

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 15 August 1985

The **SPEAKER (Hon. T.M. McRae)** took the Chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

### PETITIONS: PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

Petitions signed by 102 residents of South Australia praying that the House urge the State Government to request the Federal Government not to reduce expenditure on preschool education were presented by Mr Mathwin and the Hon. Michael Wilson.

Petitions received.

### OMBUDSMAN'S REPORT

The **SPEAKER** laid on the table the report of the Ombudsman, 1984-85.

Ordered that report be printed.

### PAPER TABLED

The following paper was laid on the table:

By the Minister of Recreation and Sport (Hon. J.W. Slater)—

*Pursuant to Statute—*  
South Australian Totalizator Agency Board—Report, 1984-85.

### MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT: PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

The **SPEAKER**: I report to the House the receipt this day from the Leader of the Opposition of the following letter:

Dear Mr Speaker,

I desire to inform you that this day it is my intention to move: That this House, at its rising, adjourn until 1 p.m. tomorrow for the purpose of discussing a matter of urgency, namely:

That this House demands that the Federal Government, in the Budget next Tuesday, withdraws its unprecedented cuts in funds for preschool education and, if it fails to do so, calls on the State Government to make up the shortfall in the State Budget to be introduced on 29 August.

Yours sincerely, John Olsen, Leader of the Opposition

I call upon those members who support the proposed motion to rise in their places.

*Members having risen:*

The **SPEAKER**: More than the necessary number having risen, the motion may be proceeded with.

Mr **OLSEN (Leader of the Opposition)**: I move accordingly. At the outset, I call for bipartisan support for this motion. It is an issue on which most, if not all, members would have received strong representations. The Opposition therefore intends to allow a number of members on this side of the House to contribute to the debate, and this can be done by keeping our speeches short and to the point. I trust that the Government will reciprocate so that this House can genuinely reflect public opinion on the issue.

Support for the motion is vital to end the crisis of confidence which has developed in the preschool system following the Federal Government's mini-budget. At last count, South Australia had 313 preschools, accommodating 14 327 four and five year olds, as well as 92 child-parent centres, accommodating 3 131 children. So, the cuts, the subject of

this motion, directly affect more than 17 000 South Australian children.

Next Tuesday the Federal Government has one last chance to review its decision to savagely cut funding for this vital component of the education of our children. This House should take every opportunity to make Canberra aware of its attitude. The Opposition raised this matter with the Premier immediately after the minibudget. In a question asked on 15 May the shadow Minister of Education asked the Premier what the State Government would do about Canberra's decision, a decision which will effectively cut the current funding of preschools by almost 20 per cent. Then and subsequently, the Premier and the Minister of Education indicated that they would negotiate with the Federal Government.

However, in the intervening three months nothing more than that has been said. As a result, uncertainty and lack of confidence have swept through the preschool system in South Australia, causing concern to parents and teachers. The Government knows that, because many of its own backbenchers have received this message. The member for Henley Beach has even gone public about the matter.

I point out that this motion is about priorities, and I refer to priorities that Governments are prepared to give to election promises; the priority of considering our youngest children in the education system; the priority in relation to parents hoping to give their children the best possible start with their schooling; and the priority in relation to preschool teachers, who have enormous responsibilities. The Hawke Labor Government has made decisions which have resulted in an increase in Commonwealth public sector employment of about 18 000. The cost to the taxpayer is about \$400 million a year. South Australia's 'kindy kids' may soon become amongst those who have to pay the price for a bloated bureaucracy.

Cuts in education are being made to fund expansion in other less essential areas. Recently, the Federal Government granted South Australia \$5 million to stage the Grand Prix. The Grand Prix is an important event to South Australia, but so is maintaining our preschool education system important to the long-term future of this State. The State Government's contribution to the Grand Prix also has escalated. It appears that, as this has happened, the money has been made readily available. Yet preschools can get no commitment about their funding position—about whether the State will make up the shortfall if Canberra will not change its mind. The shadow Minister of Education has already given that commitment on behalf of a future Liberal Government.

It will be no good the Premier or the Minister getting up in reply and talking about inconsistencies between reducing taxes and increasing spending, because that, as well, is a matter of priorities for Government, and my Party believes that preschool children, their parents, and their teachers, deserve the highest priority.

This motion arises out of the decision in the Federal mini-budget on 14 May to withdraw Commonwealth preschool block grants altogether from 31 December. This was a serious breach of election undertakings given by Federal Labor. Nothing was said before the 1983 or 1984 Federal elections by the ALP to suggest that this course of action would be taken. Its effect on South Australia is significant. The cost is \$3.7 million in lost funding, amounting to about 20 per cent of the recurrent cost of providing education in kindergartens and child-parent centres.

There are a number of possible consequences of this cut. Parents of kindergarten children will have to pay up to \$65 per term extra in fees. This will be beyond the budget of many families who have already been stretched to the limit by the escalation in other Government taxes and charges.

Services may have to be reduced, or there will be increased child-staff ratios, or fewer programs for special needs, or in the final analysis closure of kindergartens.

Each one of these consequences is, to a greater or lesser extent, totally unacceptable. Preschool education caters for the education and learning needs of children at a vital time in their formative stage; it caters for children from different environmental and ethnic backgrounds; it caters for disadvantaged children to ensure that, wherever possible, they participate in normal school systems; and it identifies learning difficulties at a time when remedial action can be most effectively started.

All of this imposes enormous responsibility on preschool teachers. I have made it my business, as has my shadow Minister and as have many other members from both sides of this House, to talk to preschool teachers, to assess their needs and to listen to what they have had to say. There is no doubt that they are extremely well motivated and totally committed to their vital role in the education system, but they have been devastated by this attack on their resources by Canberra, especially when Labor, in its election promises at both Federal and State level, encouraged them to think that they would get a lot more—not less—in support for services in kindergarten and child centres.

Parents of preschool children are similarly totally disillusioned. It is only necessary to read a few country or suburban newspapers to obtain some appreciation of the depth of feeling. One of the reasons for this is that the benefit of preschool education is wider than just beginning a child's education. It encourages parents, who are otherwise housebound, to become involved in the community. It encourages further community activity in areas like fund-raising effort to provide facilities which governments, otherwise, would have to fund.

The benefits and the importance of preschool education make Canberra's decision to take the knife to its Government funding a case of callous indifference as well as political treachery. In South Australia, the funding problem has been exacerbated by the expensive exercise this Government has undertaken to establish the Children's Services Office.

The Opposition maintains that all childhood services, including child-parent centres and non-government school groups, could have been coordinated by placing them under the Minister of Education without upsetting existing structures within each sector.

The destruction of the Kindergarten Union after 80 years of outstanding service was unwarranted. But now that the new office has been set up, it must be made to work, and the Opposition certainly will use its best endeavours to see that that happens. That is the spirit in which we are prepared to deal with this vital matter, because children, and not politics, are the issue.

At the weekend, the member for Henley Beach made a statement in very similar terms to an announcement by the shadow Minister on 26 June. In his statement, the shadow Minister called on the Minister of Education to state categorically whether the State Government would restore the \$3.7 million funding cuts in preschool education announced by the Hawke Government. He also said that a Liberal Government would make the money available on gaining office if Canberra did not. The member for Henley Beach has now called upon his own Party to do exactly the same thing. I hope he will make a contribution in the debate today. I hope that there will be no criticism from the Government of the timing or the intention of this motion because it is time the parents and teachers of kindergarten children received some reassurance for the start of next year.

It is time the Labor Party put its cards on the table. We do not know what representations this Government has

made to Canberra. I hope they are a little more substantive than those of the Minister of Transport over the airport issue, where obviously there were none made in writing because there was nothing to table in the House. I assume that they have been made and that the Premier and the Minister have reminded Canberra of its obligations to the preschool system in no uncertain terms. If Canberra has given its reply, it is time people knew about it. If it has not, this Government must give a commitment that the \$3.7 million will be available next year—whether it is Commonwealth or State funding. Identification of that needs to be done now so that uncertainty can be eliminated, so that planning for school year 1986 can be undertaken without stress and uncertainty being placed on parents and teachers in the system for the benefit of children who are participating in the school system. That is what we ought to have as a priority. The \$3.7 million will attain that reassurance for them. It needs to be forthcoming and I trust the Government will give a commitment today that it will reach that objective.

**The Hon. J.C. BANNON (Premier and Treasurer):** I have listened carefully to what the Leader of the Opposition has said and I have read the motion before the House. Certainly, as far as the first part of the motion is concerned, I do not disagree at all. In fact, the demand encapsulated in that part of the motion faithfully represents the attitude that has been consistently taken by me, by the Minister of Education, by my Government and by members of our Party since the particular cuts were announced by Treasurer Keating in May this year—consistently, publicly, and in representations to the Federal Government.

So, I have no quarrel with that part of the motion. As to the second part, I am certainly prepared to note it. I said from day one, from the day that these cuts were announced, that we would be looking in terms of our budget preparation to see whether or not and in what way we could ensure that we did not see preschools in South Australia affected adversely by the Federal decision. Having said that, I must say that the motion is singularly ineptly worded by coupling together those two thoughts. I would have thought that if we had a real intention of getting the Federal Government to change its mind (and indeed that has been our strategy consistently) one would not at the same time totally give away one's bargaining position in this area, as the motion does. I just say, 'Thank goodness the Opposition is not negotiating in this manner.'

**Mr Olsen:** Come on!

**The Hon. J.C. BANNON:** 'Come on!', says the Leader of the Opposition. I put to him that if we say to someone, 'It's your responsibility to do this, and we insist you do it but, incidentally, if you don't we will do it,' in what sort of bargaining position are we placed? Our line has consistently been that, with the constraints on our State resources, with the need to offer up tax relief in some areas of our economy, it is going to be very difficult indeed for us to make up that shortfall. But, if we do as the Opposition apparently believes we should do it in a negotiating position, namely, say to the Commonwealth, 'Look, you have said you are going to make these cuts—we think they are wrong; we think you should make up the difference, but if you don't we will be doing it, don't worry about that—the need will still be met,' how would they react? They get back into Cabinet and say, 'That's a good joke, we got away with this one very nicely indeed, because we've effectively cut South Australia's future child care requirement financing by \$3.7 million and we know they will make it up for themselves. That is something we can put off our plate and not worry about again.' What a hopeless way to bargain or negotiate!

In wording the motion in this way, the Leader of the Opposition destroys the very good basis of the first part of the motion, simply conceding it by putting it in the second part. We are confronted with it, and I guess that really underscores the weakness of the bargaining position in these circumstances. I address myself to the substance of the motion itself. What is the record in this area? I suggest, first, that our colleagues opposite do not have anything of which to be terribly proud in the area of preschool allocations.

My colleague the Minister of Education will have one or two things to say about that, but I recall—and I guess somewhat painfully members opposite recall—that in the 1981-82 budget the then Liberal Government (the Cabinet of which consisted of a number of members opposite) proposed to cut back in real terms the level of grants paid to kindergartens by 50 per cent. That was the proposition. It was altered quite rightly in a massive public hue and cry including a major protest on the very steps of Parliament House, eventually forcing a reconsideration of that action by the State Government.

Those who are moving this motion and raising disruption in the community about it do not come here with clean hands in regard to their own record. I give the former Minister of Education his due—he probably argued for the maintenance of funding in the budget, but was obviously overruled by his more powerful colleagues at the time. Well might he whisper to some of his colleagues about it. It would have been a most unhappy time for him, being confronted with a 50 per cent reduction proposal. Fortunately, the cut was restored.

At the federal level also our colleagues opposite do not have too much to say in their favour. What did the Fraser Government do? One of the main reasons we are in the very difficult position we are in today involves action taken by the Fraser Government in the 1970s when it threw out the former Whitlam formulae and effectively and progressively worked to foist the whole responsibility in this area on to the States. The facts are there.

In the late 1970s the block grant for Australia as a whole was pegged at \$33.9 million by the Fraser Liberal Government. The Commonwealth said at the time that it would be the State's responsibility and that it would not be a part of it. In 1975—10 years ago—the South Australian Government met 34 per cent of preschool costs and the Commonwealth 66 per cent. The situation in 1985 has gone to 85 per cent being met by the State with 15 per cent by the Commonwealth. We can look at that in terms of the policies of a Liberal Government on child care at the Federal level. In 1985, under the policy suggested and about which we are protesting, it looks as though we may have to pick up 100 per cent of the tab.

We do not accept that and we are protesting about it, but I believe that the House should remember those figures and who was responsible. A number of members who were around at that time might well say, 'Ah, yes, but we did not support our Federal colleagues in that.' History repeats itself! Let me refer to a motion moved by one of our colleagues in this place, the member for Newland, on 16 August 1978—almost seven years ago to the day:

That this House condemns the Fraser Liberal Government for its callous attitude toward pre-school education as evidenced by its retreat from financial responsibility in this area. It notes that while, on the one hand the Prime Minister seeks to justify present Commonwealth Government policy by stating that pre-school education is a State responsibility, his heavy-handed treatment of the States at the recent Premier's Conference and Loan Council meetings denies them the resources to adequately compensate for the decline in direct Federal funding. It calls upon the Prime Minister to restore Federal funding for pre-schools to the block-grant equivalent of the 75 per cent salary subsidies which were initiated by the Whitlam Labor Government.

That was the motion moved by my colleague the member for Newland, and it was debated and voted on in this place. In fact, did members of the Opposition then in Parliament support that motion as they are suggesting we support this? No! I suggest that they go back and look at the record. They did not support it. On the contrary, the hapless member for Mount Gambier, who was soon to be unfortunately the Minister in charge of this area—Minister of Education (but then a backbencher)—moved an amendment to that motion, as follows:

Leave out all words after 'House' and insert 'commends the Federal Government for the manner in which under its federalism policy it has very substantially increased untied grants to South Australia from \$365 000 000 in 1975-76 to \$560 000 000 in 1978-79, thereby permitting the State Government to exercise its own discretion in setting priorities for the funding of pre-school education'.

That was moved by the man who unfortunately was shortly to become Minister in charge of this area. His policy was that the whole burden should be up to the States and that it was really nothing to do with the Federal Government. Yet, I imagine that he contemplates supporting this motion today. Who else contemplates supporting it? Just reading from the record, do the members for Coles, Chaffey, Hanson, Flinders, Davenport, Alexandra, Light, Fisher, Kavel, Eyre, Glenelg, Victoria, Torrens, and Murray support this motion? All those members—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.C. BANNON:** Yes, listen to them cry now, but they all voted against a motion couched in the same terms as this and in support of an appalling wishy washy amendment that exonerated the Federal Government from any responsibility in this area. How times have changed and how short memories are, I say to the member for Mount Gambier. They are the facts, not only about what was done at the State or Federal level but of our own attitude on this side of the House which has remained consistent, and it shows that those opposite have done a complete double flip, for whatever reason I do not know.

Looking at the record of Governments at the Federal level, I have just outlined Mr Fraser's wretched record in this area, which was supported by members opposite in a vote in this House on the record. Incidentally, those members I did not name, like the Leader of the Opposition, are excused because they were not in the House at the time, but all those members whose names I read out were there and voted against it.

The Hawke Government has moved in this area in a fairly substantial way. Let us not forget that. Also, do not let us forget that in two years of State and Commonwealth Labor Governments we have seen a 60 per cent increase in funds for children's services: we have seen an increase from 4½ to 7½ per cent in the number of children catered for in the range of childhood services and a 50 per cent increase in child care places. They are massive and impressive improvements and, in the context of saying that we do not support what the Federal Government is doing in the child care area, it is only fair to put on record what has been done. That is substantial and in total contrast to what was done by the previous Federal Government and members opposite. I need rest my case only at that point.

Yes, as we have consistently done, we oppose those cut-backs. However, I wish to make another point as regards the hypocrisy and opportunism of the motion. The Government can, with unashamed conscience, support the general terms of the motion, but members opposite are hypocritical because, on the cuts themselves, what was their reaction when the cuts were announced? I came out immediately and said that I was disappointed. Indeed, the newspaper report of my remarks states:

Mr Bannon said he was disappointed also that funds for child care had been cut at a time when South Australia had just rationalised services for preschool children, with the creation of the Children's Services Office. I will be seeking an assurance from Mr Hawke that none of South Australia's planned increases in preschool placements will be jeopardised by these cuts.

That was my reaction. What did the then Leader of the Opposition say? He said that the cuts were largely rhetoric and meant nothing: they did not amount to much. Largely rhetoric! That is how he branded the statement. Yet, now he comes before us and talks about unprecedented cuts in funds. Are they largely rhetoric? I did not think that they were rhetoric, but he did at the time, and so did the Federal Liberal Leader (Mr Peacock), who said:

The supposed cuts made by the Government amount to little more than a trimming of the fat, from the forward estimates as might be normally be expected. It is an exercise in window dressing.

The Opposition cannot have it both ways. Was the Leader of the Opposition correct in saying that it was largely rhetoric and did not mean anything and was his Federal Leader correct in saying it was just trimming off fat? Does he think that these child-care cuts are trimming fat? Alternatively, he says that they are unprecedented cuts. So, I suggest that this is a hypocritical exercise, but I am happy to support the demand that the Commonwealth Government withdraw those unprecedented cuts. I hope it will, but whether it will or not we do not know. However, if it does not, we will look at the situation that confronts us.

**The Hon. MICHAEL WILSON (Torrens):** I should have thought that the Premier today would have paid a little more than lip service to the parents and children of this State. What an extraordinary exhibition we have had from the Premier! He has given us an historical record: indeed, a reading out of *Hansard*. Let me put the record straight at the beginning: no previous Federal Government before the Hawke Government, in the past 10 years, has actually cut preschool funding by 100 per cent. That is what the Hawke Government is doing: cutting preschool funding by 100 per cent. What has occurred in the past (and I have admitted it in this House before) is that Federal Governments of both political colours have not increased it in real terms, but the Hawke Government has been the first to remove it entirely. One must take into account that there have been cuts in child care funding amounting to about the same sum (about \$3 million) and the cuts have been felt in all areas of education: primary, secondary, tertiary and multi-cultural. Of all those cuts the most important is the cut in preschool funding—\$3.7 million.

Let us be sure what this motion is all about. Let us be absolutely positive. It is all about a reduction of 16 per cent to 20 per cent in recurrent funding for preschool education in this State. Yet the Premier or the Minister of Education will not give an assurance that that amount will be restored if the Federal Government does not bring it down in the budget next Tuesday. Mr Mick Young and Mr Peter Duncan have addressed meetings of parents of kindergarten children in the past couple of weeks and they have given those parents precious little hope that that funding will be restored.

The Premier knows that there is very little likelihood of that being restored. Therefore, the Government should come out now and make a statement to alleviate the concerns amongst those in the kindergarten community. The situation is exacerbated by the cuts in child care. We shall refer to that in greater detail at another time. But the situation is exacerbated, because we are talking about the Children's Services Office, which must cover both those amounts. The situation is extraordinarily serious.

In the past week I had the pleasure of talking to some groups of parents with children attending kindergartens, and

I have also received a communication from a group of kindergartens in the member for Semaphore's area. I want to refer to the concerns expressed by people associated with those kindergartens in the Semaphore area. These are not my words but those of parents and teachers associated with those four kindergartens. Incidentally, meetings of people associated with these kindergartens were addressed by Mr Mick Young, and, as I said, he gave them precious little hope. These are the concerns that they have in relation to cuts:

Children and families in general will suffer through increased fees in the neighbourhood of \$65 per child per term. Many parents may well not be able to afford preschool education due to personal commitments. Kindergartens will not be able to expect parents to support fund-raising if they are paying higher fees. This will cause kindergartens to be unable to purchase equipment to fund general maintenance.

Any Government funding and fee-raised money will have to be spent on general running costs, such as art material, toiletries, electricity, water rates, cleaning and cleaners, etc. As a spin-off manufacturers and retailers of educational equipment, general equipment and books will suffer due to the decline in kindergarten purchases, and may well cause some unemployment.

The normal child's general development may well be behind by the time a child starts school, which will disadvantage the child, other children and the teacher. Children with various problems may well not be detected early, or those already diagnosed may not have the necessary assistance. Pre-entry groups of 3½ to 4 year olds may have to be disbanded through extra running costs. Future capital grants projects will suffer, as will funding to new kindergartens. Why doesn't the Government fund five year olds at preschool, when they are funded at schools, although school is not compulsory until six years of age? Will the standard of training colleges be maintained with the funding cut-backs, and what are the prospects for student graduates in early childhood education?

They are not my words, but the words of concerned parents and teachers in the community. This involves a 16 per cent to 20 per cent proposed reduction in the current funding for preschools in South Australia. A few nights ago on television, the Minister of Education said that he could not give a commitment because of other funding cuts that the Federal Government has made. This is the Federal Government that the Premier has just defended. He defended the other funding cuts that the Federal Government has made, and could not give a commitment to restore the \$3.7 million. Instead, the Minister of Education has called a meeting of Education Ministers throughout this country to try to pressure the Federal Government to restoring those funds.

However, the Federal Budget will be presented on Tuesday, so when is the Minister going to have his meeting of Education Ministers from around the country? It is absolutely ridiculous. If the Government wanted to alleviate the fears and concerns of parents of kindergarten children in this State it should immediately state (and I hope that the Minister takes the opportunity) that the \$3.7 million will be restored by the Bannon Government.

**The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD (Minister of Education):** I must say that one of the things that I think it is very important to remember here is exactly what action brings rather than what words bring. I shall deal later in some greater detail with matters concerning the action taken by the former State Liberal Government in respect to preschool education. Any Party which puts itself before the community at a time when an election will be called within three to six months, clearly, must be able to say that what it is proposing will be able to be adhered to, and in so saying it must be able to point to its own record of what it did when it had the chance to be in government.

I will identify what has happened under this State Labor Government with respect to preschool education and also, because the shadow Minister did not, I will identify what

his Government, when it was in office, did for preschool education in this State. I concur entirely with what the Premier said in relation to the motion before us. It is quite correct that this House most deservedly should criticise what the Federal Government has done with respect to cutting out funding for preschool education in Australia. That is a correct motion to move. This Party is consistent. As was mentioned by the Premier, a motion was moved in the late 1970s that took a similar stand. We have a stand of consistency. I point to the inconsistency of the Party opposite on that matter.

*The Hon. Michael Wilson interjecting:*

**The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD:** The shadow Minister attempts to undervalue the comments I made, not just earlier this week but for some time now, with respect to other cuts that were outlined in the mini budget. I do not stand here defending those cuts at all. Those cuts to education should not have taken place, but it is entirely true that we have to examine the impact of all those cuts. Whilst the member for Torrens has made one or two little weak references to some of them from time to time, he has not commented on some of those cuts to education by the Federal Government that we have had to suffer. He could not care less about some of them. He is saying to some areas of the education community that there is nothing to say.

He made reference to my calling this meeting of Ministers of Education and implied that I called it on Monday last: he is wrong on two points. First, it was not called for on Monday last; it was called for on 5 July, and that meeting was not a meeting of Ministers of Education around this country, because it would not have been a particularly edifying meeting had it been so, because the tragedy is that, with respect to early children's services in this country, child care and preschool education, there are so many different ministries responsible for it throughout the nation that, if you called a meeting just of Education Ministers, there would not be a very large turnout of Ministers who were responsible for this area.

What I called was a meeting of all the Ministers responsible for early childhood services in this nation in order to get them together to lay on the table what our stand is on this matter and what our views are in relation to the cut-backs, particularly to preschool education. I promoted that and I have been receiving responses from various Ministers. I was disappointed with the reaction I received from some States, particularly the conservative State of Queensland, which was particularly disinterested in the matter. Queensland recommended that this matter go to a meeting of officers for discussion. As far as I am concerned, that is not good enough. It needs a gathering of all Ministers, talking to all the Federal Ministers responsible, and laying on the table what the impact is going to be.

If the funds were not made up in the State arena, the impact would be devastating on the preschools not only of this State but every State in Australia. That is the point that needs to be talked through. Again, the Premier is absolutely correct: what do you do when you go into a stoush to talk about those sorts of things? Do you tie your hands behind your back and then try and peck at them with your nose and say that that is as much strength as you have left to try to argue your case?

Not only have I called that meeting, but I have also met with the Federal Minister (Hon. Don Grimes), who is responsible for this area. Soon after the cuts were announced, I arranged to meet him in Canberra and represent our point of view. Sadly, the Federal Minister has been seriously ill for a period of time and we have not been able to follow those representations through with him, but in the intervening period I have done so with the acting Minister, the

Hon. Neale Blewett. I am interested to find out exactly what representations were made by this Opposition that chooses, so late in the matter, to raise this issue.

The Opposition talks about the Federal budget next week. I am interested to know why it chose this as the urgent day and not yesterday, the day before or last week. This, apparently, is the urgent day. It chose effectively the last sitting day before the Federal budget is brought down. I think the Opposition is transparent in its cynicism with respect to preschool funding.

The points made and the words spoken about the critical importance of preschool education for the development of children cannot be argued with and I have never done so. My record is clear on that, and anyone who chooses to read not only *Hansard* but any speech I have given inside or outside this place can confirm that that is the case. I have not attempted to convolute myself around funding motions, as the member for Mount Gambier and his colleagues did at the time of that motion in the late 1970s. I have been consistent in my stand in relation to the importance of preschool education, and I made a number of commitments before the last election in regard to that matter.

I will in a moment identify what the track record has brought in terms of State Government commitment to that arena. But I want to make the point that the record of the former Government is not clear. The record of the former Government is not a happy one. As the Premier mentioned, there was the proposal in the 1981-82 budget to cut back in real terms the budget operating grants to preschools in this State. It was not a failure to index the amount that was paid for budget operating grants. They did that in other budgets. It was an absolute real cut in terms of the money paid to preschools. They attempted to brush it up in a bit of a cosmetic affair but it failed, and it failed so seriously that the anxiety level raised in kindergartens was such that parents came in their hundreds out on the steps of Parliament House to protest about the matter.

It was indeed at the time of the Estimates Committee on Education. I went out and addressed them and said what our policy was and what we would do—and I will confirm in a minute how much we have done down the track. As the then shadow Minister I moved a motion that the Estimates Committee delay its proceedings to allow the Minister to go out and explain his position. He did not take up the offer. That cut was so serious, of course, that kindergartens were talking about substantial fee increases having to apply. Some of the kindergartens that wrote to me then said that their fees would have to double, and some said that they would have serious problems maintaining their kindergartens and all kinds of other problems to support the educational programs that they were doing for their children.

Of course, the Government did have to back down on the matter, and finally it had to put that money in. That cut-back was not proposed against a backdrop of the Federal Government's increasing money. On the contrary, because the Federal Government had failed to index the amount that it was paying to the State Government there was a cut-back in those terms as well. The member for Torrens said that no other previous Government has cut by 100 per cent the amount of the preschool block grants. That is true, which is why we are angry about that matter, and why we have taken action on it.

What it amounts to is that in the 1985-86 budget we are coping with a cut of \$1.865 million, and in the 1986-87 budget we will have to cope with a full year's cut of \$3.7 million. In other words, a further \$1.865 million is added to that. I draw the attention of the House to the fact that between 1977-78 and 1978-79 the Federal Government did not cut \$1.865 million, nor did it fail to index the amount

of preschool grants to South Australia. It cut in real terms the sum of \$2 million in 1977 dollars.

That is what it cut then. It was as a result of that that the motion that the Premier read out was moved in this place. They cut a larger sum of money in real terms than has been cut by this Federal Government at this stage. The record was that this Government moved a motion of protest about that but was not supported by the State Opposition, and the record was that later on when that matter came in the budget process the funds at that time were made up.

Let us look at the record over the last three years of this Government. It is important. If the public is to believe and understand what the rhetoric means in a pre-election situation with respect to the next three years of funding in preschool education, I say again that the best thing the public should do is look at what has actually happened under the various Governments in this State. I will now refer to the Kindergarten Union Annual Report that I tabled in this House a little while ago, and interestingly enough not referred to by the honourable member because, of course, it identifies what this Government has actually achieved.

As to enrolments in the Kindergarten Union—not child-parent centres, because I acknowledge that I have not those figures with me but I will certainly provide them for anyone—he did not identify CPC separately. In 1982 there were 15 937 four to five year olds and above five year olds in preschools in this State. In 1984 the figure was 14 300—a drop of 1 600 students—in preschools. What is the reaction of the Liberal Party to things like that? Its reaction to a drop in the enrolment of students is to cut staff. I am absolutely certain, given their track record with education and teachers in this State between 1979 and 1982, that a drop in enrolments in preschools would have resulted in a cut in staff.

Did this Labor Government do that? On the contrary! The annual report shows that not only were staff not cut, but in fact there was a marginal increase in the total number of staff from 749.1 to 751.4—an increase against a backdrop of a 1 600 enrolment decline within the preschools of this State. The other point to be made concerns what happened to preschool staff/child ratios under the former Government compared to what happened under this Government. Again, I cite the annual report of the Kindergarten Union, because it is a pertinent document to identify what has happened over recent years.

In the first year of the former Liberal Government the ratio was 10.8 to 1. Our goal before the last election was to bring it down to 10 to 1. By the time they had finished in 1982 the ratio was 12.4 to 1. The former Government had run down the system and made staffing ratios worse. I went to the election with a policy of bringing it back to 10.1, which I acknowledge we have not achieved, but we have brought it down to 11.2 to 1. We have made a significant improvement, despite continuing financial troubles in this State over the last three years. We have progressed rather than regressed.

So, I suggest that it is from that sort of position of strength that we have been going to the Federal Government and criticising what it has been doing with preschool funding. Preschool funding committed by the State Government of South Australia has increased in real terms in every budget introduced in this House. Nobody can deny those figures. We have in fact increased other areas which the former Government is saying, belatedly, are important areas. The Opposition is at least now giving credence to such areas as special services support, which we promised to double in the preschool sector. After the first two budgets, we have progressed along that way and further reports will be made available in the budget to be brought down this month.

What is our record? The public of South Australia should understand the extent to which we have a commitment to preschool education in South Australia as proof that we will battle as much as we can to do what we can for preschool children in this State. We will battle it out with the Federal Government to have the money put back and examine, as the Premier stated, what will happen in the light of certain eventualities.

We face a serious situation. I do not want to be spare in my criticism of what happened in the mini-budget, as it was serious and it deserves to be condemned. It means that every single dollar that the State Government makes up of that cutback is money that was available to improve preschool education in this State to do such things as bring back the staffing ratio to 10 to 1 and improve special education. Every dollar that makes up that 1. 865 in a half year or 3.7 in a full year is a dollar not available for improved services: it is a dollar that helps move towards holding the line. That is why it is important that we take up this matter and have been doing so with the Federal Government and that we do not tie our hands behind our back as this motion would have us do.

We must compare the records in the face of cutbacks. Under the Liberal Federal Government we saw cutbacks in real terms greater than the amount in real dollars being suffered now, and this Opposition supported that. We are now opposing as a Government—as we opposed the cutbacks then—the cutbacks taking place federally now.

This Opposition is choosing to take a different stance and hoping the electorate will believe it. I hope the electorate takes the time to study the facts before it. Preschool education in South Australia serves many children very well indeed. We have better services than other States have, but we have a lot to do and a lot further to go. The fact that there are still children who do not have four sessions of preschool and do not have access to preschool education is a pity.

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

**The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Let us dispose of this nonsense that has been churned out by the Premier and mimicked by his Minister of Education in relation to having their hands tied behind their backs and weakening their negotiating stance. What sort of confidence has the Premier's backbencher, the member for Henley Beach, got in his Leader and his negotiating stance? This is what was reported less than a week ago:

State Labor MP has called on the Bannon Government to make up the \$3.7 million Federal cut in funding to South Australian kindergartens.

The Bannon Government, mark you! The Premier is condemning us for saying his Government should make good the money if the feds do not. How much confidence does his backbencher have in the Premier's ability to negotiate with Canberra and have a win? I would think that the member for Henley Beach, along with his two Federal colleagues—Young and Duncan—know what the score is. They know all this posturing by the Premier of carrying the fight to Canberra, where his mate of orange flower water fame now operates. They know just what the Premier's negotiating skills have been. We, along with the member for Henley Beach, know just what the Premier's track record is for taking on his comrades in Canberra, and having a win. It has cost this State very dearly indeed as a result of election promises broken by this unscrupulous Administration in Canberra.

They have gone back on their promises, and I will give two quick instances: first, the promise of no wine tax; and secondly, the promise to build a railway to Darwin. The

Premier took that up with what success? No wonder the member for Henley Beach (the former State President of the ALP) has not the slightest confidence in his Premier's negotiating skill. So much today for their regarding this motion as garbage, when the Premier seeks to condemn the Opposition for suggesting that, if his negotiations with Canberra (which appear to have been non-existent up to now) are not successful, they should come good. That is not how his backbench feels. So, just what is he on about?

One of the problems with the Labor Government here and with this loquacious Minister of Education, in particular, is that their memories are very poor indeed. The fact is that the Liberal Administration, through the member for Mount Gambier, instituted some significant gains in the area of preschool education. In fact, no cuts were made: at no stage was a cut even contemplated of the size of that inflicted on kindergartens in this State.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY:** I happen to know what the figure was; in fact, a cut did not occur. The Labor Party was on a different footing then: its members were squealing like stuck pigs, but the cut did not occur. That was the end result and that is the position we are in at the moment.

We instituted a program for 3½-year-olds that this Minister has virtually abandoned. It is very good to have a hazy memory when it comes to details about what happened under previous Administrations. The plain facts are these: never has a cut of this magnitude been inflicted by any Federal Government in the last decade, and never has a Labor Government in this State been so tardy in coming to grips with this problem. We have this pedantic Minister of Education making a big debating point about the fact that my colleague mentioned that we had called a meeting of Ministers of Education. He said, 'That's not right; they were Ministers of kindergarten education,' or whatever they are called. What a contribution to the debate!

The point is that they have not met or done anything. But what a pedantic, pathetic, weak, miserable point to try to make. That is about the strength of the Minister's contribution to this debate. It is no wonder that he did not move up the line when he sought preferment. His colleagues are awake to him too. The Labor Party, with its Christmas stocking full of promises to which I referred last evening, were very fulsome regarding preschool education, as they always are come election time, but not when it comes to delivery. Regarding preschools, the Labor Party said:

Believing that preschool education is not an exercise in baby sitting but a fundamental foundation stone in a child's further education, Labor will maintain the progress achieved.

That refers to the progress achieved by the immediately preceding Liberal Government. However, what did the Labor Government do? It cut out the 3½ year old program, and now it is dithering around wondering what it will do in the light of yet another broken promise made by its hapless counterpart in Canberra. What an appalling record! The Premier sought to make light of it and talked about the enormous fight he would put up, but I hope that he has a little more in his veins than orange flower water; and that he has convinced his Federal colleague (Mr Peter Duncan) that that is so.

What was his reaction? He sought to talk it down, not talk it up. In reply to a question in this place he said, in effect, that it was only small and that we should not be worrying about it. On 15 May, he said:

I point out that in the education sector certainly aspects of education funding by the Commonwealth did suffer and the State will obviously have to look seriously at the implications of that. Of course, that is the case but, according to the figures we have, the cuts there were of the order of 1.5 per cent. Of all those areas

that were cut as part of that package, education is one of the smallest.

Here he is apologising, as he has done so often, for his hapless colleagues in Canberra. Here is this man who says, 'We can't have this second part of the motion because it weakens our negotiating power with Canberra.' However, when faced with these cuts in May, he said that they were relatively small and that other sectors had suffered much more. What a sham by this hapless Premier and this hapless Minister of Education, to get up here and condemn this motion.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY:** I enjoy the discomfiture of members opposite: it is a source of pleasure and consolation to me to know that one can at least prick skins that are mostly thicker than those of a crocodile and that one can manage to get under those skins and prick the conscience of members opposite who, blatantly, are prepared to make promises only to break them. Again, we have an example of this. I believe that we should now hear from the member for Henley Beach. Let him get up and justify what he has said publicly. If anyone is to support the motion, he must, or else he made a liar of himself last Sunday.

**Mr FERGUSON (Henley Beach):** It is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity to support the kindergartens in my district. Those members who have followed my career (and members opposite seem to follow it more closely than anyone else) will know that I have spoken three times in this House on child care in my district. Kindergartens and child care are closely aligned subjects. If I have time, I will explain that statement and, if I have not, I will explain it later.

I know the record of the Liberal Party in this matter because, as a Parliamentary candidate in 1979 and 1982, I was aware of the campaign that the Liberal Party was putting up for cuts for kindergartens in Henley Beach. Indeed, the then Liberal member for Henley Beach was apologising for what his Government was doing. We were then talking about cuts of \$400 000 when the Tonkin Government, with the member for Mount Gambier as Minister of Education, was talking about it as a slight reduction! Therefore, let us not hear about the efforts of the Liberal Party in the field of child care, because its record has been absolutely miserable. I have talked much about child care in the Henley Beach District, because of the money introduced into this field by the Federal Labor Government, whereas none was introduced by the Fraser Government.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Will the honourable member please resume his seat. I call the honourable member for Mount Gambier to order. I call all honourable members to order. The next breach by an honourable member will result in a warning, and members know the consequences from there.

**Mr FERGUSON:** I agree with the present Minister of Education when he says that the mini budget deserves condemnation. There is no argument about that: both sides agree on that. The first part of the motion is something on which we all agree. I was pleased to hear the Premier say that he noted the second part of the motion. A letter from Federal members that has been circulating in my district states:

It has been widely acknowledged that preschool education is a State responsibility.

What a load of nonsense! No-one on this side acknowledges that it is totally a State responsibility. I am glad to see that the Minister of Education has called for talks on this matter. My district has been bypassed to some extent in the matter

of child care. I find this difficult to understand because, apart from the Munno Para and Port Lincoln council areas, the Henley and Grange council area has the greatest number of children in the under four year age group. I have been calling constantly for this fact to be recognised and I have been disappointed by the response to my calls for funding in this and other directions. A press report on a submission by the Henley and Grange council to the Social Security Department states:

Although council confirmed there were several child care services available in the area, including kindergartens, play groups, baby-sitting co-operatives and informal day care networks, it did not believe these were sufficient.

If the proposed cuts go ahead, more pressure will be put on the kindergartens in my district. One kindergarten that at present is seeking to expand is the Barbara Kiker and the parents of the children there must raise \$20 000. I should not like to see any further pressure put on them.

**Mr ASHENDEN (Todd):** I am pleased to be able to address myself to the motion. I hope that in the few minutes at my disposal I can convince the Government that it is not history in which the parents of children in my kindergartens are interested: they are interested in what is happening now. They cannot understand why a Government in control of the State cannot assure them that the \$3.7 million funding that has been removed cannot be replaced. They do not care whether the money comes from a Federal or from a State Government. They are stretched to their limit. Their fund raising abilities have been pushed so far that they can go no further. They want an assurance from the Government that the money will be made up to them because they know that, unless the funds are found, their children will be unable to get the standard of education that is their right. The parents of the children in my district are worried and genuinely angry. Money has been taken away from them by a Labor Government and, at this stage, no Labor Government will give a firm commitment that it will restore the funding. However, the Liberal Party has stated categorically that it will, when elected, make up the money. These are the words that my parents want to hear from this Government.

If the Minister and his colleagues had close contact with the kindergartens in this State (as I have had with those in my electorate) they would know that kindergartens have very limited sources of funding, and to have 20 per cent of that funding removed in one fell swoop is just too much. Parents have pointed out to me that a certain number of things must occur. It may be that the number of teachers will have to be reduced, or the kindergartens may have to raise fees, and there are many other unpleasant alternatives. They are afraid that if the number of teachers is reduced the standard of education available for the children will drop. Further, if fees go up, many parents will be unable to afford to keep their children at kindergarten, and many parents have told me this.

Most of the parents to whom I have spoken are from one income families, struggling to pay off a mortgage on their new homes. How can they be expected to pick up an extra \$65 a term for a child attending kindergarten? One mother told me on Monday night that she has two children at kindergarten. That would cost an extra \$130 a term, and she could not afford to pay that. What does she do? Does she pull out one child and leave the other one there? These are the people who want answers, not rhetoric, as we had from the Minister of Education about things that happened X years ago. These people want to know what will happen to them now; they want to be told that the money will be made up so that they can keep their children at kindergarten,

thus enabling their children to obtain the education that is their right.

**Mr KLUNDER (Newland):** I have spoken consistently against a reduction of Federal responsibility in this area, and I will do it again. I want to draw attention to the Liberal Party's record in this matter. In 1976 Mrs Molly Byrne moved: 'That the House express its satisfaction with the 75 per cent funding arrangement for teacher salaries, and note its concern that the Commonwealth is about to renegotiate that agreement.' The member for Fisher replied by saying that we really should wait until something had happened: in other words, that we should not do anything until it was too late. However, better counsel prevailed in the Liberal Party at that time, and Liberal Party members eventually agreed with Mrs Molly Byrne's motion. In 1978 they opposed my motion on exactly the same topic, and they are now arguing again in an opposite direction. It is a matter of straight-out political expediency. Members opposite will chase votes in any given direction under any sort of motion whatsoever, and they do not give a darn about what has happened previously.

The member for Todd has just said that the parents in his electorate do not care what happened in the past. That is what the Liberal Party is working on. It does not matter what they say now or how they contradict themselves, as long as they are chasing the illusory vote. They do not care how they get it, and it does not matter whether they are consistent or not, or about what they say, as long as it looks to be effective in the short term. I think that children in this State are being used as a political football by the Liberal Party, which has no regard for being consistent or for the kids in this State. It cares only about gaining votes at the next election.

**Mr BAKER (Mitcham):** We have had to listen to the diatribe of members opposite. The Liberal Party does care about kids, which is why we have already put out our policy. We have indicated already that we intend to support the kindergartens in this State. Let us not hear from members opposite that we are playing politics. The Government would have told the kindergartens that it would make up that difference of \$3.7 million which was not made up by the Federal Government. In relation to the Federal budget, the ink is well and truly dry, and it is too late to do anything about it. The Government has had since the time when the mini-budget was brought down to attempt to have that decision reversed. So much for the rhetoric of members opposite in relation to such things as not wanting to have the State's bargaining position ruined.

The Premier has not won one fight in Canberra since he became Premier, and he is not likely to do so, because he is quite willing to go cap in hand every time and accept the umpire's verdict, the umpire being the Prime Minister. The Premier has no determination, and is recognised as backing down from issues important to the State. The Premier does what he is told. He has not shown the people of South Australia that he can lead the State in the way that the people of South Australia want. He has not indicated that he or the Minister of Education have got the guts or determination or whatever to be able—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member will refer to other honourable members by their district or title.

**Mr BAKER:** The record is clear: on every occasion the Government has failed to stand up for the State. On this occasion it failed to say that it did not want its negotiating position to be in any way undermined by committing resources from this State. Now it is too late. They know that they should now be telling the kindergartens that they will have to make up the shortfall in funds, although the



Government should have been able to express to the kindergartens that it cares for the children of this State.

**Mr Becker:** The Government is letting future generations down.

**Mr BAKER:** Yes. When listening to members opposite talk about what—

**Mr Groom:** What is your policy?

**Mr BAKER:** We have already announced our policy; members opposite have seen our policy on kindergartens.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The time for the debate has now expired.

Motion withdrawn.

### JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE PARLIAMENT

**The Hon. B.C. EASTICK (Light):** brought up the report of the Joint Select Committee on the Administration of the Parliament together with minutes of proceedings and evidence, and moved:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

**The Hon. B.C. EASTICK:** I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion carried.

**The Hon. B.C. EASTICK:** I move:

That the report be noted.

On the occasion of delivering this report to the House I shall make some brief remarks. Members of the Select Committee from this House were the Hons J.D. Wright, (the then Deputy Premier), the Speaker, Mr Gunn (the member for Eyre), and me. Due to the unfortunate illness of the former Deputy Premier, and with the constitutional requirement that the Speaker of the House is unable to lay on the report, it falls to me to do so. I am pleased to be able to bring the report to the House. The Select Committee met over a considerable time to develop this report. Earlier, there was a series of meetings in the early 1980s to determine a method of consideration of the rights of public servants who were appearing before Parliamentary committees.

There was a perceived need to lay down some guidelines so that the responsibilities of individuals to the committee could be fulfilled as well as providing an element of protection for those people. At the conclusion of the discussions a report was laid on and that has been followed. With the changes to the Supreme Court Act, the *Hansard* service provided in this House was attached to the Attorney-General's Department, and it became apparent that it did not rest easily in that role. With the changed circumstances, the question arose as to whether there was a means of incorporating *Hansard* as a division of the House structure.

Discussion took place over a wide range of industrial and personnel activities associated with Parliament House. A group from the Public Service Board provided a consultancy to a committee which was set up and which involved the Presiding Officers and representatives of both Houses of Parliament. Over an extended period of time the consultants, having received evidence from members, the committee, staff and staff union organisations, brought down a report about which action was contemplated. However, because of changing circumstances and an election, and also the expression of some concern by individuals within the parliamentary system as to how some of those determinations had been arrived at, the matter lapsed for some time.

There was a clear indication in the report which was handed down by the committee and circulated widely to members of the House and to staff that there were grave

difficulties, particularly with the industrial aspects of employment within the parliamentary precincts. It identified that there were 10 employing bodies within the structure of the parliamentary system and only three of them were legitimate in the sense of having final authority to employ the persons whom they employed.

At that time we also had the experience of a workers compensation case involving a member of the House staff. As was that person's right, the matter was taken to court. On that occasion the learned judge, for almost a day and a half, took evidence which suggested that he may be precluded from giving consideration to workers compensation for an employee, because he might be deemed to be interfering with the privilege of Parliament. Notwithstanding that a certificate was issued by myself as your predecessor, Sir, in the role of Speaker, to the court, there was still a question mark as to whether the court might subsequently be found to have interfered with the privilege of Parliament.

To my knowledge, every member of staff who has been employed within the parliamentary system throughout the years has always received due benefits from employment. If there were any problems associated with compensation, leave, other entitlements, damages or anything else, they were always met. There is no suggestion whatsoever that the Parliament has been in dereliction of its duties to its staff in relation to those matters.

However, there was this unanswered question of law which made it somewhat difficult to demonstrate that the position was legitimate and that their employment was totally legitimate, as well as the question relating to the benefits which would arise therefrom.

Superimposed over those preliminary discussions, and then as the report will show the subsequent discussions which the Select Committee now reporting has had, was a recognition of the supremacy of the Parliament, or more specifically of the two Houses, in so far as their own destiny is concerned. The Westminster system as we embrace it (and as it has evolved through the years) makes very clear that the Parliament is the body charged with making the laws and that it is not for other outside bodies to interfere with that law-making or supreme position. Notwithstanding that there was a clear indication that the Parliament is a body which has made the laws, it is also a body which must obey the laws, but the method of approach by which it obeys them may be structured a little differently as a result of the supreme power of the Parliament.

The report which has been laid down recognises that fact and, indeed, the Bill which is attached to the report also recognises that an action taken by the Industrial Court, an action taken under the Workers Compensation Act, or an action taken by the Equal Opportunity Commissioner, should be forwarded via the Presiding Officer or collectively the Presiding Officers of the Parliament, to bring to fruition the decision that that outside body may wish to make.

It is clearly laid down in the report that the committee expects due weight and consideration to be given to any certification or indeed any order of those bodies, and that the Presiding Officer(s) would give due regard to those certificates or orders.

If I might very quickly draw members' attention to various aspects of the report as presented, it begins with the introduction which identifies the method by which the Select Committee was created. There is an indication of the conduct of the inquiry, that is, the methodology. We then move to the deliberations of the committee. I refer members specifically to the deliberations which appear at pages 2 and 3 of the report. Referring to a small part of that section, it states:

In its deliberations the committee considered the question of the supremacy of the Parliament and the relationship of that doctrine to other issues. On the one hand under the Constitution

of the State and in accordance with the Westminster style and system of government there is no doubt that the Parliament is and must be the supreme law-making authority.

I stress the next point:

This notion is essential to the very democratic process itself.

I do not think that that point can be argued with. The report continues:

Without that unquestioned supremacy then the Executive, or for that matter any number of bodies vested with differing jurisdictions, could conceivably challenge the basic wishes of the people. It must always be remembered that it is the people who, by their vote, establish the Houses of the Parliament and that through their elected legislators chosen by the people the Executive Government is created and continually controlled.

I do not need to enter into an argument as to the control of the Executive. That is a matter about which argument will continue for a long period of time. It is the philosophy of that view to which I draw the attention of members of the House. The report continues.

In order that this basic principle be upheld—and upheld it must be—it follows that the Parliament, in each of its Houses, must have certain privileges. One of these privileges must be, and always has been in modern times in democratic nations, immunity of the Parliament from control by outside bodies, no matter whether those bodies are established directly under the Constitution or not. Hence it follows that Parliament cannot, without certain absolute privileges, be made subject to the orders of courts and tribunals. It can be seen on reflection that without this principle, democracy, and hence the wishes of the people, are placed at risk.

I believe that members of both political persuasions who served on the committee, members of both Houses, accepted that that was the basic principle and tenet under which the determination should be made. The report states:

However, it must be said that Parliament, having made the laws, must be seen to abide by them.

I have already indicated that it has in the past and I believe they will continue to do so in the future.

A series of recommendations is set out from page 3 to page 6 of the report. Those recommendations are the basis of the Bill which the Minister in due course will present for consideration and which will be debated if necessary. The recommendations cover a multitude of responsibilities which exist within the parliamentary system and the different areas of operation.

It creates the three major subdivisions of the parliamentary system: that which is the Reporting Service, that which is the Library and that which is the Service Branch. We fully recognise that there are two other major contributors to the whole parliamentary family: the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council. Under the normal Westminster system the individuality of the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council does give them a certain privileged position, one to the other and each against the other three service divisions.

Whilst it was originally planned and suggested in the first report that there should be a grouping of effort by the five divisions—not only the three that are now encompassed within the main framework of the Bill—there is nonetheless the creation of an advisory group that will embrace the five divisions.

I refer to the statement on page 5 where another part of the Bill is concerned with achieving equitable working and industrial conditions for all the staff at Parliament House, attempting to establish consistent management principles throughout the Parliament. This is done by directing the committee to consult with and make recommendations to the President and the Speaker on appropriate matters and by establishing a committee of the Clerk of the Legislative Council, the Clerk of the House of Assembly and the three Chief Officers of the Joint Parliamentary Service that will be able to make recommendations as to the management and working conditions of all staff in the Parliament.

If there is a criticism of the work of the committee it would be that it was unable to achieve perhaps more strength in that aspect of its deliberations. However, the progress that has been made is worthy progress. It leads the way, and I hope most fervently that it will eventually lead to amendments that will strengthen the resolve of all members of the parliamentary family so that those matters affecting staff and personnel will be taken up in a positive way, first, from the advisory group and, if necessary, subsequently as a recognised group.

The general committee to be organised will be empowered to make rules to assist in the management of staff and the provision of services. Those rules exist in a fragmented way at present. More is the pity that the length of time that we have had to apply to the finalisation of this committee report probably worked against some of those rules having been sorted out in recent times.

I believe that the deliberations of the committee, with membership from both sides, will achieve much for the parliamentary system in this State. Certainly, I support the commendation given in the report to members of staff who serviced the committee and to the other persons who provided evidence to it.

On your behalf, Mr Speaker, because of the position you hold, I draw the attention of members to the contribution that you have made more recently as the Acting Chairman of the group through the inadvertent illness of the former Deputy Premier, who was the designated Chairman. I commend the report and the noting of it to the House.

**The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD (Deputy Premier):** I second the motion and compliment the member for Light on his admirable summary of the matters that we will be inviting the House to consider further next week. Honourable members will be aware that appended to the report is legislation that this House will be asked to consider following the normal processes of members being able to take the document home over the weekend to have a really good look at it and consider the merits of the recommendations from the Select Committee.

I do not wish to speak at any length on this matter, except to simply place the report in the context of two principles or problems that have exercised the minds of honourable members from time to time. One is the relationship of the Parliament and its methods and procedures to what happens outside and to the law of the land in general. Obviously, not as individuals but as keepers of a democratic tradition, we would want to ensure that these inalienable principles as we would see them are not in any way affected by legislation such as this.

At the same time we would also want to concede that we live in the last quarter of the twentieth century where people's appreciation of industrial matters and of the laws of the land, as they apply to matters such as equal opportunity, has evolved considerably since this place was first set up or, indeed, since the most recent change to the procedures under which we operate.

I believe that the Select Committee has had a difficult task in ensuring that, on the one hand, the new spirit of the times is reflected in what we do here without in any way derogating from the basic principles of Parliament's being its own master—not again, I repeat, because of the individuals involved but because of the positions to which they have been elected for the time by the people.

The second matter with which the Select Committee obviously has had to grapple involves the relationship between the two Houses. I would not want to open up any old wounds but, having been here for 15 years, it would be reasonable for me to suggest that from time to time there have been strains in the administration of Parliament as a

whole between the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council. In fact, at times in the past there have been strains between Presiding Officers and between their staffs. It would seem to me that the spirit that is abroad at present is probably as good as, if not better than, anything we have experienced here for a long time, which is why we are reasonably optimistic about a successful outcome to the legislation that the House will be invited to consider next week.

However, there have been these strains at times. There has been from time to time unnecessary duplication of function because each House is seen as having a particular preserve—a line that it would rule—and people were not to step over that line. The Select Committee also has had to grapple with that matter of the position of the two Houses and it has come up with recommendations that honourable members will be invited to consider within a few days.

There is a degree of urgency involved in this matter. It has been discussed for a long time. The Select Committee has been made aware of the fact that there are important matters that have to be resolved and placed before members' colleagues in both Houses as soon as possible. In seconding the motion of the member for Light I commend to all members a speedy passage of the legislation.

Mr M.J. EVANS secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### SOUTH AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD (Deputy Premier) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the South Australian Heritage Act, 1978, and to repeal the South Australian Heritage Act Amendment Act, 1979. Read a first time.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: I move:

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

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

Leave granted.

#### Explanation of Bill

The South Australian Heritage Act, 1978, provides for the identification and conservation of the cultural and natural heritage of the State. To this end the Act requires the Minister to keep a Register of State Heritage Items. No item on the Register may be demolished, converted, altered or added to without the consent of the relevant planning authority, usually the local council. Any application for such consent must be referred to the Minister responsible for the South Australian Heritage Act, 1978, for his recommendation and the planning authority must take any representations by the Minister into account in reaching a decision. Recent amendments to the Planning Act, 1982, now require the planning authority where it is a local council to seek the concurrence of the South Australian Planning Commission to decisions affecting an item on the Register. This matter was introduced in the last session of Parliament but lapsed due to Parliament being prorogued.

Experience over the past five years in the administration of the Act has demonstrated that certain amendments are necessary. Some are substantive amendments to provide more effective means of protecting heritage items in situations where planning controls do not provide a sufficient level of protection, while others are machinery amendments to make the operation of the existing law more effective.

The amendments proposed have been reviewed by the South Australian Heritage Committee which has endorsed

the provisions as desirable and necessary for the effective management of the State's heritage. The major amendments proposed have been referred to in parliamentary debates and public statements from time to time and the major interest groups have supported moves to more adequately protect the State's heritage. The amendments to this Act together with the recent amendments to the heritage provisions of the Planning Act, 1982, are part of a package of responses to the public concern about the need for effective management controls in respect of the State's heritage.

The major amendment contained in this Bill provides for the declaration of a conservation order covering the whole or part of a registered heritage item (including an item on the interim list) or the whole or part of a declared State Heritage Area. At the present time the only protection available for places on the Register of State Heritage Items or State Heritage Areas is that which operates under the Planning Act, 1982, where development of an item is proposed. This mode of protection depends solely on an owner wanting to undertake a development, however, the actions of owners are not the only threats to heritage items and areas. Experience has shown that more positive measures are required for items which are ruins, archaeological sites and historic monuments. Fossicking, deliberate excavation in search of relics, destruction and vandalism are major problems at such sites and cannot be effectively managed through development control procedures.

The Bill provides for the Minister in consultation with the South Australian Heritage Committee and the owner or any other interested person to declare a conservation order to apply to a heritage item or area. The Bill also provides for an urgent declaration of a conservation order which would apply for a maximum period of six months unless confirmed or revoked sooner, in which case the consultative provisions will apply after the order issues. The discovery of important heritage sites or the emergence of new threats to a registered heritage item or declared State Heritage Area may require prompt action to provide immediate protection.

Flowing from the power of the Minister to declare a conservation order the Bill provides for the making of regulations for the prohibition and restriction of destructive activities and the appointment of inspectors to enforce these provisions. The Bill also provides for the Minister to issue permits to any person authorising that person to act in contravention of the regulations. In this way protection will be available for those sensitive and fragile heritage sites located in the more remote parts of our State. The consultative process provided for in the Bill will ensure that except in very special cases the act of providing this higher level of management control over a heritage item or area will be done in collaboration with the land owners and managers. The other amendments contained in the Bill are in the nature of machinery changes. This is the first time since the inception of the South Australian Heritage Act, 1978, that such amendments have been put forward.

The Bill provides for the use of the word "environmental" rather than "physical" throughout the Act and the standardisation of the ambit of significance as including "aesthetic, architectural, historical, cultural, archaeological, technological or scientific" matters of interest. It has been found that the word "physical" was not readily understood as including the natural features of and associated with the land. The word "environmental" is commonly understood to include such natural features. As greater knowledge has been gained over the last five years it has become evident that heritage significance can derive from a variety of different characteristics of an item or area. The use of a standard description of the components from which heritage significance is

derived will ensure that the ambit of the law is clearly defined and easily understood.

The Bill provides for the entry of a heritage item on the interim list without first issuing a public notice where it is necessary to provide immediate protection through the urgent declaration of a conservation order. This will enable immediate protection to be given to possible heritage items where there is some imminent threat to their destruction. In the event that a heritage item is entered on the interim list in this way the Bill provides that the Minister must immediately take proceedings to enter the item on the Register. This requires the issue of a public notice and the consideration of written objections. In the event that subsequent research indicates that an item ought not to be placed on the Register, both the interim listing and the conservation order will cease to apply.

The Bill provides for the functions of the South Australian Heritage Committee to be amended to accord with the new functions related to conservation orders, and to enable the committee to provide advice to the Minister on matters or things which the committee believes the Minister should receive advice on rather than those things about which the Minister seeks advice. It also provides for the committee's responsibility to advise on the declaration of State Heritage Areas to be recognised in the functions of the committee. Finally the Bill provides for the payment of a prescribed fee for a copy of the Register of State Heritage Items or Register of Heritage Agreements or any extract from those registers. People will continue to be able to inspect the registers free of charge. The Bill provides for errors in the description of items contained in the register to be corrected by publication of an appropriate public notice and for the Minister in his capacity as trustee of the State Heritage (the Corporation) to delegate his functions and powers. These changes will ensure more effective administration of the legislation.

The Bill provides for the repeal of Act No. 12 of 1979, which provided for shipwrecks to be items of the State's heritage. This Act has never been proclaimed and the passage of the Historic Shipwrecks Act, 1981, made it redundant. South Australia's heritage legislation is held in high regard by other States and has been effective in ensuring that there is an appropriate mechanism for realising the communities aspirations for heritage conservation. It is also widely regarded because of its integration with planning law, which means that the community's often divergent interests in both heritage conservation and development can be resolved. The amendments effected by this Bill will improve the effectiveness of the administration of this legislation and will ensure that it provides adequate protection for our heritage.

Clauses 1 and 2 are formal. Clause 3 makes a consequential amendment to the long title to the principal Act. Clause 4 makes a consequential amendment. Clause 5 amends section 4 of the principal Act. Clause 6 amends section 8 of the principal Act. These amendments expand the functions of the South Australian Heritage Committee. The category of State heritage previously given the term "physical" will now be given the term "environmental". This term more accurately describes what is intended. New paragraph (c) of section 8 (1) enables the committee to give unsolicited advice to the Minister.

Clause 7 amends section 12 of the principal Act. Paragraph (b) adds archaeological, technological and scientific categories as qualification for registration. Subsection (2) is replaced with a provision that allows the Minister to correct an error in the description of an item in the register. Clause 8 amends section 13 of the principal Act. Paragraph (c) inserts a new provision that will allow the Minister to revoke the designation of an area as a State Heritage Area.

Clause 9 replaces subsection (1) of section 15 of the principal Act with two new subsections. Paragraph (b) of new subsection (1) allows the Minister to place an item on the interim list before the publication of notice under section 12 where he wants to take immediate action to protect the item by making an order under new section 22. Where he does this subsection (1a) requires him to immediately take proceedings under the Act to register the item. Clause 10 replaces section 16 of the principal Act with a provision that requires the payment of a fee for copies of the register or the interim list. Clause 11 brings section 16a into conformity with other provisions of the principal Act.

Clause 12 makes an amendment similar to that made by clause 10. Clause 13 makes a consequential amendment to section 18 of the principal Act. Clause 14 inserts a provision that will allow the Trustee of the State Heritage to delegate its functions and powers.

Clause 15 inserts new Part V into the principal Act. This Part will enable the Minister to bring an item or a State heritage area under the protection of regulations made under Division II. Before making an order for this purpose the Minister must give the land owner, any other interested person and the committee the opportunity to make representations in relation to the proposal (section 21 (2)). An exception to this requirement will exist in matters of urgency (section 22) in which case the Minister must give the same groups an opportunity to comment before he confirms the order. New section 25 provides for the making of protective regulations. Division III inserts standard provisions in relation to inspectors. Clause 16 repeals the South Australian Heritage Act Amendment Act, 1979. This Act amended the definition of 'Item' to include shipwrecks but was never proclaimed because of the enactment of the Historic Shipwrecks Act, 1981.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON** secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY

Adjourned debate on motion for adoption.  
(Continued from 14 August. Page 309.)

**The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD (Chaffey):** I take this opportunity to indicate my support for the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply and, in so doing, to paragraph 19 of His Excellency's speech, in which he states:

The proper management of the State's water resources has historically been a major concern within South Australia. My Government has been negotiating with the Government of Victoria concerning an agreement for the equitable sharing of the ground water resources through which the border between our two States passed. These negotiations have reached a stage which will enable legislation to be introduced in the coming session to ratify the agreement which has been concluded.

I am very pleased to see that the present Government has continued with the negotiations between Victoria and South Australia, because members of the House would be well aware that negotiations were commenced during the time of the previous Liberal Government to achieve exactly that. It is an important agreement in that a great deal of conflict can occur as a result of excessive use by either of two parties sharing a common resource.

While we have an underground water resource running down the Victorian/South Australian border on which the agricultural areas are very much dependent, if either of the States were to make excessive demands on that resource it could substantially affect the rights of the other party. That has occurred in other countries, a good example of which is the conflict that developed between the United States of

America and Mexico, along the international boundary between those two countries. In that instance there was excessive use of the common resource by one party which clearly put the other party at a disadvantage. It took many years to resolve that situation.

I am pleased to see that, before this situation arises in Australia, an agreement has been reached between Victoria and South Australia for the sensible utilisation of that resource, because not only does it need to be shared but it needs to be assessed and the overall capacity of that resource to maintain adequate supply to both parties over a long period has to be made before the demand becomes excessive. His Excellency, in paragraph 19, continued:

Work has also commenced on the completion of a comprehensive South Australian Water Resources Management Plan. The plan has as its objective the proper use and management of the State's water resources for the greatest benefit to the community.

That item is a direct lift-out from the Liberal Party's water resources policy of 1982. We do not know what was the present Government's policy at that time: it never had a water resources policy, or if it did it never made it public and to date the public has never seen such a policy from this Government. That item is still contained within the Liberal Party's water resources policy and it is an essential ingredient for the effective and proper use of South Australia's resources now and in the future.

We have, as all honourable members would be aware, the Murray River resource which is contributing greatly to the development of South Australia and providing agricultural, stock, industrial and domestic water, particularly in metropolitan Adelaide and the cities of the Iron Triangle. Without proper and effective management of that resource, ultimately it will fail, and that will be a great disaster for South Australia. Not only do we have the Murray River as a significant resource but we have various confined underground resources throughout South Australia as well as surface water resources, in the main in the Adelaide Hills.

I refer again to the Murray River resource. Members may become a little tired of my continuing to refer to that resource, but I will continue to do so until we see positive action from the Government on that resource from South Australia's viewpoint. Members would be well aware that the new Murray River waters agreement came into force recently and, as a result, gave the River Murray Commission additional powers to look at not only the sharing of waters between the States but, above all else, to have control over water quality. That would be determined and controlled by looking at future developments along the Murray/Darling system, in fact, throughout the whole of the catchment area.

Agreement was achieved and I believe it is operating as it was designed to do, whereby projects of any significance within the three States are referred to the River Murray Commission so that the commission can assess the likelihood of pollution effects on the total resource. The River Murray Commission has been working effectively over the last year or so to develop a computer model of the total Murray/Darling system so that at any time any proposal put before it for industrial or further irrigation development can be fed into the computer and a print-out obtained of the likely effects it will have at that point in the system and on users further downstream. That is of great importance to South Australia. South Australia has had a computer model of the river for many years and has been able to determine reasonably accurately the effect of any new development in this State, but, unfortunately, that has not been the case in Victoria or New South Wales.

The fact that that work has now been undertaken and almost completed will be of great benefit to all Murray River users. Unfortunately, still no commitment has been forthcoming from the Governments—particularly the Gov-

ernments of Victoria, New South Wales and the Commonwealth—as to where they stand in relation to funding commitments of work that needs to be undertaken. Only a week or so ago I had the opportunity of attending a dinner in Renmark hosted by the River Murray Commission, when it held its regular monthly meeting. I refer to an article in the *Murray Pioneer* of Friday 9 August, as follows:

The River Murray Commission has ruled out the possibility of cutting South Australia's water entitlement this season despite a 'difficult' storage situation. Commission President, Mr Alan O'Brien, said in Renmark this week that widespread rains on Sunday and Tuesday had allowed the RMC to revise its figures slightly. Releases from Dartmouth to Hume Dam in the lead-up to the irrigation season have been reduced to half of what had been anticipated. However, Mr O'Brien stressed that the situation remained serious. The RMC held its 301st meeting at the Renmark Country Club on Wednesday and yesterday had talks with senior representatives on its advisory committee structure...

A major item on Wednesday's agenda was discussion of the RMC's salinity action package, which has taken about \$1 million and up to three years to develop. The program has used computers to assess salt monitoring along the river and determine the cost effectiveness of a series of salinity mitigation works on the drawing board. Mr O'Brien said a further \$500 000 was needed to finish investigation of the eight projects, which will cost an estimated \$53 million to implement.

The RMC has written to the Premiers of South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria and to the Hawke Government asking for funds to complete the research. Mr O'Brien said he hoped to have replies in the next two weeks. Across-the-board support could mean a July 1986 start to the works program. Four of the eight projects are located in South Australia—the Woolpunda scheme and the Berri East, Chowilla and Loxton groundwater interception schemes. Six of them will intercept saline groundwater and use pumps to divert it to evaporation basins. The works are expected to result in a 20 per cent drop in salinity at Morgan over five years. Mr O'Brien said \$50 million to achieve this was 'good value'.

In order to achieve a 20 per cent reduction at Morgan, \$50 million is exceptionally good value. However, there has been no commitment from the Federal Government. I believe that the South Australian Government has responded, but I am not sure what that response was. However, there has been no response from the Federal Government nor from the Governments of Victoria and New South Wales.

I have mentioned on a number of occasions in this House that the average salinity level at Morgan is in excess of 830 EC units for most of the time, and 830 EC units is the figure determined by the World Health Organisation as the upper limit of totally dissolved solids that is acceptable for human consumption. The vast percentage of the time that figure is greatly exceeded.

When we consider that much of the water that is pumped into Adelaide (anything up to 90 per cent of Adelaide's requirement comes from the Murray River in a dry year) has a salt content in the vicinity of 1200 or 1300 EC units, we see that we are way in excess (30 per cent to 40 per cent much of the time) of the World Health Organisation's recommendations. Yet, we see very little response from the Government—particularly the South Australian Government—in relation to this health matter.

When we consider that we in South Australia require far more Murray River water for potable use than any other State and that this Government is doing very little to encourage the Governments of Victoria, New South Wales and the Commonwealth to come to grips with this problem as a matter of urgency, one cannot help but wonder why this is the case. The answer is quite simple: we are talking about a resource for which millions of dollars needs to be spent to solve a problem which cannot be seen by the eye, and which does not have the same impact as building a complex in an electorate. In other words, there is very little immediate electoral benefit or gain for the expenditure of x-millions of dollars on such a project.

However, it is high time that a statesmanlike approach was adopted, particularly by the Federal and South Australian Governments, because it will grow and is continuing to grow into an ever-increasing health problem for the people of South Australia. The fact that there is a significant reduction in productivity in the irrigation industry is another major reason why this problem should be tackled immediately. The River Murray Commission, which has done an excellent job and has worked with enthusiasm since the advent of the new River Murray Waters Act, is now in a position to do something positive in coming to grips with the problem. The President of the commission said that, with the eight works projects the commission has identified, it will reduce the average salinity at Morgan.

Reference is made to the reduction at the time when South Australia is on its statutory allocation of water, but unfortunately there is little response. The South Australian Government (if not the Minister of Water Resources, certainly the Premier) should take up the issue with the States of Victoria and New South Wales first, on the basis of endeavouring to determine a cost sharing arrangement. There is only one basis on which the cost sharing should be arrived at, and that is that the Federal Government (since it involves a national resource—and basing this on overseas experience) should accept 70 per cent of the responsibility and the three States involved 10 per cent each.

On that basis, we would be looking for an agreement between the four Governments for the States to provide \$5 million each in the very near future and for the Federal Government to provide \$35 million to undertake the initial program proposed by the River Murray Commission. That is not a very big contribution by the four Governments when we consider that we are talking about probably the greatest natural resource that Australia has, bearing in mind the productivity that that resource creates in terms of export industries and the gross national product.

For example, when one takes the whole of the Murray-Darling system and the wide range of products involved and when one considers one small section of that total resource—the Riverland, which in itself generates somewhere between \$300 million and \$400 million annually—one can possibly gain a picture of the total value of the Murray-Darling system to the economic benefit of Australia as a whole. So, when we talk about \$50 million that the River Murray Commission now requires, that is a very small sum compared to the total value to Australia of the whole resource and its productivity. It is absolutely disgraceful that there has been, I understand, no response from the Federal Government at this stage. Until the Federal Government is prepared to accept its national responsibilities, water quality will continue to deteriorate and problems in South Australia will go from bad to worse.

The River Murray Commissioner for South Australia has in a public address acknowledged that there will continue to be an average deterioration of something like 6 EC units in the quality of water in the Murray River in South Australia over the next 10 years unless a major capital works program is undertaken to divert known salt loads out of the Murray system.

In this House I have repeatedly raised the matter of the Woolpunda scheme. The River Murray Commission has reached the point where it is sick and tired of further investigations. We have had investigation after investigation and we get no closer to starting the necessary work. A press release, dated 16 July, from Senator Evans, states:

Senator Evans confirmed the Federal Government was proposing an all new authority for the three States, including South Australia, to control the Murray-Darling Basin.

What absolute rubbish! This is purely a means of putting off the day when Governments must find the necessary

money to come to grips with the problem. The press release continues:

The authority would be headed by the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) and the Premiers of Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales.

That is what we have now because, to all intents and purposes the Chairman of the River Murray Commission is the Prime Minister's representative and the three State Commissioners are the representatives of the Premiers of those States. This press release is seen as absolute rubbish by all those closely involved with this issue as a further method of putting off the evil day. It is procrastination at its worst and is seen as such by all concerned.

It is up to the Government of South Australia to come to grips with this problem. The Minister has said that, before the end of the year, there will be a meeting of the heads of Government, but I will believe that when I see it because I see no enthusiasm in South Australia for getting on with this job. After all, when one talks about spending millions of dollars on water resources, that is a long term investment from which benefits will not be seen for possibly 10 years, and that is not on for this Government because, unless it can get an immediate electoral gain from spending taxpayers' money that will help it in the forthcoming election, this Government is not interested. So, South Australia continues to be in greater and greater jeopardy as regards water resources. That is a tragedy that must be highlighted time and time again. If the Premier will not act as a statesman in this matter in the long-term interests of South Australia, the Government should be exposed for all that it is worth.

I turn now to a statement made by the Premier in July this year in relation to water rate increases. In a press statement dated 3 July, the Premier refers to the fact that water rates are to rise by only 3.5 per cent and sewerage rates by only 3.5 per cent. The Opposition has been saying for a long time that charges should not be increased at a greater rate than inflation or the increase in the consumer price index, and in this instance the Government has fallen into line with what we have been saying. However, the Premier also promises in that press release that, despite these moderate increases for 1985-86, the E&WS Department will face an operating deficit of \$22 million this year.

Last year, it had an operating deficit of about \$8 million and the Government increased the water and sewerage rates by about 20 per cent. Now, as a result of public pressure the Government has contained the escalation in charges of this department at about the inflation rate and it will result in a \$22 million dollar deficit. The Liberal Party has given a clear undertaking to the South Australian public that it will contain charges within the increase in the consumer price index, but at the same time we will control the escalation of costs in the department. Here, however, the Government has bowed to pressure and fixed a moderate increase in rates, at the same time doing absolutely nothing to contain costs.

The public sector must learn to live within the inflation rate, the same as the public at large must. We have seen an average wage increase that has been controlled and contained within the CPI at about 2.8 per cent. If the public must live within that figure, there is no way on earth that Government departments should be able to operate other than on the same basis. There cannot be an escalation of 10 per cent or 15 per cent in costs when wages increase by only 2 per cent or 3 per cent. It can be done, but we will be left with a devastating situation if the Government does not have the courage, or does not know how, to contain costs. We had an example in the 1982-83 financial year when the present Government came to power and there was a blowout in the E&WS Department figures of about

\$14 million in the first year of government. That figure was reduced to \$6 million in the following year and it was \$8 million last year, but now it is back to a \$22 million deficit for this financial year.

Somewhere along the line, the taxpayer at large has to pick up the tab. We have seen certain tax cuts introduced by the Government, but most of those will have little bearing on the man in the street. Indeed, the only cut that will directly affect him is the one-off reduction in electricity tariffs and that will result in only a small reduction each quarter for this financial year. However, having made the tax cuts, the Government has in this one department a massive escalation in costs of \$22 million, and one does not have to be terribly bright to work out that if this is to occur across the board in the other Government instrumentalities that are supplying essential services, the blowout will be absolutely enormous. I can imagine what we will inherit after the State election in November and the dismay that will be felt by all the people when we have a clear picture of the Treasury situation.

Again, it is an absolute disgrace that the Government can proceed in this way. We cannot run our farms and other properties in this way because, if we did, we would be out of business in a couple of years. Yet, a Government, because of political expediency, is creating a deliberate situation where there is a \$22 million overrun in one department alone. That is totally unacceptable. I support the fact that the increase in charges must be contained within the CPI increase but, at the same time, Government departments must be made accountable and operate within the same cost restraints as everyone else in the community. It is as simple as that.

I now want to refer to Government irrigation rates. The Minister proudly made a statement in this House a day or two ago that there would be no increase in irrigation charges in South Australian Government irrigation areas. That in itself is to be commended. However, I point out that in 1983 the present Government increased water rates by some 28 per cent, the reason given by the Minister of Water Resources for this increase being that the previous Liberal Government had not increased the charges to a sufficient amount. The increase provoked an enormous reaction from the irrigators, and the Government would well remember the demonstration on the front steps of Parliament House. There were 400 or 500 angry irrigators congregated on the steps of this building, although there was certainly no sign of the Premier or the Minister of Water Resources on that occasion, no matter what efforts were made to bring them outside.

However, that demonstration had an effect on the Government. Also, we have the irrigation advisory boards which are operating extremely effectively and which are keeping a close check on Government expenditure in Government irrigation areas, and, further the Government is mindful of the offer made by the Liberal Party at the time of the demonstration that a Liberal Government would enter into negotiations with the irrigators in the Government irrigation areas in relation to handing over the operations to the irrigators. This would be done in a similar manner to the arrangements in relation to the Renmark Irrigation Trust and other private irrigation undertakings in South Australia.

Those three issues have had a dramatic effect on the Government, and as a consequence there has been no increase in irrigation charges in South Australia for the past two years. However, I point out that prior to that time irrigation charges in South Australia were the highest in Australia. In a statement to the House the Minister tried to castigate the Liberal Party for its proposal to hand over the irrigation undertakings to the irrigators. The Minister said:

It must be remembered that almost \$56 million in loans is being used to operate the State's irrigation areas which are currently incurring an annual deficit of \$10.2 million.

That is absolutely disastrous. The reason for that figure being so high is that the rehabilitation work, which was commenced during the time of the former Minister of Works, the Hon. Des Corcoran, has been totally undertaken using Government day labour, at enormous cost. It is acknowledged by the Directors of the Engineering and Water Supply Department that during the period of the Tonkin Administration, when a couple of private contractors were put in to work side by side with the Government work force, that had the effect of increasing the productivity of the E&WS pipe-laying team by something like 95 per cent. Those figures come from the Directors of the E&WS Department.

In relation to the amount of \$56 million, much of which is as a result of the inefficient manner in which the Labor Government has approached the rehabilitation work in the Government irrigation areas, it is an absolute disgrace that taxpayers' money has been wasted in that way. In his statement to the House the Minister totally misrepresented the situation as far as the Opposition is concerned.

If the irrigators so desired, the Opposition would hand over the management and maintenance of the irrigation areas to them to run, in a similar manner to that adopted by the Renmark Irrigation Trust. The assets would remain the property of the Government, and the loans that had been run up would continue to be serviced by the Government. The assets would be handed over on a long-term lease, so there would be no servicing of the loans, as suggested by the Minister. In fact, the undertaking could be run by a board of management, in exactly the same way as in the other irrigation areas in South Australia, which are operated on a private basis. The Leader has pointed out on a number of occasions that this proposal would be implemented if that is what the irrigators in Government irrigation areas want. Whether it is in the best interests of the irrigators and the people of South Australia is ultimately a decision for the irrigators to decide for themselves.

As I have said, the events over the past few years have had quite a remarkable effect on the Government, and I have referred to the demonstration, the effectiveness of the irrigation advisory boards, and also the offer made by the Liberal Party to hand over the assets and management of the irrigation areas. Clearly, that is why there has been no increase in water charges for the Government irrigation areas for the past two years.

I refer now to a matter of considerable concern to many people in the Riverland, in particular, because of its closeness to the Victorian and New South Wales borders, namely, the requirements of Victoria and New South Wales for one to have, in inland waters, a recreational fishing licence. As members would be well aware, the Riverland is a significant area for recreational pursuits and tourism. Many people tend to cross the Victorian and New South Wales borders in their boats while they are holidaying in the Riverland.

On a number of occasions holidaymakers have been confronted by fishing officers from Victoria and New South Wales and have been charged with fishing illegally in those States. In New South Wales any person over 18 years of age must obtain a \$5 licence, which covers a person for 30 days. The alternative is to obtain an annual \$10 licence. In Victoria, any person over the age of 16 years is required to hold an annual \$10 licence before going fishing. Members who were here at the time when boating legislation was introduced and debated in this House would recall that we recognised the problems which would arise in relation to interstate visitors coming to South Australia and wanting to use houseboats on the Murray River if they were required to have a boat operator's licence in this State.

Quite obviously, they could not arrive here one day and obtain a licence of competency on that same day; so, having recognised that situation, we exempted the hire boat industry from the requirements of that legislation, particularly in recognition of the problems encountered by interstate visitors.

We now have a situation in reverse where Victoria and New South Wales have amateur angling licences in their inland waters and people visiting those States are being prosecuted for fishing. I believe that is totally unacceptable and that it is a matter which the Minister of Tourism or the Premier ought to take up with the Premiers of Victoria and New South Wales in an attempt to have them recognise the situation as we recognised it in, I think, approximately 1974, when the Boating Act was passed. The same provisions as contained in the Boating Act should be provided for interstate visitors to those States.

I think it is absurd that people who may be visiting the State concerned for only one or two days or a matter of hours, should be prosecuted for having gone to that State and having had the audacity to dangle a fishing line in the river. It is not a situation where, as in the case of driving licences, there is a reciprocal arrangement. South Australia does not have an amateur angling or fishing licence and I certainly do not wish to see one come into existence. So be it: if that is the way the Governments in Victoria and New South Wales wish to treat their residents, that is their affair, but they ought to recognise the situation which exists in this State in the same way as we recognised them when we debated it and dealt with it in relation to the Boating Act. We exempted interstate visitors from the requirements of that Act in order that they would not be inconvenienced.

Unless the Government is prepared to take up some of those issues with the Governments of Victoria and New South Wales, obviously nothing will be done about it, but I would have thought, particularly from a tourism point of view, that it would have been an instance where the appropriate representation from South Australia would have resulted in a sensible agreement being reached. We will wait and see whether the Government is prepared to look at some of these issues that are important to some people in South Australia and whether it will go to the trouble of doing something about it.

The other matter I wish to mention relates to Adelaide International Airport, not from a passenger point of view, but in relation to export industries and particularly the export of fresh fruit, vegetables and flowers. That industry has the potential to develop into a very lucrative market from South Australia to South East Asia.

The facilities that currently exist at the Adelaide International Airport for this type of trade are virtually non-existent. If we are to be successful in any export market, quality is absolutely essential. When dealing with fresh fruit, vegetables and flowers there are no second chances. One only has to look at the extent to which a small country like Israel has developed its fresh flower export industry into Europe to appreciate the potential of such an industry. Just as Israel has the vast population resource of Europe close by, we have an enormous population to the north of Australia. By the same token, people expect quality and, if they do not receive it, they will obtain their supplies from other countries, particularly the United States, which is more than happy to supply quality fruit and vegetables if we cannot.

In the *Advertiser* of 23 July, an article headed, 'Airport's lack of storage costly for exporters' states:

The lack of storage facilities at Adelaide Airport caused costly losses of export produce, the SA Chamber of Commerce and Industry said yesterday. A chamber trade development adviser, Mr Paul Begg, was commenting after having given evidence to the Federal Government's national review of international airfreight policy which held its first public hearings in Adelaide

yesterday. Mr Begg said the personnel and the systems of handling exports at Adelaide Airport worked efficiently but were hampered by minimal undercover storage and lack of a cold room to hold perishables.

I recognise that this area is very much the province of the airlines concerned and also the Federal Government, but by the same token we are talking about export industry prospects for South Australia, and that should be of vital concern to the South Australian Government. I am quite sure that the new Riverland Development Council will take this matter up with the Government if it has not already done so. I am quite sure that the council has already become involved in this matter.

I have a copy of a letter from the South Australian Tablegrape Growers Association (Inc.). The President of that association is Mr B.G. Western; the Vice-President, Mr R.C. Western; and the Secretary is Mr D.H. Agg, from Barmera, in the Riverland. The letter is directed to the General Manager of Qantas Airlines and highlights what the problem is. It is interesting to note that, since the Adelaide Airport commenced international operations in 1982, the volume of perishable freight handled has increased substantially. For instance, tablegrape exports from Adelaide from 1982 to the present are as follows: in 1982, in the first year of operation, 72 tonnes of fresh tablegrapes was exported through the Adelaide International Airport; in 1983 that had risen to 201 tonnes; in 1984, 490 tonnes; and in 1985 (the figures are not yet to hand) it will probably approach a further doubling of the 1984 figure. That volume is quickly approaching 1 000 tonnes of tablegrapes, without looking at all the other fresh fruit and vegetables.

The fresh fruit and vegetables are very carefully handled on the farm. They are kept in cold storage, brought to Adelaide in refrigerated conditions, delivered to the Adelaide International Airport, and stacked on the tarmac in temperatures approaching 45 to 50 degrees, as can often be the case on the tarmac in the middle of summer. That means that the product is almost destroyed there and then.

I just make the point once again that there is the potential for an extremely lucrative market in air freighting perishables out of South Australia. It is a matter that the Government should take up as a matter of urgency with the Commonwealth Government, and especially with the airlines operating out of South Australia to the export markets to the near north.

In conclusion, I would like to mention my colleagues who will be retiring from the Parliament at the next State election. The member for Victoria has been in the Chamber for a long time; he entered Parliament in 1965, three years before I first entered it in 1968. Also retiring are the member for Whyalla (Max Brown), the member for Price (George Whitten), and also the member for Adelaide (Jack Wright), and I take this opportunity to wish them well in their retirement, which I trust will be long and happy.

**The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER (Minister of Community Welfare):** I move:

That the sittings of the House be extended beyond 5 p.m.

Motion carried.

**Mr FERGUSON (Henley Beach):** I support the motion, and from the outset I would like to express my condolences to the families of the former members who have passed away, Messrs Hunkin and Clark, since the last Address in Reply debate. I met Mr Hunkin only on social occasions and I did not know him as a member. Mr Clark I knew from my duties at head office of the ALP in the many offices I had and, of course, his winning the seat of Gawler for the first time was the beginning, if you like, of the road that eventually led to a Labor Government in South Aus-



tralia after many years. I remember him very well, and I extend my condolences to his family.

I congratulate the Governor on his speech. His Excellency accepts the advice of the reigning Government and the speech itself promised tax cuts to South Australia, the order of which has now been revealed. They have provided South Australia with the greatest tax benefits it has ever seen. Mysteriously in my electorate I have seen signs saying 'Cut taxes, Olsen for action'. Those signs would now be providing some embarrassment to the person or persons who erected them, because it has certainly been 'Bannon for action' in the way that he has cut taxes.

The cuts in ETSA charges, considering the inflationary spiral, represent a bold step. I have taken a deep interest in small business in my electorate, and I know that the cutback of payroll tax has been of benefit to the manufacturing area, some of which is in my electorate. Manufacturers appreciate the reduction and realise that it provides more opportunities for increased employment.

The stamp duty cuts are most welcome, particularly to those wanting to buy their own homes. People who have moved into the new developments in my electorate will certainly appreciate that. As a member of the Caucus Tourism Committee I was extremely pleased to see the tax cuts applying to liquor licences for cellar door sales. Having got the South Australian economy on an even keel, we can look forward to greater development, increased employment, and further stimulation of the economy.

I take this opportunity to refer to certain problems in my district. I have had the opportunity to mention earlier in debate today my concern about childcare facilities in my electorate. Some members might be unhappy to hear my remarks on child care, because they may appear to be repetitive, but I intend them to be repetitive, and I intend to keep making them, both inside and outside this House, until I achieve my aim: a child care centre within the electorate of Henley Beach.

If one looked at a map of the western suburbs and provided a star for every child care centre in my electorate there would be a great white space on the map. Unfortunately, both State and Federal Governments have neglected this area, for two reasons. The first is that, under conservative administrations, those people who were able, willing and capable and who were willing to spend money to provide elaborate submissions were the people who won the money for the building of child care centres. Thus, we saw a proliferation of centres in the eastern suburbs and neglect in other areas.

This may be a reflection on certain administrations in the western suburbs. It may be a reflection of community attitudes in the western suburbs. However, it boils down to a question of opportunity and of being able to put together some submissions which are expensive and for which people have to provide the time. One reason for my continuing to call for a child care centre in my district is that the most recent census figures show that the Henley and Grange council has the third highest number of children aged between nought and four years.

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr FERGUSON:** I do not know what causes the baby boom. If people could discover what causes it they could finish up being millionaires.

*The Hon. H. Allison interjecting:*

**Mr FERGUSON:** It certainly has nothing to do with the local member! Henley and Grange is behind only Munno Para and Port Lincoln in the number of children in the area, as shown in the last set of statistics. As the local member of Parliament I have had the opportunity to discuss the matter in recent years because of the provision of Federal Government money. So far the Federal Government

has continued to do what it said it would do in relation to the provision of child care centres.

Unfortunately, there was some confusion about the way in which the allocation of this money was agreed to in the early stages. I suppose that is understandable because the Federal Government was anxious in the first instance to show in brick and mortar something of the effort that it intended to make. My understanding was that the provision of child care centres would be done on a needs basis. That is my bone of contention as the interpretation of 'needs basis' is one of the reasons mitigating against the establishment of a child care centre within my electorate.

I was rather disappointed recently to see a field staff report from the South Australian Interim Planning Committee for Children's Services. The report became available in March 1985, but I did not receive a copy until a couple of months later. It referred to the local government areas of Henley, Grange, Woodville, Thebarton, Hindmarsh and Port Adelaide in the western region. It referred also to the fact that this is a more established area than either the northern or southern suburbs and much more developed. It observes that there are people of lower income brackets and concentrations of various migrant populations as well as a large number of Aboriginal people in the area. I totally agree with that observation—one could not argue with it.

The report went on to state that the most pressing perceived need in the western region is the provision of a further service for Aboriginal families and that such a service could be modelled on other existing centres. It further recommended that there be an extension of hours of the Brompton/Thebarton child care centres to offer 24 hour care in due course.

In summary, the recommendation is that child care centres should meet the needs of the Spanish, Polish, Kampuchean, Vietnamese, and Aboriginal people within the western area. I have nothing detrimental to say, any of those minority groups, but must say, representing the seat of Henley Beach, that if federal resources are to be directed solely into those areas, there will never be an opportunity in the foreseeable future for a child care centre to be set up within my electorate. One of the other problems that one comes up against in this situation relates to the average salary across an electorate: my electorate reaches the exact average, therefore, it is difficult, when compared with other areas, to be perceived as an area of need. However, there are poor people living next door to well-off people and a large number of needy people in my electorate. Under the present set of circumstances, unless there is a change, these needy people will never receive the sort of child care service for which I am looking.

Data provided by a report from the Henley and Grange Council stated that there was an inaccessibility to public transport to get to current child care centres and that they are in inappropriate locations for occasional care. Statistics also indicate that 59 per cent of people drive to work. This leaves the majority of families reliant on public transport. Data shows that 63 per cent of families in Henley and Grange have either one car or no car per household. The difficulty of getting to existing child care centres is a point I make to those people I wish to impress in order to achieve my objective.

Earlier today I referred to proposed federal cutbacks in the kindergarten area. I express my disappointment with the mini budget brought down by the Federal Government and do not resile from that. I was disappointed to see a letter circularised to kindergartens in my area expressing the viewpoint that it has been widely acknowledged that preschool education is a State responsibility. I do not know what conclusions could be reached by saying 'widely acknowledged'—'Widely acknowledged' by whom?

**Mr Peterson:** Who signed it?

**Mr FERGUSON:** Mr John Scott, the member for Hindmarsh. The letter was circularised throughout the western area. One of the reasons given for the cutbacks in kindergarten finance was that there has been, and will be, provision for child care services. Members would realise, in view of the information I have just tendered to them, that it is no compensation to see an increase in fees for kindergartens to provide a child care service for other people. It is time that this area in the western sector was more carefully looked at.

Referring to the Federal budget decision, I would be remiss if I did not mention my concern (and the member for Semaphore has already mentioned this matter) about the decision to freeze nursing home benefits. I have been approached by a number of people in my electorate who have expressed deep concern about the situation of their relatives in nursing homes and the difficulty in being able to afford the new fees resulting from the Commonwealth benefits freeze.

I was deeply disturbed to receive a telephone call from one of my constituents requesting my assistance in obtaining a nursing home bed for her husband, who is now at the Seaton Nursing Home. Both she and her husband are age pensioners whose only source of income is the pension. Changes in Commonwealth subsidies have made it impossible for her to provide finance for her husband to continue at Seaton Nursing Home.

I contacted the Western Community Hospital to see whether any beds were available, and I was told that there was a waiting list. People are considered on merit by an assessment panel of three doctors appointed by the board. Their waiting list has grown considerably since the announcement of the freeze involving nursing homes. I understand that the Commonwealth Government has refused to enter into discussions with the State Government on the financial status and quality of life of private nursing home patients in this State, and that matter seriously concerns me. The Commonwealth Government should enter into those discussions as a matter of urgency.

It is difficult to understand the apparent indifference expressed by the Commonwealth Government on this matter. Its decision adversely affects the health of a number of elderly people living in my electorate who simply can no longer afford nursing home services and who will have to find alternative accommodation. I understand that the freeze will result in some 30 000 South Australian pensioners facing an increase of \$30 a week for essential health care and accommodation and that the pension rates mean that it is almost impossible for an age pensioner to find an additional \$30 per week.

The Commonwealth strategy seems to be to compel South Australia to lower its aged care services. The proper course of action would have been for other States to lift their standards rather than the reverse—to ask South Australia to reduce its standards to their level. I fully understand that pensioners in a deficit funded nursing home would not be affected by the freeze because the Commonwealth is meeting full running costs. This would be admirable if sufficient beds were available for all pensioners in need, but the reality is that those in private nursing homes and in some of the homes operated by churches or charitable organisations are faced with a situation that is impossible to avoid.

I also understand the financial impact that the decision is having on private nursing homes and church and charitable organisations. The South Australian Government should have the full opportunity to explain the position and negotiate with the Commonwealth Government on this matter. I understand that the Commonwealth Government's philosophy is to try to bring services to the people rather

than people to the services, which would be an admirable objective if support services for aged people were sufficient, but such services are grossly under stress and in need of injections of large sums of money. Meals on Wheels, Domiciliary Care, the Home Handyman Service and other service organisations are unable to cope with the amount of work that they are required to do. So, the Commonwealth decision to freeze funds is premature unless proper support services can be provided. It is certainly inhuman to continue the present situation, and we need to review the present decision of the Commonwealth Government.

I turn now to a local issue—the Grange railway station, whose location has been a bone of contention for many years, as it is sited more or less on the road and narrows Military Road at that point. Since the development of West Lakes, which has been considerable, that station has been a traffic hazard at the point where the road narrows, and most people support removal of the station.

I thank the Minister of Transport for his efforts on behalf of myself and the Henley and Grange Council in respect of negotiations on the financial situation pertaining to the station's removal. At first the State Transport Authority was not prepared to agree to funding the removal of the railway station, and it has taken 12 or more months of negotiations to get to the point where it has at last agreed to accept full responsibility for total removal of the station and construction of a retaining wall.

That leaves us with one problem on which negotiations are still continuing, and which I hope with the Minister's assistance and with reasonableness all round we can resolve. Because of the change of location of the station, it is necessary that the bus terminal, which is presently close to the old station, be moved, and negotiations are under way concerning this matter. I hope that the State Transport Authority sees the logic of providing sufficient finance to move the bus station to its new location.

It is not a local government responsibility, and for very good reason the State Transport Authority is insisting that Grange railway station be moved. I hope that we can come to a logical and agreeable conclusion all round and that there is no public controversy over the negotiations that are to take place shortly.

I now express my concern about press statements made in recent weeks by various Liberal Party spokesmen in an attack on youth wages. I noted with interest the report that was brought down by the member for Davenport from a committee of which he was chairperson and which produced the Liberal Party's youth policy. That document said that there was no link between youth wages and unemployment rates and that across-the-board cuts in youth wages should be rejected. That was an interesting statement because it did not say categorically that there would be no cut in youth wages: rather, that there would be no across-the-board cut in youth wages.

In response to my interjection when this matter was being discussed last week, the member for Davenport cited one industry in which he would attack youth wages—the building industry. He said in this House that he intended to reduce youth wages in the building industry. In response to a further interjection, when asked at which other industries he intended to look, there was no reply. Obviously, the Liberal Party, if returned to office, would make a full scale attack on youth wages. To illustrate this point, may I refer to the following statement made by the Leader of the Opposition and reported in the *Advertiser* of 1 July:

Mr Olsen said a Liberal Government would take action through the Industrial Commission to ensure youth award rates do not price young people out of a job.

The implication of that statement is that a Liberal Government would presumably apply to the Industrial Commission

to reduce youth wages. This follows closely the attitude taken by the Victorian branch of the Liberal Party in its recent State election campaign when it promised that, if elected, it would cut junior workers' wages. Similar statements have been made by Federal spokesmen for the Liberal Party in relation to Federal policy. What has apparently escaped the notice of Liberal members is that already 90 per cent of awards provide for lower rates of pay for people under the age of 21. No-one has provided a satisfactory explanation as to why employment would be increased if youth wages were cut, and I invite Opposition members to do so.

The Kirby Committee of Inquiry and the OECD Review of Income Systems also rejected any link between youth wages and high unemployment. The object of any business is to maximise profit, so why would an employer increase the number of people on his payroll merely because his wages bill had been reduced? Already, we see in the retail industry employers taking advantage of the provision of lower rates of pay for young people by employing them at the age of 16 and discharging them by the time they reach their eighteenth birthday. If a further reduction in youth wages is to be supported, as the Leader of the Opposition would like it, this practice would continue to spread. The *News* of 25 July contains the following report:

The Federal Opposition called for the introduction of a graduated system of youth wages to allow increased employment opportunities for young workers.

Someone should tell the Federal Opposition that there is already a graduated system of youth wages and ask it to explain why a further reduction would result in increased employment. Even the member for Davenport's statement in the *Advertiser* of 24 July, where he was allegedly replying to a statement made by the Minister of Youth Affairs, leaves room to doubt the Liberal Party's approach on youth wages. The honourable member is quoted as saying:

The Liberal Party is opposed to an across-the-board cut in youth wages. For the new Minister to suggest otherwise reveals just how desperate the Labor Government has become!

I especially ask the House to note that the Liberal Party is opposed to an across-the-board cut in youth wages. If that is so, in what areas does the Liberal Party intend to cut wages? The member for Davenport says that he does not support an across-the-board cut in youth wages, obviously implying that he supports a cut somewhere, and I should be interested to know exactly where the Liberal Party would cut youth wages. The Liberal Party must have selective targets for cutting wages and it should come out before the next State election and say specifically where it believes that youth wages should be cut.

I now refer to the privatisation proposals that have been advanced by the Opposition. I was much taken by a letter which appeared in the *Advertiser* of Saturday 20 July and which specifically referred to the Liberal Party's privatisation proposals. Incidentally, with the *Sunday Mail* there appeared an extremely expensive multi-coloured brochure, printed on top quality art paper, apparently from a Party that has told us it has no money and would be scraping the bottom of the barrel to find funds with which to fight the coming election. The brochure contained a photograph of the shadow Cabinet from which prominent members were missing. For instance, I tried very hard, with the aid of a magnifying glass, to find the member for Alexandra there, but I could not find him. Looking at this expensive publication, I tried to find what the Party was telling the general public about privatisation, but not even one word appeared on that subject. Was not that strange! On Saturday 20 July, the following very telling letter appeared in the *Advertiser*:

Privatisation is an ugly word which describes an even uglier phenomenon. It reared its ugly head again at the Liberal Party's

Federal Council, which turned its deadly sights on such noble enterprises as Qantas, TAA and the Commonwealth Bank. Qantas is a profitable airline with a reputation for safety and service that is second to none. TAA, too, is a safe, sound airline and would be even more profitable if it did not serve remote areas which private enterprise would never contemplate.

With the influx of foreign banks, there is a greater need than ever for the countervailing force of the Commonwealth Bank—the people's bank for 75 years.

What madness has infected the Liberal Party? In the 1984 Federal election, for example, the Liberals even suggested selling off our public education system to private interests. In the last Victorian election, they targeted the gaol system.

In South Australia, Liberal Leader John Olsen is looking longingly at ETSA—some 40 years after his distinguished predecessor, Sir Thomas Playford, found that he had to nationalise the Adelaide Electric Supply Co., to provide a wider service at cheaper rates.

Selling off public assets may provide a one-off profit, but after that the people would be left to pay the piper for ever more. Private entrepreneurs seek to maximise profits. They would buy off the profitable bits of public enterprises, leaving the taxpayer to shoulder an ever-increasing deadweight.

In the end we would be left with the disastrous situation that John Kenneth Galbraith described so graphically as: 'Private affluence, public squalor.'

J.C. CONNOLLY,  
Parkside.

I was interested to hear the member for Goyder's Address in Reply speech—he is always an entertaining speaker, although not always accurate. He also has heard the rumours in relation to the Government Printing Division. It is the fourth enterprise in line for privatisation; that is, if we ever have the misfortune to have a Liberal Administration. I want the Leader of the Opposition to come out and tell us that the Government Printing Division would not be privatised. It is not unusual at all for the Liberal Party to suggest that a government printing office ought to be sold off. Prior to the last State election in Tasmania the Liberal Party proposed during the election campaign that as soon as it got into office it would sell off the Government printing office. The rumours referred to by the member for Goyder are very strong in the printing industry. I would like the Liberal Party to categorically state at this time that it would not sell off the Government Printing Division.

During the years 1979-82 (and I had quite a bit to do with the Government Printing Division) we found that Government printing contracts were going out the door to private printing firms while quite often the Government printing office fellows were standing around with nothing to do. We know that a Liberal Government would like to see this large investment go to private enterprise. One of the results of that would be that prices to Government would increase immediately.

**Mr Lewis:** Why not sell it to the workers?

**Mr FERGUSON:** The Liberal Party in Tasmania (with exactly the same philosophy as the member for Mallee) promised that, if elected to government, it would sell off the Government printing office. However, on coming to office that incoming Liberal Government found that it was unable to do that because private enterprise would not buy it. I trust the member for Goyder in many ways, although often what he says here is a little astray. However, on this occasion I think the member for Goyder is right about the rumours.

*The Hon. H. Allison interjecting:*

**Mr FERGUSON:** It came from that side of the House, and not from this side. All I did was check up on the rumours that were in *Hansard* and those that are being mentioned around the printing industry. I want the Leader to make a statement about this. A statement from an Opposition backbencher is no good, because the amount of influence of such a member is very slim indeed, and there is no way that a backbencher could influence a decision about selling off the Government Printing Division. The Leader

must stand up in this House (hopefully on Tuesday) and assure us and the industry that a Liberal Government would not sell off the Government Printing Division, that it would be maintained, and that there is no way that it would be privatised.

**Mr Meier:** You have the Leader's guarantee: it will not be privatised.

**Mr FERGUSON:** The member for Goyder's making an interjection on behalf of the Leader is no good, because he has very little influence on what the Leader will do. I want the Leader to stand up in this House and lay to rest those rumours. I refer to the rumours not only about the Government Printing Division but also in relation to the State Bank. I hope that the jobs of those good, solid employees in those organisations which are providing profits and returns to the State that can be utilised in other areas, will remain. The Leader did say that, in relation to whatever enterprises were sold off, the jobs of those people involved would be saved. But how can one give a guarantee like that?

There is no way that the Leader can guarantee job security for the workers in an enterprise that is sold off by the Government, because when that occurs the Government loses influence over that organisation. A contract for, say, two to five years, or whatever it might be, might be arranged, but eventually there is no way that employees in any industry that is privatised can be guaranteed lifetime employment. Therefore, statements made about guaranteed employment are nonsense. I am happy for this matter to go out on the hustings; I will be happy to debate it during the forthcoming election campaign.

**Mr Lewis:** With whom?

**Mr FERGUSON:** I will be happy to go out and discuss it with the Government workers at the factory gates and to tell them what the propositions are. I will be happy to tell them that there is no way that they would have job security if the industry in which they work is sold off to a private entrepreneur. The member for Mallee says that he would be happy to see the State Bank sold off, to see it go to Westpac or one of the big private companies, and to see the sort of concessions that the State Bank is able to give South Australians go down the drain; that he would be happy to give the State Bank to an interstate or international monopoly. I think that the privatisation plan of the Liberal Party is its Achilles heel, and I hope that it continues to be exposed.

**Mr LEWIS (Mallee):** In response to the remarks of the member for Henley Beach, I can assure the honourable member that I would willingly join him in a debate on privatisation, and I intend to have something further to say on that during the course of my remarks over the next 59½ minutes. Indeed, we would be very much in front as a community if we were to give the opportunity to those people who work in government owned and operated enterprises the chance to buy those enterprises, and in so doing the chance to enjoy the benefit of their labours, and to participate as fully fledged citizens carrying their share of the tax burden paid from the profits that they then most certainly would be able to make in the enterprises which they own. Why cannot we have a whole series of Fletcher Jones, as it were, in which the workers who work in those enterprises indeed own them?

If they are as efficient as the member for Henley Beach says, I do not see any reason for them not being able to guarantee job security for themselves. I believe that they could and that they would be, as he has said, very capable of doing that and also that they will enjoy the profits of their labours. The catchcry I put forward is simply: profits to the people who do the work, and why not?

I do not see why it is necessary for taxpayers to take risks, through the mechanism of government, by owning these enterprises and retaining the risky interest in perpetuity. To do otherwise is to reduce the burden of responsibility of the Government and the risk that the Government has to pick up the tab for any losses or shortfalls there may be. It increases the revenue base of government, because there is a greater number of enterprises in the private sector (having come to the private sector from the public sector) to share the tax burden and pay their fair share of taxes along the way. That is a substantial contribution which the workers in those industries at the present time are unable to make. They are not able, in a sense, to be fully fledged citizens in that respect.

I now turn to something that fascinates me. I refer to a stupid bureaucratic problem which exists in a significant number of Government departments. I refer specifically to the way in which forms are printed for citizens to complete. Since I was elected this matter has been referred to me continually by many of my constituents. They complain that, when they have to fill out these forms for some departmental purpose or another, they very often find that they are required to state the location of their dwelling as being their address.

Members of this place who represent people living in urban areas may think it odd that I should complain about that situation. My constituents complain that they resent having to state the location of their dwelling as their address and that there is no space provided for them to list their postal address. Why is this a problem? It is a stupid practice which displays an insensitivity by Government departments which do not realise that, when correspondence is sent to the dwelling location address, it will never arrive.

Generally, postmen do not travel the rural arterial roads and rural local roads of this State. People who live in those localities have their mail distributed through roadside delivery bags, private mail boxes, or some other mechanism. To state the hundred and section number or location by giving the name of the road upon which the dwelling is located, if there is a properly named road—

**Mr S.G. Evans:** What about the longitude and latitude?

**Mr LEWIS:** That is just as ridiculous and stupid: it is probably effective in defining the precise geographic location where they live, but it will not get their mail to them. People who have to do business with Government departments need to be provided with a space on those forms where they can write the postal address where the Government department can reach them by mail. It is embarrassing when mail is sent to the dwelling location address but never arrives and then the innocent constituent finds himself *persona non grat* in relation to the Government agency which has sent the correspondence they did not receive. The department assumes that the message has been received, when in fact it has not.

I have written to all Ministers in recent days asking them what they are going to do in their departments to ensure that this frustration is alleviated and to ensure that their department is seen as being a service to the public, provided by servants of the public, and not the other way around. I trust that Ministers will look into this matter and rectify the problem promptly. I do not accuse Ministers of this Government alone; it is an insensitive practice born out of ignorance and perpetuated in time for convenience.

I turn now to a pamphlet which appeared in the letterbox of the unit where I sleep when I am in Adelaide. For the benefit of the member for Henley Beach and members opposite who were present when he was speaking, it is a beautiful full colour pamphlet about a political Party, stating what the Party says it is doing or not doing for the people who live in that general locality.

I am reliably informed that these beautiful full coloured pamphlets have been distributed in all electorates around metropolitan Adelaide, although none, as yet, have appeared in my electorate of Mallee. In fact, neither the Labor Party nor any other Party has endorsed a candidate for the District of Mallee, for which at this time I am endorsed for the next election.

**The Hon. D.J. Hopgood:** Join the club.

**Mr LEWIS:** What a pity! You mean you will not have a Labor Party—

**The Hon. D.J. Hopgood:** No, the Liberal Party.

**Mr LEWIS:** I am astonished that the Minister should find himself so neglected. I think we will have something to say for the Minister's benefit in the course of the coming weekend. As the Minister probably realises it is the annual meeting of the State Council of the Liberal Party.

**The Hon. D.J. Hopgood:** I was not aware of that.

**Mr LEWIS:** For the Minister's benefit, edification and interest, I pass on that piece of useful information. The Minister can look forward to hearing something from that.

**Mr Plunkett:** Is that not behind closed doors?

**Mr LEWIS:** Never behind closed doors. Anyway, this beautiful full colour pamphlet looks every bit as attractive a publication as the one that the member for Henley Beach referred to, if one merely considers the colours and pictures, although it is not attractive in terms of substance, in the sense that it does not really convey a message of much hope for the person reading it. I should say that it is published by the Australian Labor Party and has six panels (three, and the obverse three), it is folded into three—

**The Hon. H. Allison:** It's in Liberal colours.

**Mr LEWIS:** All the way, and they use the Australian flag for as long as it is convenient for them, even though they advocate changing it. I think it is the left and centre left factions that support the change from the existing Australian flag to any other flag but not this one. They will have anything at all except this flag.

**The Hon. H. Allison:** But they will still use it.

**Mr LEWIS:** They will still use it for the sake of propaganda.

**The Hon. H. Allison:** Pretending they are Liberals!

**Mr LEWIS:** Indeed, pretending that they are conservative and concerned and capable of understanding the meaning of a head of state separate from a head of government and a court separate from that. We have seen the kind of mess they have got themselves into recently with their political appointment to the bench of the High Court of Australia of a former Labor Attorney-General, and the sort of mess he has made of his life. The pamphlets that I was referring to have everything in common except on the back panel where in black and white—this is how much the Labor Party thinks of its candidates (it is the only place on the pamphlet where it is black and white)—they put a picture of the candidate.

In this case it is the Minister of Community Welfare, Greg Crafter, the member for Norwood. The pamphlet does not say that it is the member for Norwood—it just says that he is 'working for you'. I have seen how the Minister has worked (or failed to work) and failed to advise the head of his department of some serious problems relating to the administration of the Children's Services Office, which is run from his department. Of course, the propaganda on the back of the pamphlet says:

Greg Crafter is working with you to build a strong and caring community where quality of life, satisfying work and a healthy small business sector continue to thrive.

I find that—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Mallee will resume his seat.

**Mr PLUNKETT:** I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. The member for Mallee throughout his speech has been displaying a pamphlet. I think it is unparliamentary to hold something in one's hand and discuss it, and I seek your ruling on this matter.

**The SPEAKER:** I have not been present during the whole of the honourable member's speech, so I will take advice about this matter.

My ruling is that the use of copious notes is always tolerated by the Chair. Secondly, however, the honourable member should not display material to the House.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Does the honourable member for Peake wish to take a further point of order?

**Mr PLUNKETT:** I took the point of order because it was an ALP pamphlet that the honourable member was showing, not copious notes. I was not taking a point of order on the basis that it was a written speech. It is a pamphlet that the honourable member has freely displayed in the House, whereas on other occasions members have been stopped from doing that.

**The SPEAKER:** I would have thought that the matter was made clear in the second part of my ruling, namely, that the use of copious notes is not offensive to the Chair, but that the display of documents is. I ask the honourable member to take note of both points. The honourable member for Mallee.

**Mr LEWIS:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for your statement about the point of order. I am astonished that the member for Peake believed that there was a necessity for him to take such a spurious point of order. It would seem that by so doing he seeks to prevent any honourable member, including the member who addressed the Chamber immediately before me, from ever again using a coloured document from which he wishes to quote. In this instance all I was doing was quoting the substance of a pamphlet. If that is to be so, then I see no difference between a coloured document and a black and white document. Therefore, any member who wished to use newspaper clippings, brochures or pamphlets in future would be precluded from so doing.

**Mr Trainer:** There is a difference between reading from and brandishing a document.

**Mr LEWIS:** I am referring to it constantly. Who is brandishing anything?

*Mr Trainer interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Chair has been very tolerant of honourable member's behaviour. I have asked honourable members to maintain a certain amount of reasonableness as we approach the end of the week. So long as the member for Mallee pursues this course, bearing in mind my second admonition, I do not see that there is any problem. The member for Mallee.

**Mr LEWIS:** Do I take it that I have been admonished, Sir? May I ask you that?

**The SPEAKER:** Would the honourable member repeat his question?

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr LEWIS:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. In this pamphlet that I have been reading from there are certain headings which obviously refer to those tender spots in the Labor Party's present political position where it feels under threat, and where it is being hurt because it is being found out. The slogan at the head of the pamphlet is 'South Australia winning again'. Hell, if we are to win the sorts of things that we won at the last election then we really do have something to look forward to. We went from being the lowest taxed State in the Commonwealth to being, if not the highest, certainly the highest taxed State on the mainland during the life of this Government. If we are to win more of that sort of thing during the next Parliament, in

the event that we are so unfortunate in South Australia that a Labor Government is re-elected, heaven help us because it will be one hell of a time.

One of the headings to which I am referring is 'Generating jobs'. The Premier says that energy and hard work are needed. I know that it is no nine to five job. That is in direct contravention of the general ethics of the trade union movement which sees working outside the hours of nine to five as requiring some specific provision for overtime and penalty rates. Whether the Premier works from nine to five, or longer, is immaterial as far as I am concerned. I am sure that for the most part the people in South Australia also see it that way. After all, if the Premier cannot stand the heat he ought to get out of the kitchen. That is what Truman had to say about people who complained about the degree of difficulty they found in the work that they had to do.

It also states in the pamphlet that the Premier is fighting hard to secure the giant Roxby Downs development. You could have fooled me! It was just over three years ago, by a matter of a week or two, that the Premier was standing in this place saying that Roxby was a mirage in the desert, that there was no future in the whole thing anyway and that the sooner it was dispatched by him and his colleagues into the history books as a non-event the happier he would be. Anything is possible from a Labor politician, I presume—a complete about-face.

He says that he is getting behind small business with the creation of a Small Business Corporation. Frankly, he has been getting behind small business—no question about that—but I would not describe the knife in his hand as the Small Business Corporation. I did not know that the Small Business Corporation was a Labor Party initiative or idea. It certainly was not the Premier's initiative, and it certainly had its origins during the term of the previous Government. The pamphlet also states that he is putting Adelaide on the map and that we are leading the nation. I do not know in which direction!

The very fact that on the final panel of the pamphlet it is necessary for the Premier to address himself to the question of taxes clearly indicates the sensitivity with which the Labor Party views its record on that policy issue. It is quite properly perceived to be a high taxing Party. It has increased taxes when it said it would not and the total revenue it collects now is in excess of \$190 a year more for every man, woman and child in this State than was being collected at the time it came to office. That represents an increase of over 50 per cent for every person living in this State of the amount of taxes being collected from them by the State Government since this Government was elected. That is a fact.

I want to turn now to another matter relating to the capacity of members to function effectively whilst addressing other honourable members in the Chamber. I guess that, if I had made this point earlier, it would have helped the member for Peake, who I notice left the Chamber just now.

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr LEWIS:** He is hiding behind the Speaker's Chair. I am sorry, I did not see him there. I apologise to the member for Peake also, as I had not expected to see him there. The problem to which I refer relates to my height and the height of the benches. My stance at this point is obviously ungainly but at least more comfortable than if I had to do what some honourable members do, namely, bend over with their shoulders hunched and the backs of their hands resting on the bench in front of them. So that the bench-top level retains its relevance to us while sitting and working in this place, we need to be provided with three small lecterns; they could be sat on the bench in front of members during their speeches so that members can stand and face the Chamber and speak in terms that are more easily understood

by all members. By so doing, the clarity of the remarks made would be very much greater.

I for one rely on lip reading quite a deal because of my considerable tone deafness, which is a direct result of my having to use farm machinery that was not properly muffled. (It is the kind of thing which one would not contemplate doing these days, but about which people knew so very little in times gone by.) However, that is an aside, and I must return to my proposition. It would not cost very much to provide the Chamber with three small lecterns, which could be sat on the bench-top and on which members could place their notes and papers without having to hold them up if they wished to speak from a normal standing position without crouching, crossing their legs or otherwise appearing ungainly. At the end of every parliamentary session when the *Hansard* pile gets tall enough at 14 to 16 inches high, I am comfortable because I can drag my *Hansards* across in front of me and put my notes on top. It was at that time during the preceding session of Parliament that I first struck on the idea, and I ask you, Mr Speaker, to look into that question.

**Mr Mathwin:** Why aren't we allowed to bring our own coat of arms?

**Mr LEWIS:** There are some useful suggestions being made. I do not know whether they are entirely serious or whether they are partly in jest. Anyway, before I conclude my remarks, I want to draw attention to a letter which I had the good fortune to stumble across when reading one of the newspaper tabloids that I always take the trouble to read. I find it most interesting and often quite entertaining, although equally often unfactual. It contains apparent fiction—and I thank the member for Fisher for providing me with a podium of parliamentary papers; it is very comfortable.

The correspondent to this newspaper tabloid wrote a letter. Lest I disclose its identity and his too soon, I will not quote the first sentence just now. The letter, in part, reads:

I believe that for too long our Party has taken the view from the city industrial base, but has not borrowed or promoted a true rural policy where most of our State income is derived.

To compare this with the aboriginal on their rights with the European settler is wrong.

However, I would fully support the broad-based conferences on the four points . . . mentioned.

1. Land use
2. Rural Taxes
3. Environmental impact of those taxes.
4. Social justice for 'all' rural Australians.

Unless we consider and act, the ostrich syndrome will continue its merry way on ALP rural policy.

That is the punch line. The man who wrote that letter was Mr Peter Dickson, who is an advocate for the Railways Union. I note that the member for Albert Park recognises the name—

**Mr Hamilton:** My word!

**Mr LEWIS:** —in my reference to Mr Dickson. It would have taken a lot of courage for Mr Dickson to write that letter. Equally, it would have taken a lot of objectivity on the part of the Editor of the *Herald* to publish it, because it is openly critical of the ALP's indifference to all rural people. The total global concept is the context in which the word 'all' is used in that letter, and Mr Dickson of Tailem Bend was referring to an article which appeared in the *Herald* preceding this edition. This is the *Herald* of April 1985—only three or four months ago—and the article to which he referred was written by Mr Norm Napper, of Pinnaroo. I have had my differences in discussion with both those gentlemen, but in recent times we have reached more common ground in our views of how the ALP is apparently unable to relate its policies and understanding to the people who live in rural communities. I would like

to say more about that later. I now seek leave to conclude my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

**SUPPLY BILL (No.2)**

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

**LIQUOR LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

**LAND TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

**PAY-ROLL TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

**STAMP DUTIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 5.50 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday 20 August at 2 p.m.