly, neither Act offers any real protection to consumers when unprofessional conduct occurs. I am sure the Leader and the member for Playford would agree that the purpose of legislation in this area should be to ensure standards of ethical conduct and to protect the consumer. The Government opposes the Leader's amendment, because the purpose that the Leader has stated will simply not be served by retaining these Acts on the Statute Books. The desire to protect consumers will be met by amendments to other Acts that cover the operation of persons who act in these areas.

Mr. McRae: What about the gap?

The Hon. JENNIFER ADAMSON: The Minister has already given an undertaking not to effect the repeal until the Land and Business Agents Act amendments have been introduced, passed and are operating, so that would satisfy any objection that the member for Playford may have in that respect.

Mr. McRae: What about the capacity of Parliament to supervise and look at those amendments?

The Hon. JENNIFER ADAMSON: The Minister has already given that undertaking, so that part is taken care of. I also indicate that the Department of Public and Consumer Affairs has received very few complaints under these Acts, and the nature of the complaints that have been received involves the duties of auctioneers. That area is covered by the general law of contract, and it is certainly not covered by the Auctioneers Act. There is no way in which a consumer can receive any redress for complaint under the Auctioneers Act. Therefore, the Act is serving no useful purpose in regard to protection of consumers and it should be repealed. Most of the inquiries received relate to the machinery to obtain licences.

The only representation that the Minister received prior to the introduction of these Bills (and I make a distinction between "prior" and "post") and to the consultative process that the officers of the department attempted to ensure took place has been from the Australian Jewellers Association, which organisation is principally involved in appraisal in relation to the valuation of gemstones and jewellery. This is a very important field and one in which people certainly need to be protected. It is believed that this industry is sufficiently regulated as a result of a system of competence tests introduced by the association.

Mr. Bannon: It is their view that that is sufficient?

The Hon. JENNIFER ADAMSON: Yes, that is their view and the Minister's view.

Mr. McRae: What about those outside the association? That's the problem.

The Hon. JENNIFER ADAMSON: If the professional jewellers, who would have the greatest interest in ensuring that all jewellery was valued in accordance with a proper procedure and ethical conduct, are satisfied, I feel sure that they would be the first to complain if people were improperly or unethically engaging in this field. We must take the assurance of the jewellers and, if they are satisfied, the situation is well under control.

The Land Valuers Association has been consulted as to the valuation of land, and land valuers are already adequately covered. The department's experience is that, in areas other than auction and appraising of land, there have been no significant problems. The Minister intends that the department monitor the situation after the repeal and, if it is found that legislation is needed, adequate and effective legislation will be introduced, but the legislation that we are repealing today is neither adequate nor effective.

To recapitulate, there is no value whatsoever in leaving on the Statute Books Acts that do not serve any useful purpose; to do so is like clinging to something that is outmoded simply because it is there, without providing any logical reason why it should be retained and without clearing the decks to assess the situation to see whether anything should take its place. The Government opposes the Leader's amendment on the grounds that it is unnecessary and would serve only to take up additional, unwarranted time of the House.

The House divided on the amendment:

Ayes (18)—Messrs. Abbott, L. M. F. Arnold, Bannon (teller), M. J. Brown, Corcoran, Crafter, Duncan, Hamilton, Hemmings, Hopgood, Keneally, Langley, McRae, Payne, Plunkett, Slater, Trainer, and Wright.

Noes (21)—Mrs. Adamson (teller), Messrs. Allison, P. B. Arnold, Ashenden, Becker, Billard, Blacker, D. C. Brown, Glazbrook, Gunn, Lewis, Mathwin, Olsen, Oswald, Randall, Rodda, Russack, Schmidt, Tonkin, Wilson, and Wotton.

Pairs—Ayes—Messrs. O'Neill and Whitten. Noes—Messrs. Chapman and Goldsworthy.

Majority of 3 for the Noes.

Amendment thus negatived.

Bill read a second time and taken through its remaining stages.

The SPEAKER: It has been brought to my attention that, in the division on the amendment of the Leader of the Opposition, the name of the honourable member for Fisher was inadvertently left out. The member for Fisher voted for the Noes on that occasion. I direct that the votes and proceedings be corrected accordingly.

CRIMES (OFFENCES AT SEA) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 26 August. Page 614.)

Mr. McRAE (Playford): A great deal could be said about the constitutional ramifications of this measure, but I will not be saying it, the House will be pleased to hear. What is happening is that, because of agreement between the Attorneys-General of all the States and of the Commonwealth, a scheme has been arranged to deal with offences at sea.

It was necessary that the legislation be co-ordinated as

to year of operation. There was a slight deficiency, as to the date only, in the original Bill which became an Act of Parliament in this State and which is now remedied by this Bill. The Opposition supports the Bill.

Bill read a second time and taken through its remaining stages.

FIRE BRIGADES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 28 August. Page 775.)

Mr. BANNON (Leader of the Opposition): Yesterday, I gave contingent notice of motion in respect of this Bill, indicating that the Opposition would move that the matter be referred to a Select Committee. Since that time it appears that the Government, having at last, and somewhat belatedly, had some more comprehensive discussions with representatives of the fire service in South Australia, has agreed to the establishment of a Select Committee. We await a formal notification to that effect from the Chief Secretary. In view of what we understand to be the Government's acceptance of that course of action, we do not intend to make this a protracted debate, but one or two things must be said quite clearly at this stage.

It seems an unfortunate thing that the Minister who has charge of this area of Government responsibility has a sort of reverse Midas touch; everything he touches seems to turn to dross or to go astray. Whether that is the competence and ability of the Minister concerned, whether it is that he has been handed in his portfolio a number of areas which are too hot to handle, or whether in fact he is the victim of some of his Cabinet colleagues, is a little difficult to answer. One would suggest, for instance, that in the portfolio of fisheries he has some problems with the Minister of Agriculture breathing down his neck and behaving in his cowboy-like fashion.

However, I think it is fair to say that there is grave concern about the way in which the Government has handled a number of areas in the past 12 months, and in particular a number of those areas under the direct control of the Chief Secretary. So, there has been a need to establish a Royal Commission into Prisons after months of bungling and problems and alleged scandals, and so on. There have been problems in the fishing industry, and in the marine area, and now we have before the House another major problem area. It is a major problem not because in itself no solution can be found. It can be found. We have an extremely efficient and well organised Fire Brigade service in this city, of which we can be proud. Obviously, it needed some review. It has had problems with manning and equipment refurbishing, and the whole question of the funding of fire brigades is in need of review.

This was recognised by the previous Government, which commissioned a major report in that area, and the report was handed to the Labor Government in August 1979. There was a change of Government before the report could be properly processed and considered, and so it fell to the present Chief Secretary and the Government of which he is a member to look at the report and decide how and in what manner its recommendations might be implemented. This is where the problems began. As in a number of other areas to which I have referred, there seems to be a singular lack of ability on the part of this Government to properly consult with people who will be affected by legislation or administrative changes which it proposes.

It is all very well to talk rhetorically about changing the Public Service or introducing this or that type of legislation or abolishing this or that body. It sounds good, and the Government can make a great song and dance about it, but when it gets down to the hard job of putting it into effect, making executive decisions, and consulting with people, that is when it is doing the work of government, and that is where this Government has signally failed. That, more than anything, is what will make the judgment of the South Australian people on this Government very harsh at the next election—more than its rhetoric, more than the things it has said it wanted to do, it is the way in which the Government has gone blundering around, not consulting with people, trying to enforce decisions, backing away, changing its mind, and picking and choosing that is causing such confusion in our community.

Rather than the Fire Brigade's welcoming the report and the ability to have a constructive dialogue with the Government about it, we have the Fire Brigade in uproar. We have had a protest demonstration in the streets of Adelaide by the Fire Brigade service—unheard of. It ranks with a major turn-out by the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force in protest down King William Street, or the Police Force, or one of the other uniformed bodies whose watch-word is discipline. That demonstration was extraordinarily disciplined and it made an impressive sight—the entire Fire Brigade in full rig-out marching in protest against the Government, down the middle of the streets of Adelaide, to Parliament House, to put across its point of view about the appalling way in which this Government was handling the matter.

What an indictment that is of the Chief Secretary and of the Premier and his Government. Part of this problem stems back to the fact that, when the Fire Brigade people were finding it virtually impossible to get to the Chief Secretary to talk to him, when he was refusing to receive their delegation, they called on the Premier to assist, and the Premier, rather than saying to the Chief Secretary, "It wouldn't be a bad idea to see these blokes and have a chat with them and try to sort out something", sought to defend the evasive action being taken, sought to make people more inaccessible, and in fact made himself inaccessible.

Whatever one can levy at the previous Government under the member for Hartley and the former member for Norwood, the Ministry under both those Premiers of this State was accessible to people who had something to talk to them about. Those Premiers were accessible in a major way to delegations, deputations, and to interested groups in the community, and that is something that this Government has to learn. It cannot hide from people being affected by its actions. It has to front up to them, it has to talk to them and either convince them or come to some accommodation with them. That is a lesson that has not been learned. The Chief Secretary cannot hide behind inquiries or commissions or ordinary Ministerial inaccessibility. He has to speak to those people more often. All the ill feeling engendered around this issue, starting in about February this year when the report was published, stemmed from the fact that these people were not being allowed proper access and a proper opportunity to talk and discuss, and the situation went from bad to worse.

Questions were asked in this House. There were evasive replies about whether the report would be making public, and what action the Government intended to take. After a series of crises, including the Gays Arcade fire and the resulting turmoil of the investigation into it, finally this Bill was introduced into Parliament and the Government's intentions were plainly delivered for all to see. Again, it was not welcome at all: on the contrary, it created absolute despondency in the ranks of the Fire Brigade,

despondency that went not from the bottom up a certain way, but right to the top, indeed, to the resignation of the Fire Chief. A remarkable situation and one of which the Government should be ashamed in terms of its handling of the issues!

Following the presentation of the report, which was introduced by the Minister, and this Bill as an updating of the Fire Brigade, the very next day the Government was, in the words of the *Advertiser*, "warned about the board plan". The Secretary of the South Australian Fire Officers Association, Mr. Buttery, who has been untiring in his efforts to talk rationally and face to face with all these people with some influence over this legislative process, was forced to say, with the full support of his organisation, the officers of the Fire Brigade, that industrial action was likely if this legislation went ahead willy-nilly. He said it was a "gigantic step backwards" and the association would ask the Opposition to block the legislation. He said that the Government would destroy the finest fire service in Australia with this ridiculous legislation. He said that it is totally unacceptable to firemen.

That is a drastic position for that association to have got into as a result of the way in which the Government had handled the consultation on the report. Mr. Buttery's views on behalf of the officers were backed up by the Fire Fighters' Association, the union that looks after the rank and file members of the fire service. Equally strong statements were made by that association and equal concern was expressed by it about the future of the fire service under this particular Bill. What was the response? Among other things, some time in September it was reported that firemen had been threatened by an officer of the Chief Secretary, following a letter which had been sent by a number of senior fire officers. It was stated that those who had signed the letter would never have any hope of becoming Chief Officers of the brigade.

Admittedly, hasty denials were made after the event but the firemen concerned will assure you—and the Chief Secretary knows this—that those words were said to them by an officer of the Minister's department. That is a serious matter which was made public. The denials are not sufficient. Whether that matter is to be pursued is up to the fire officers concerned, but it is an extremely grave situation which has not been dealt with satisfactorily. That is the reaction that this Bill has provoked: utter dismay, loss of morale and opposition from those in the fire service on whom we have to depend to provide the protection from and prevention of fires throughout the metropolitan area and, indeed, beyond the metropolitan area in cases of specific types of emergencies.

It has been clear from the time this Bill was tabled in the House on 28 August that the Government should draw back, reconsider and consult again with those officers. Until yesterday, until the hint was given that it would accept the concept of a Select Committee, the Government had shown no intention whatsoever of doing that. This was in the face of not just statements to the press but quite detailed specific submissions from the fire officers concerned. Their criticisms of the Bill were precise, they were well founded and they deserved a full and proper investigation and hearing. Until yesterday it was apparent that they were not going to get anything of the sort; the Bill was going to be steamrolled through this Parliament and they would have to cope with the consequences of that.

What are some of those reactions and some of those major points? I will deal with them briefly because they will be fully canvassed before a Select Committee, should one be established. They were well expressed in a general letter written by the Secretary of the Fire Fighters

Association of South Australia, Mr. Doyle, on 2 September. That letter and those arguments have been before the Government now for many weeks, and yet it was still the Government's intention to ignore it and push on with the consideration of this Bill. Mr. Doyle's letter was in fact prompted by the introduction of the legislation. In that letter, he said on behalf of his membership:

... that the proposed changes were potentially harmful and that they would probably herald a new period of industrial turmoil within the South Australian Fire Brigade. The recent fire at the Adelaide Arcade, if it proved nothing else, certainly proved the negative attitude of the Government toward the development of the South Australian Fire Brigade. As you were no doubt aware, both the officers and Fire Fighters Associations were critical of the manpower levels present at that particular fire. Members working at the seat of the blaze wearing breathing apparatus were not connected to lifelines, which is a common practice in the use of breathing apparatus. We believe that firefighters in South Australia are entitled, as any other worker in the work force is, to a safe working environment.

He went on to concede that this is a risky occupation and that there will always be problems associated with it, but that those risks must be minimised. He said that the association had checked carefully the Parade statements of the day in question and agreed that 71 personnel were available, but his union still did not accept, as stated by the Chief Secretary, that everything was in order and that that level of manpower was sufficient. The Chief Secretary has said, in relation to some of the more thorny questions of the Fire Brigade, that questions like manpower and finance will be dealt with not by this Bill but by the new board established by this Bill. Following the inquiry, the buck has been passed on yet another stage, and those matters will not be fixed by this Bill. A number of other organisational changes will be made by the Bill, all of which have been vigorously opposed.

The association makes the point that its worst possible fears were realised when the legislation was introduced and it listed five specific areas of problems in the legislation. The board's structure gets rid of any kind of employee representation and the *ex officio* membership of the fire chief. These are two changes that mean that, at the board level, both the input of the fire officers who work at the grass roots level, who are actually on the spot, and the person who is in charge of the fire-fighting operation, is no longer to be part of the board consideration.

This is done in pursuit of this ideological opposition the Government has to any kind of involvement of employees in the decision-making process, quite a backward step being taken in that restructuring of the board—the elimination of those with specific experience in the area.

The second point was the responsibility towards the Minister. Here, the brigade pointed out that to make the fire service directly controlled by the Minister in every detail, right down to its basic organisation and method of operating at any particular fire source, and so on, would simply mean that the brigade could not function adequately or properly. We believe in the concept of Ministerial control of statutory authorities. It is a very proper concept, and any statutory authority or State instrumentality should make some sort of provision for that Ministerial control, but the wording of the provision in this particular Bill and the implications of it, as far as the brigade saw it, went way beyond this concept of general overall Ministerial control and direction of policy. It went down into the actual administration and the administrative decisions at the basic level of the Fire Brigade, clearly something that had to be looked at very closely.

The third point was this question of a Director of the

South Australian Fire Brigade, the abolition of the Fire Chief as being the overall executive officer of the brigade, and his replacement by a Director, who need not necessarily have any skill or particular background or experience in fire-fighting, but who would have under him a Fire Chief, a Personnel Officer, and some sort of Administrative Officer—a large bureaucratic structure being set up which got away from the way in which most brigades are organised elsewhere. That is a fundamental change and obviously one that had to be discussed very fully by the Government, but it did not bother: it simply read it in the report and inserted it into the Bill, and that was to be that.

The redefinition of the Chief Officer's role as part of that change in administrative structure was another thing that concerned the associations; finally, there is the fairly thorny area of the responsibility and interlocking between the Fire Brigade's activities in its metropolitan fire area and outside that area. To what extent and in what circumstances should the Country Fire Service organisation be able to direct the regular Fire Brigade? They make a valid point that in the case of a bush fire or something of that nature, clearly the Country Fire Service has the overriding responsibility. But what about the case, as occurred this year, of a tanker accident outside Burra, where dangerous substances were spilled on the road and where skilled personnel in the brigade, trained to handle that particular situation, went up to look after it? Are they in that situation to be under the direction of the Country Fire Service? The Act would suggest they were. That is obviously something that has to be examined and suitable amendments made, if necessary.

In summary, Mr. Doyle was saying in September and is saying today that the amendments appear to do nothing to assist the Fire Brigade in its development. Despite repeated attempts at consulting with the Chief Secretary, Mr. Doyle says his association has been ignored to the extent that it is now insulted by this attempt to restructure the South Australian Fire Brigade in a most negative and foolish manner. They are very strong words but they reflect the strong feeling within the brigade. It was made most graphically clear in a letter published on 5 September 1980 and sent to the newspapers and various other people of influence in the community. It was signed by all the chief officers in the Fire Brigade, including the Chief Officer himself, Mr. Eve, who had already announced his resignation. That letter stated that they felt deep concern for the State's fire services; that the proposed Fire Brigades Act provides for control of the brigade by people without fire service experience; that outside this country it would be difficult to find support for the system of administration proposed in the amending Bill; and they go on to say:

The amendment may be prejudicial to the good relations which exist between the volunteer and professional fire fighters within this State, and could lead to increased costs, decreased efficiency, and industrial unrest. The Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officer have previously forwarded submissions to the Government on these matters.

It is not the intention of the senior Fire Brigade officers to interfere with the process of Parliament. However, because of the graveness of the situation, we believe it is our responsibility to the Fire Service and the State of South Australia to make this submission. The practical alternative at this time: *status quo*.

Each and every one of the Chief Officers, the Deputy Chief Officer, the Senior Superintendents and the Superintendents, signed that letter. Can there be a greater indictment of the way in which the Government has handled this matter?

It is clear that this Parliament is not in a position to properly consider this legislation by the normal second reading and Committee process. Unless major amendments are made to this Bill it will not improve or assist the Fire Brigade, and the only recourse is to adopt the proposal which we intended to move and of which I gave notice yesterday, and that was the establishment of a Select Committee to deal with it.

Mr. McRAE (Playford): I support the second reading, and it is important to stress that I do so only on the basis that this Bill is going to a Select Committee. I want that clearly on the record. I note that on the Notice Paper there is a contingent notice by the Chief Secretary (and I accept the word of that gentleman, of course) that he will in fact move for the Select Committee contingently on the second reading passing. Having said that, I am very sorry that, with the limitations that are placed on one because of the reference to a Select Committee, I cannot address the House with the great deal of factual information I have that would have been of interest. Once again, I will reduce an interesting 30-minute speech to an interesting 5-minute speech.

The principal responsibility of the Chief Secretary as such, it seems to me, lies in two areas: first, the safety of the public from fire and other natural disasters which links the fire service and the police service, and then the safety of the public in the law and order sense which involves the Police Force. Can members really imagine a Police Force in which there was a board which operated and on which the Police Commissioner or Police Chief was not even represented and did not even get to have a say? The proposal is just preposterous. Who could believe such absolute garbage and nonsense? The same thing applies to the Fire Brigade. How on earth can you have a Fire Brigade made up just of people who are basically administrators, industrial officers, personnel officers, and so on? They may be all admirable people and they may be, in fact, people who have had some experience in the fire service themselves, but how on earth can you justify a system whereby the Fire Chief is not on the board which controls this service? It cannot be done. It is just too stupid.

Furthermore, I object most strongly to the proposal of the Bill to take away employee participation, because it is a continuing part of this Government's philosophy. However, I congratulate the Chief Secretary on at long last accepting the sincerity of the Opposition, which has been displayed by the way in which the Leader of the Opposition spoke in his address and, I hope, in the way in which I am speaking now, that, provided the Parliament will be involved in the decision-making process, as was the policy of the Liberal Party at the September election, cheap point-scoring will not come into the act.

There is no better way to avoid cheap point-scoring and to get positive results than to have a Select Committee, particularly in areas such as this, because nobody stands to gain by casting doubt in the public mind as to their safety from fire and other natural disasters. No political Party can ever gain by making the fire service a political issue, any more than it could stand to gain by making the police service or the prison service a political issue. My only regret is that the action taken by the Chief Secretary in relation to this matter has not also been taken by him in relation to other law and order issues I have raised in the past few weeks in this House.

Mr. LYNN ARNOLD (Salisbury): My remarks arise from a question that I put on notice in the first session of Parliament (No. 487), wherein I asked the Chief Secretary

the following question:

Does the Minister propose to seek an extension of the coverage of the South Australian Fire Brigade to include suburban development in Salisbury North, Salisbury Downs and Parafield Gardens, not presently covered?

The Chief Secretary replied:

This and many similar matters will be determined when a decision is made on the report of the committee of inquiry which has recently been released for public comment.

In the second reading explanation, it was clearly indicated that it was derivative from that committee of inquiry. I am very sorry to see that nowhere in the second reading explanation, or indeed in the Act before us, is there any reference to this matter. I had hoped that that would not have been the case. I had hoped that the Minister meant what he said in his reply to my question, but it appears that that was not the case. To reiterate, I would like to record now that a large number of houses within my electorate (and I know that the same situation applies in other electorates) in a residential context are so involved.

It is important to bear that in mind for two reasons: first, if a fire breaks out in houses which are not within the Fire Brigade area but which are within the residential context those house owners have to meet greater cost if the South Australian Fire Brigade comes to fight the fire—in other words, crosses outside its own district. That is the first problem—if indeed the Fire Brigade comes.

The second problem arises if the Fire Brigade does not come and the Country Fire Services comes instead. Without in any way wishing to decry the very good work that C.F.S. does within this State, it is true that its expertise and experience is based on rural fires, not residential fires. It could be contended that the best people to fight residential fires are none other than the South Australian Fire Brigade, which has such a tremendous record in that area. In this respect, and we are not talking of one or two or a couple of dozen, but of some hundreds of houses within my electorate, I am sure that the same case applies in other electorates, so that thousands of houses are not covered. In fact, I believe that the owners of those houses do not know that they are not covered by the South Australian Fire Brigade district. I have some figures of the part sections in my area that are covered by this. As they are of a statistical nature, I seek leave to insert them in *Hansard*.

The SPEAKER: With that assurance from the honourable member, is leave granted?

Leave granted.

Residential areas excluded:

Part sections . . . 4003, 4004, 4005,
4010, 4012, 4013,
3062,
2188,
2256, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2272,
pt 2265, 2271

Mr. LYNN ARNOLD: Part section 2250, which is not mentioned in that list, does not include any houses, but it does include a local district club, a high school and a church, and none of those is in the Fire Brigade district, and I think it is appropriate that they be included. The point I make is that we had an assurance that this matter would be looked at, but it has not been looked at as promised. I think that, in fairness to the people involved in this situation, not only in my electorate but in other electorates also, whenever a new residential subdivision takes place it should be incorporated within the South Australian Fire Brigades Board area, and not left out until there is some revamping of the district at the whim of time.

Bill read a second time and referred to a Select Committee consisting of Messrs. Corcoran, Evans,

Randall, Rodda and Wright; the committee to have power to send for persons, papers and records, and to adjourn from place to place; the committee to report on 27 November.

ADJOURNMENT

At 5.28 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday 4 November at 2 p.m.