HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 6 March 1986

The SPEAKER (Hon. J.P. Trainer) took the Chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

PETITION: COOBER PEDY SCHOOL

A petition signed by 199 residents of Coober Pedy praying that the House urge the Government to make provision in the 1985-86 budget for the building of a new school at Coober Pedy was presented by the Hon. G.J. Crafter.

Petition received.

QUESTION

The SPEAKER: I direct that the following written answer to a question, as detailed in the schedule that I now table, be distributed and printed in *Hansard.*

PHILIPPINES FINANCES

In reply to **Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY** (27 February).

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: It is not possible to make predictions regarding future trading proposals with the Philippines at this early stage. The country is still suffering from a substantial foreign debt (estimated to be $US27.5 billion in 1985), a fall of 3 per cent in 1985 for real GDP and interest rates of up to 35 per cent. On top of this the Philippines is facing a critical balance of payments problem. However, despite the erosion of business confidence in the Philippines over the past couple of years, the Department of Trade in Canberra is hopeful of seeing a return to a more stable economy under the new Government. Australia's line of credit with the Philippines is open and discussions are to take place shortly with a view to extending the present availability. It is worth pointing out that our present line of credit quota of $A50 million has been significantly underutilised (to the extent that only $29 million has been used). Already shipping and air freight services have reopened and intending exporters are to maintain close contact with Austrade for indications from the Philippine Government on new trading conditions. It is also likely the Philippines may attract significantly more foreign aid, which may assist the financing of imports.

PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Premier (Hon. J.C. Bannon)—

Pursuant to Statute—

Public Service Board, Department of—Report, 1984-85.

By the Minister for Environment and Planning (Hon. D.J. Hopgood)—

Pursuant to Statute—

Planning Act 1982—Crown Development Report by South Australian Planning Commission on Villa Units, Port Augusta.

South Australian Planning Commission—Report, 1984-85.

By the Minister of Emergency Services (Hon. D.J. Hopgood)—

Pursuant to Statute—

Country Fire Services Board—Report, 1984-85.

By the Minister of Water Resources (Hon. D.J. Hopgood)—

Pursuant to Statute—

Engineering and Water Supply Department—Report, 1984-85.

By the Minister of Education (Hon. G.J. Crafter)—

Pursuant to Statute—

Advisory Council for Inter-Government Relations—Report for year ended 31 August 1985.

National Companies and Securities Commission—Report, 1984-85.

By the Minister of Labour (Hon. Frank Blevins)—

Pursuant to Statute—

Department of Labour—Report, 1984-85.

By the Minister of Correctional Services (Hon. Frank Blevins)—

Pursuant to Statute—

Department of Correctional Services—Report, 1984-85.

QUESTION TIME

HOSPITAL WAITING LISTS

Mr OLSEN: Will the Premier order the Minister of Health to investigate immediately the waiting lists at Adelaide's major public hospitals, following confirmation from a confidential Health Commission document that a serious situation is developing? The Minister of Health has consistently refused to acknowledge the severity of the situation facing South Australians seeking surgery at our major public hospitals. However, an internal Health Commission document provided to the Opposition reveals how serious the problem has become. The minutes of a meeting of the standing committee on waiting list management, held on 7 February, states:

> Substantial increases in the numbers on the waiting list for the Royal Adelaide Hospital, Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Flinders Medical Centre were noted. There has been a 43 per cent increase in the waiting list in the past 13 months.

This is completely contrary to the impression the Minister has attempted to give when questioned previously about waiting lists. Other information shows an 83 per cent increase in people waiting for ear, nose and throat surgery at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital between October 1984 and July last year. This waiting list now extends for up to two years.

This document indicates an attempt by the Government to cover up the seriousness of this situation brought about by the increasing pressure on the public hospital system following the introduction of Medicare and the Premier should order an immediate investigation to determine the full extent of waiting lists and what action is necessary to reduce them.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: I find that a very strange question from the Leader of the Opposition, posed in such a way and in an area in which he has not displayed a great deal of interest or knowledge in the past.

Mr Olsen: You haven't got an answer?

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: True, he has not got a question. That was quite a good interjection—you are dead right. I would have thought that, with all the things that could be questioned relating to so many matters of the day—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: —to raise this question in this way, knowing well that the Minister of Health is in another place where there is adequate time—

Mr Olsen interjecting:

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: There was Question Time there today. The Council had Question Time and the Minister of Health could have been asked—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: Such is their childish excitement at what they think is a document that they just could

not resist asking a question about it. The whole issue of waiting lists in hospitals is complex indeed.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: The former Minister whose undistinguished record in health we all know is interjecting. If she remembers practically nothing about her unhappy experience in that portfolio, she might remember that there are a number of complexities involved in how waiting lists are defined, how they are compiled, hospital to hospital, in what area, and in what area they are given. That is the starting point.

In answer to the question, I will say, as the Leader of the Opposition will have expected, that the question could better be addressed to my colleague the Minister of Health, who knows the situation very well, who has made a number of comments and statements about it and who is addressing the problems quite comprehensively. It is as simple as that: that is the answer and, for this subject to be the lead question and for the Leader of the Opposition to be yelling out, 'This is my last chance, this is why I have to introduce this matter,' I find quite extraordinary and an indication of the complete sterility of the Opposition at the moment.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE

Mr RANN: Will the Minister of Transport, representing the Minister of Tourism in another place, approach His Excellency the Governor to suggest the possibility and feasibility of allowing tours of Government House by the public to mark our Jubilee 150 celebrations? Their Excellencies Sir Donald and Lady Dunstan have very kindly agreed to open the grounds of Government House to mark the Adelaide Festival of Arts. I understand that guides from the Botanic Gardens will conduct tours of the grounds from 17 March to 21 March. I am advised that, at the colonial ball to be held in the grounds in April, guests will also be able to view the historic state and public rooms located on the ground floor of Government House, which has a history stretching back to 1839, in the time of Governor Gawler.

It has been put to me that there would be enormous public interest if the ground floor rooms of Government House—including the State Dining Room, the Ball Room, the Adelaide Room, the Morning Room, the two drawing rooms—could occasionally be opened to the public for organised tours.

I am advised that there would be some technical difficulties involved, but the tremendous response of tens of thousands of South Australians in visiting Carrick Hill on several open days is testimony to the enormous public and tourist interest there would be in such a move at Government House.

The Victorian Public Service Board recommended in February that Government House in Melbourne be open to the public to help pay for its restoration. That report found that if the Victorian viceregal residence was open to the public it would be 'A unique and therefore international attraction in the sense that no other Government House in the world regularly opens its doors to visitors.'

I am advised that other official residences, including Windsor Castle and the White House, regularly have tours of their public and state rooms at certain times and that these arrangements are made so as not to interfere with official duties of Her Majesty or the United States President. These tours do not of course include any intrusion into the private and domestic quarters. It has been put to me that if agreement could be reached to allow the public, under supervision, to tour the grounds and state rooms of Government House on a weekly or monthly basis then South Australia would add substantially to its tourist infrastructure.

The Hon. G.F. KENEALLY: I will be delighted to refer this very excellent suggestion to my colleague the Minister of Tourism in another place.

The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy: Why didn't you ask it in another place, where the Minister is?

The SPEAKER: Order! If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition can restrain himself I will be able to call on the member for Bragg.

BUS STRIKE

Mr INGERSON: Will the Government tell the bus drivers union that the essential services legislation will be invoked if the bus and tram strike becomes prolonged, and, if not, why not? I have received many complaints from people of all ages about the irresponsible behaviour of this union. It has been put to me that all the Government has done is show impotence and inertia over this dispute, of which it was given notice almost three months ago. The essential services legislation is on the Statute Book to deal with circumstances that cause economic and social dislocation. As this dislocation is now occurring, as a result of this strike, the Government must tell the union that it will not hesitate to take appropriate action if the strike is prolonged to force the union to give more consideration to the public.

The Hon. G.F. KENEALLY: The short answer to the question is 'No', and there are very good reasons for that response. I should point out to the honourable member and his colleagues, who ought to know, that this legislation was introduced into this Parliament and became law in 1981. Since that time it has not been invoked, and there are very good reasons for that. The Liberal Party in government was never prepared to invoke the essential services Act, but now that they are in Opposition they are anxious to recommend to the Government that it should invoke what would be an inflammatory piece of legislation in relation to the current dispute.

The Government aims at resolving this dispute, not inflaming it: this action, proposed or suggested, could only hope to inflame the situation and one wonders why, when there is to be a union meeting at the Dom Polski centre at 2.30 today, the shadow Minister of Transport has put this question before the Parliament at 2.15 p.m., 15 minutes before the union is due to meet, as a possible course of action for the Government. The Government has acted as it always has and its record is quite clear in this matter: it has acted in a way that has proven in the past and will in the future (because we will be in government a long time) that the best way to solve disputes is by taking the firm position that this Government has taken.

It has brought the whole dispute to a head. The union is meeting at 2.30 p.m. today. I hope that as a result of that meeting the commuters will be able to have their bus service tomorrow—that is my expectation. I can tell members of this House and the people of South Australia that, if I were even to suggest that I was considering invoking this legislation, there would be no bus services tomorrow or next week and a lot of other services in this State would be under threat. That is just what the Opposition wants. It would get a great deal of enjoyment and, as it suspects, some political advantage out of it.

It is a pity that the previous member for Davenport, who had slightly more industrial and economic sense than present members of the Opposition, is not still in this place, as I am certain that he would not come up with such a crazy suggestion or, if he did, it would be under duress from his less informed colleagues.

COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION

Mr KLUNDER: Will the Minister of Employment and Further Education inform the House if his inquiries have shed any light on the serious allegations raised by the Opposition yesterday concerning misuse of Federal Government materials at the Underdale campus of the South Australian College of Advanced Education?

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: I am happy to provide a report to members of this place, and I am sure that members are eager to receive it, since the allegations raised yesterday had the potential to be very serious indeed. Members will recall that the member for Hanson stated yesterday that over the past six months he had received a number of allegations that a person at the Underdale campus of the South Australian College of Advanced Education had added quite significantly to his personal possessions through lavish use of college materials and machinery, not to mention time paid for by the taxpayer. He advised the House that he had photographs of goods in various stages of production and indicated that the workshop at the Underdale campus was something of an Aladdin's cave from which this fellow was, at taxpayers' expense, making goods for himself.

The most appropriate thing for me to do, since I indicated that I would seek a report from the Tertiary Education Authority of South Australia, is to read the report that I have today received, and I will paraphrase the last paragraph for reasons that I will explain. The report I received from the Chairman of the Tertiary Education Authority of South Australia states:

> The management of the SACAE has investigated the allegations made. It is satisfied that the employee concerned:
> - has not used college materials to construct the items of furniture—he has receipts to prove purchase of the materials;
> - constructed the items in his own time, not during working hours.
>
> It is the case that the college's workshop was used after hours but this is not thought to be a serious matter.

I will paraphrase the last paragraph as it gives the point of contact from where I or my officers may get information from the college or the Tertiary Education Authority. I do not wish to enter into *Hansard* the names of those people without their permission at this stage. A further piece of action that I have initiated as a result of this report was the making of a request to the college that I see copies of receipts and to indicate that at the next available opportunity I will table them in this place. I am advised by my staff that officers have in fact sighted the receipts (so they do exist), but I give the assurance that I wish to see them myself and that I will table them for members in this place.

That being the case, rather than being an Aladdin's cave whereby this fellow was doing his own private activities during time paid for by the taxpayer or using materials paid for by the taxpayer, it indicates that the member for Hanson has chosen to bring into the House an Aesop's fable. A number of aspects concern me considerably about the way in which the member for Hanson has pursued the matter. I asked yesterday, as I believed it was a serious complaint that deserved serious investigation, that I be supplied with the photographs which the member indicated he had in his possession.

I asked the honourable member whether he would make those photographs available to me. In fairness, he eventually did—at 4.30 p.m.—when they were put on my desk in this Chamber. This did not occur in sufficient time to get them from this Chamber to the South Australian college, as officers finish work at the reasonable time of 5 p.m. Why was it about two hours later? It was because the honourable member felt that it was not so important to investigate the substance of the allegations—in other words, to give me the evidence to follow it through. The honourable member felt that it was more important to gain press attention for it and he took the photographs for the press to see first. That is why I got them last and that is why any attempt to proceed with this investigation with speed was hindered, not helped, by the member for Hanson. I give credit to my officers and those of the Tertiary Education Authority and the South Australian college because, without the benefit of the photographs (I had my inquiry going through straight after Question Time, we could not wait for the photographs), they have been able to trace it down and, in fact, were helped last night by the television channels which provided the visuals on air.

The other point that concerns me is that the member for Hanson admits that he has known about this matter for some time. He said in his question, 'During the past six months'. In fact, if he is the inveterate watchdog for the public purse that he claims to be, where was he six months ago, or even five months ago? Instead, he chose to allow this matter, in what I regard as a very ugly and irresponsible way, to fester on before he brought it to the attention of this place. The photographs that he has since delivered to me indicate that that was precisely the case, because they show goods in various stages of production. They can only have been taken over a period of time.

I would have thought that, if there was an allegation of serious misdoing in a college, it was the responsibility of that person to report that matter, not to sit in waiting behind some cupboard or desk with a camera at the ready hoping to bring together over a six month period some allegations of misuse of resources. That is an ugly way to pursue this sort of issue. If there is an allegation of misuse of resources, surely the obligation is to bring that to the attention of the appropriate people at the earliest opportunity, not lie in some kind of mischievous wait to see the person trap themselves further into the net so that some kind of grand slam can be achieved by the member for Hanson for his own shallow political purpose.

I hope that the next time the honourable member has this sort of issue to raise before the House he does so in a more responsible way and brings it to my attention in a way that other members have often brought concerns or worries; and that, when he does so, he gives me the evidence much more quickly than he has on this occasion. I hope that he does not wait for six months for the next episode to be investigated, but that he brings it to my attention as soon as it is brought to his attention.

I repeat that I have asked for the receipts. I want to see them, and I am certain that other members do, also. I will have them tabled in the House. I assure the honourable member that I will not wait some hours after they have been received to table them in the House. I will do so at the earliest possible opportunity when this House is sitting.

TAX INCREASES

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Will the Premier give a clear and unequivocal commitment that existing taxes will not be increased nor will any new taxes be introduced during the 1986-87 financial year?

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: I have not come to the point of preparing the 1986-87 budget at this stage. I would have thought that experience of our State's finances is sufficient to suggest that I am not going to speculate about what will happen in any budget. However, I draw to the attention of honourable members and the Deputy Leader the threat that is facing State finances at the moment by the leaked documents and comments about the attitude that the Federal Government may take at the State Premiers' meeting. I refer, as I did last week and before the election, to the way

in which we have improved our financial position in this State and got our deficit under control and our balance in order.

Incidentally, it is very interesting that in September members of the Opposition in this Parliament were moving motions of no confidence about the financial mismanagement of the State and how we were drastically in debt and about to go down the drain. Apparently we were not being permitted to take any action to correct that if that were the case, but of course they know it is not. We are confronted today with a report in the *Sydney Morning Herald* suggesting that we have $2.1 million of spare cash lying idly around.

Well, I can deal with that but not in this context. I would like to put very clearly on the record that if our Commonwealth tax share is jeopardised, the State's financial position becomes very parlous indeed and the massive cuts in services that could follow, and the problems in terms of our own revenue raising, could be quite drastic. Under the agreement reached at last year's Premiers Conference, we have been promised a 2 per cent real growth in 1986-87 and 1987-88. In fact, it is more than a promise, because it is embedded in sections 6 (2) and 8 (2) of the States Grants (General Revenue) Act 1985 passed by the Federal Parliament. If that is to be changed, the legislation has to be changed as well.

That is where the agreement is embodied, and I point out that that agreement was a result of protracted negotiations and a squeezing of States' finances to a very great extent. In South Australia's case, we were particularly disadvantaged because of the Commonwealth Grants Commission recommendations. In fact, we were assisted by a special allowance to offset that problem in 1985-86. The $34 million assistance that we obtained then reduces under the agreement to $17 million in 1986-87 and to zero in 1987-88. Even with the 2 per cent in real growth which is part of the agreement, South Australia, because of the changed sharing arrangements, will receive practically zero real growth in 1986-87 and 1987-88. That is how serious the position is. If we want to put that in quantitative terms, we would see that in 1986-87 that would cost us $24.7 million and in 1987-88, $26.8 million. They are big sums of money.

Coupled with the problems of the phasing out of the arrangement under which we put all Loan Council borrowings to housing, we are, even under the present agreement, at a significant disadvantage. Why I have said in the past that I have not been particularly concerned about these speculations and statements from Canberra is that I was relying on—as I think we have a right to do—unequivocal statements made by the Federal Treasurer last year. Members may recall, and I have referred to this in the House before, that the shadow Treasurer (the person whom members opposite support, an identity known as Jim Carlton, for those who have never heard of him) last year said that the Federal Government should scrap the agreement with the States and cut back the States. We have heard not a word of protest from those members opposite who rise in their places and ask me to make representations to Mr Keating and Mr Hawke—not a word—when their own shadow Treasurer is saying what should be done to solve the problem.

For a start, I would suggest that the Opposition take up that matter. The Federal Treasurer was asked by the member for Kingston (Mr Bilney) on 13 November in the House of Representatives whether he had seen reports of the proposals of the shadow Treasurer to cut back fundings to the States and whether there was any danger that the Hawke Government would adopt this advice. Mr Keating said:

> We definitely will not be adopting that advice. We will not be adopting it because the outcome for the States which the Government secured at the Premiers Conference and Loan Council meetings this year was perhaps the tightest outcome for the States for years.

That is what Mr Keating said: it is unequivocal, it reinforced that agreement, and I would expect him to honour it. There is no evidence, apart from speculation, that he intends not to do so. While I am on this point, let me put on the record as well that if we are talking about restraints in expenditure and setting our financial houses in order, the States—and particularly South Australia—have a far better track record than the Federal Government under successive regimes.

Mr Keating certainly, as Treasurer, and the Hawke Government have done some amazing things in terms of economic recovery and of getting control of a burgeoning Federal Government deficit, and I congratulate them on what they have done. The States have cooperated with them in that regard. I still make the point that, if, for instance, we look at Commonwealth expenditure on its own purpose outlays since 1977-78, those figures have grown by 47 per cent in real terms, while payments to the States have grown by 5 per cent in real terms.

I think that figure starkly indicates that the States have pulled in their belts, and they are ensuring that their budgets are kept under control (and that is certainly the case for South Australia), but there is work still to be done at the Commonwealth level if that is the course the Federal Treasurer wants to take. There must be cooperation in this area, but cooperation does not mean tearing up an agreement made last year and transferring the problem from one level of public expenditure to another.

STATE GOVERNMENT RESERVES

Mr DUIGAN: Can the Premier explain to the House whether or not the State Government has $2.15 billion held in reserves, as claimed in a report in today's *Sydney Morning Herald*? The report suggests that the leaked Federal Cabinet documents allege that $2.15 billion is being held by the South Australian Government and that that could lead to the Federal Government slashing grants to South Australia. Will the Premier inform the House whether this amount of $2.15 billion actually exists?

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: I thank the member for Adelaide for asking a question that one would have expected the Leader of the Opposition to ask, if he has actually been following events of the day and matters of public importance to South Australia, instead of asking me a question in this Chamber for the Minister of Health. The member for Adelaide has just demonstrated the paucity of ideas and priorities of members opposite. This is a serious matter. If in fact the Federal Government, Federal Treasury sources or the media allow the impression to develop that in some way the States—and South Australia in particular—have great caches of cash which they are setting aside, there is no question that the Commonwealth Government will be encouraged to interfere with the agreement that I referred to a moment ago. In fact, the article is based on a complete misunderstanding of the structure of State Government indebtedness and cash reserves.

I cannot speak for the other States, but I imagine that in some respects their situation is similar to ours. I might add that of all the States only South Australia publishes meaningful and comprehensive information on our debt and financial assets. We do that because we believe that it is in the public interest to do so. In consequence, we have to put up with a lot of ignorant nonsense—particularly from the Opposition—about what it all means. Here we have similar ignorant nonsense appearing in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (supposedly from federal sources). The fact is that the $2.15

billion suggested has been taken from a figure in our comprehensive paper published as part of the Budget documents—'Trends to the indebtedness of the South Australian public sector 1950-85'.

The figure has been interpreted quite wrongly. It does not represent some form of spare cash sitting idly in the State coffers; it represents all the forms of financial assets held by the public sector and includes items such as capital provided to the State Bank, loans to the State Bank for housing, loans to farmers for natural disaster and rural adjustment purposes and shares and loans to the South Australian Oil and Gas Corporation. That is just a sample of areas where funds are tied up and where our State Government Financing Authority has massed together certain assets and recorded them as such against which liabilities must be offset. Obviously, these funds are not available to finance expenditure.

They are in no way a support for an argument to reduce Commonwealth funding. I certainly acknowledge that over the past three years we have tried to build up our cash reserves. So we should have because during the 1982-83 period our cash reserves were at risk of running so dangerously low that by December 1983 we would not have been able to pay the salary bill at Christmas 1983 and we would have had to go to the Commonwealth Government for special assistance, because our cash balances would have dropped to an alarmingly low level. I was determined that that situation should not arise and, whatever fluctuations one could reasonably anticipate, we have a level of cash balance that will ensure that we can meet these obligations without recourse to emergency action.

We have built up those cash balances to $170 million which, against our liabilities, is a reasonable level. We make that money work, and so we should because, if we did not, we would have to increase the tax burden or cut public services. Indeed, the money that SAFA is earning for us (about $80 million this financial year if we are on budget) is absolutely vital to the continuance of the services of the State and, by making our contingency cash work to the greatest possible benefit for South Australia, we are ensuring that we can decrease our demands not just on our own taxpaying citizens but on the Commonwealth Government as well. The Commonwealth Government should be enthusiastically endorsing the way in which we have tackled this area of money management in order to secure a maximum return to the State.

So, that is the answer to the nonsense that is being peddled. I hope that that nonsense is not the result of some sort of concerted campaign to soften up the Premiers before the Premiers Conference but, if it is, it is having a nil effect on me and I will go to that conference with those facts and figures, insisting that, far from the agreement being scrapped, we look particularly at changes in the arrangements covering housing to make sure that the housing market remains strong through 1986-87.

MANOS POULTRY INDUSTRIES

Mr S.J. BAKER: Will the Minister of Labour confirm that Manos Poultry Industries was one of the companies to which he was referring in the House earlier this week in relation to companies facing increases in workers compensation premiums? I have been informed that the industrial safety record of Manos is particularly poor. During the past three years there have been 216 claims for compensation and last year those claims amounted to more than $500 000. I understand that SGIC has rejected Manos as a bad risk. Manos is therefore the sort of company that would be subsidised by the Government's workers compensation legislation. It would also be particularly illuminating to know whether it was one of those companies to which the Minister was referring in view of the money this company spent during the election campaign to advertise in support of the Labor Party.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: The answer is 'No'. I will not confirm the statement made by the member for Mitcham. It is a very sad day when someone comes into this Parliament, names a company, and gives the alleged business details of that company, and I should think that people in the business community who in the past have been known to back the Liberal Party would be just as disgusted as I am. The question illustrates well the way in which standards have slipped. Regarding any support of the Labor Party by Mr Manos, I assume that that refers to an advertisement that was taken out during the election campaign. That is clearly on the record. As the issue of support by business for political Parties during the election campaign has been raised by the member for Mitcham, I think it is only fair to say that, if Mr Manos supported the Labor Party, that was open and on the record.

What I would like to hear—and I am still waiting to hear it—is not whether the Insurance Council backed the Liberal Party during the last State election, because that is obvious. The Leader has the opportunity to deny it and has not done so. What we are interested to know is how much the Insurance Council gave you. That is the question. It is not whether the Insurance Council gave you anything, but how much—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: I am quite happy to say that outside. There is no problem in saying that. I believe that the insurance companies gave you a donation prior to the last election: they gave the Liberal Party a donation prior to the last election. I am happy to say that outside. All I want is a denial, but there is a very serious issue here and the issue with workers compensation is the increase in premiums that are now taking place, where employers—not just Mr Manos, but employers—are coming to me and complaining about the increase in premiums. Ask anyone in the rural industry, ask the member for Flinders, who has some regard for rural industry, about the increases being sought, and all those peole being directed to the Liberal Party and the Democrats.

The Liberal Party is squirming and trying to get off the hook by saying that it is the Democrats who hold the balance of power. If the Liberal Party does not want those increases in workers compensation premiums to go ahead, all it has to do is pass the legislation. It cannot unload the responsibility onto someone else. The Chamber of Commerce, the Employers Federation, the UF&S are all saying to you—we know they are saying to you—that the increases now coming from insurance companies for workers compensation premiums cannot be sustained. It is down to you.

INSURANCE POLICIES

Mr ROBERTSON: Will the Minister of Education, representing the Attorney-General in another place, ask the Attorney-General to consider legislating to provide that insurance companies can be held liable for the accuracy or otherwise of information conveyed to people purchasing policies from contract agents of those companies? I have before me statutory declarations made by three persons, all of whom claim to have been misled by one single agent of National Mutual. I will make these decclarations available to the Minister. One of the declarations, sworn by my constituent, Mr S.G. Kirkbride, of O'Sullivan Beach, says in part:

... In April 1980, I was involved in an explosion at Sola Optical, Lonsdale... In September 1982, Sola terminated my employment due to prolonged ill health... A few weeks later, a representative from Nation Mutual came to my home... to offer me superannuation. I told him I was unemployed and only on sickness benefits. He told me if I joined before the end of the month I was back in superannuation. He went on to say I would be a fool not to join because the policy was worth $20 000... During the conversation I told him no less than three times that with the injury I had received, I could possibly be made disabled. This did not deter him one bit... I agreed... He then produced a blank proposal form for me to sign. I signed it and asked if he required anything else. He said, 'No, I will fill the form in when I get back to head office.' I paid the first payment to him there and then... I then said to him, 'What would happen if I was made disabled?' He said a representative would come from National Mutual to my home and hand me a cheque for $20 000... About a week later I received a certificate of membership plus a pamphlet containing conditions appertaining to policy rules, but no policy. One paragraph in the pamphlet read, 'If you are not gainfully employed you are not eligible to have superannuation.' I immediately rang this agent... and told him I was concerned... He said, 'That doesn't apply to you.' I told him there was no policy in the envelopes. He said I would receive it in the near future. No policy or any copy ever came... In October 1983, I informed National Mutual I was now disabled... They immediately told me I was not eligible to have this policy. I rang... (an employee of National Mutual) and demanded a copy of the policy... I went to National Mutual's head office in King William Street... It was then that I found out that this representative had put me down as working in a steelworks, which was totally untrue.

In less detail, the other two statutory declarations tell a similar story.

I must make it clear that National Mutual did refund the premiums paid plus 9.5 per cent interest. However, the concern about signing the declarations is that the company has made it clear to them during the negotiations that it cannot be held responsible for any statements made by its contract agents. My question is designed to ensure that obligations entered into by agents are honoured by the companies concerned.

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER: I thank the honourable member for bringing this matter to the attention of the House. I will most certainly have the statutory declarations to which he refers and other information transmitted to the Attorney-General for his urgent investigation.

AIDS TASK FORCE

Mr BECKER: Will the Minister of Correctional Services—

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr BECKER: That is about the standard that I would expect. As a member of the PAC, you ought to have a little more sense.

The SPEAKER: Order! Interjections are out of order.

Mr BECKER: Has the AIDS Task Force asked the South Australian Government to allow condoms to be issued to prisoners as part of an experiment to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted diseases? I understand that the AIDS Task Force has made this request to a number of States. It has already been opposed by prison officers in New South Wales and Victoria. A spokesman for the New South Wales Prison Officers Association was quoted last week in the Melbourne *Age* as saying that although he understood the realities of homosexuality in gaols, the use of condoms would only serve to promote unhealthy practices. I ask the Minister whether South Australia has yet been asked to consider participation in this experiment and, if it has not, whether the Government would agree to the idea if it was approached by the AIDS Task Force.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: I have no idea, but I will get a report for the honourable member. It is the first that I have heard of it.

INTEREST RATE PROTECTION PLAN

Mr TYLER: Can the Minister of Housing and Construction give the House further details of the recently announced interest rate protection plan for home buyers? I have been approached by several of my constituents who wanted to know if they were eligible for assistance provided under the plan. My investigations confirm that one of the home buyers was eligible for assistance; another might be but he had first to meet with his bank manager; and a third was eligible for mortgage relief. Could the Minister tell the House for the benefit of all the members exactly how the new plan will work?

The Hon. T.H. HEMMINGS: I thank the member for his question. It seems that there is some confusion in the minds of people who are seeking benefits under the home interest rate protection plan. Some of it is coming from the lending institutions and the building societies; whether or not that is deliberate, I do not know. One of the disturbing features is that we have had calls from people in South Australia who have said that they have been misled by members of Parliament. I am presently trying to find out exactly which member of Parliament is misleading. We will follow through that investigation and I will be able to give a report to Parliament.

I think for the benefit of the House I should explain exactly how the interest rate protection plan works. The plan is part of this Government's home guarantee program. The program is designed to help home buyers who are having difficulty meeting their mortage repayments because of interest rate rises or loss of income. This Government has acted specifically to help counter the effects of interest rate rises on existing home buyers. The new plan does just that. We know that there are many people who have bought homes in the past 12 to 18 months who could not have foreseen the interest rate increases that have occurred in that period.

The plan is targeted at people who have bought a home since 1 July 1984; that is an eligibility requirement. Other conditions are that outstanding housing loans on the home must not exceed $75 000 and that the applicant has no other property that could be occupied or sold. Another criterion, and perhaps the most important, is that current loan repayments must consume more than 30 per cent of gross household income, with repayments now representing a larger proportion of income than at the commencement of the loan.

The last criterion really contains the crux of the plan: it states that, if your house repayments have climbed beyond what most lending institutions consider to be an affordable rate, the State Government is ready to help you. There is an income eligblity test, of course. Currently, for a family (and that includes single parents with two children) the gross weekly income can be up to $531. There are other income limits for other types of households, including couples without dependants and single people.

Assistance of up to $30 a week is available. This is paid in monthly instalments direct to the lender. The assistance provided is in the form of an unsecured interest-free loan or, in special circumstances, a grant. Before applying, however, home buyers in difficulty must first consult their bank or building society to see whether their problem can be resolved through a restructing of their loan or capitalisation of the most recent building society interest rate increase. The Government believes this process is necessary and the interest rate protection plan is offered to home buyers in trouble as a last resort.

This Government is not prepared to see home buyers forced to sell their homes. That is not in the interest of families or the community. We are thus prepared to step

in where all reasonable measures have already been taken to resolve mortgage difficulties but have proved insufficient. Buyers who feel they qualify for assistance under the plan should contact the South Australian Housing Trust, which is administering the plan on behalf of the Government.

PLANNING SELECT COMMITTEE

The Hon. JENNIFER ADAMSON: Does the Minister for Environment and Planning intend to re-establish a select committee to enquire into and report upon section 56 of the Planning Act 1982 and related matters, and, if not, why not? Section 56 (1) *(a)* is suspended until the end of September 1986. The committee established to examine the section, which is in doubt following High Court judgment on the Dorrestijn case, met on only one occasion before Parliament was prorogued for the State election.

Relevant organisations such as the Urban Development Institute of Australia, the Real Estate Institute, the Environmental Law Association and the United Farmers and Stockowners, are all anxious that the matter be resolved. The existing stop-start situation has created uncertainty which makes planning decisions extremely difficult if not impossible, and is holding up important developments which could create employment in South Australia. The re-establishment of the select committee to clarify this situation is seen by these organisations as an urgent priority.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: The honourable member has an advantage over me. I had assumed that in fact the other place had re-established the committee.

The Hon. Jennifer Adamson: You as Minister should know—you should not make assumptions.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: I am not continually in the other place.

The Hon. Jennifer Adamson interjecting:

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: Yes, from time to time, as we pass in the corridor, as I do to the honourable member. If the select committee has not been re-established by the other place, it is the responsibility of that other place to re-establish it. I make perfectly clear—and will try to be as brief as I possibly can, although I am being interrupted by interjections which tend to send me off at a tangent—that the Government sees no problem at all about the excision of these sections from the Act, and never has done so. Sections of the Liberal Party and sections of the Australian Democrats have seen problems. Those fears have not been borne out in practice, because we have now effectively had over two years of the operation of the legislation without that section and subsections, and the structure of metropolitan Adelaide has not collapsed.

We have been able to run an effective planning system. There has been no hardship whatsoever. I challenge the honourable member to bring forward evidence to suggest that there has been any hardship in relation to the operation of the legislation. This Government is quite happy for any sort of inquiry to be established. We want merely to ensure that, when the present sunset provision runs out, we will be able to remove those sections from the Act permanently as they should have been removed two years ago without all this nonsense that we have had to go through.

If the Legislative Council believes that that is the only way in which it can justify the ultimate removal of those sections, so be it. That is the piece of machinery that the Legislative Council will have adopted to do it. However, that is its business, not mine. My responsibility is to ensure that the Planning Act operates effectively, and the most effective way for it to operate is by the excision of that section.

WORKERS REHABILITATION AND COMPENSATION BILL

Mr S.J. BAKER: Why did the Minister of Labour submit a false document to the Auditor-General for costing of the Government's proposals in relation to the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Bill? A document was provided to the Auditor-General dated October 1985. On the front the authorship was ascribed to Ted Fedorovich and Dr Trevor Mules from the University of Adelaide. I have been advised that Dr Trevor Mules has not been involved in any costing proposals since the issue of the white paper, yet the paper states:

> The report also incorporates the cost effects of the changes made as a result of submissions received on the State Government's white paper.

No costing proposals were made by Dr Mules *apropos* the white paper, yet this—

Mr Ferguson interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr S.J. BAKER: —document tends to suggest that there is some authenticity to the information that was provided to the Auditor-General.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: I am at a loss to know what the honourable member is on about.

Mr S.J. Baker: I bet you are.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: Well, I am.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the Leader of the Opposition to order. The honourable Minister.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: Thank you, Mr Speaker. All the information collected by my office was made available to the Auditor-General. I have no reason at all to believe that any of it is false or misleading. It has been clearly stated how the material has been collected and by whom, and who wrote it, etc. Seeing that it seems to be causing a great deal of excitement among members opposite, I will have the document examined to see if there is anything strange or misleading about it, and I will let the honourable member know if I find anything of any interest. At this stage I cannot help the honourable member any further.

The Auditor-General in his report has expressed, to say the least, some reluctance to be involved any further with the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Bill. Indeed, I would be very reluctant—and I am sure the Auditor-General would be delighted about this—to refer anything further to the Auditor-General on this topic as his view is that, as it may be part of his responsibility to check the new corporation when it comes into operation, he should not really be involved in a political brawl prior to its establishment. That is a view with which I have a great deal of sympathy.

YOUNG DRIVER AWARD

Mrs APPLEBY: Is the Minister of Transport aware of any intention to continue the Young Driver of the Year Award which was so recently completed during the International Year of Youth? The Division of Road Safety of the Department of Transport has just completed the staging of the Mitsubishi and Advertiser Group Young Driver of the Year Award in South Australia. Entries were received from some 500 young people from all over our State and 20 finalists were selected. A number of my constituents have been delighted in the activity and education of road safety that this award has stimulated among youth. Therefore, I seek the Minister's consideration of ensuring that this award be established on an ongoing basis. For the

information of the House, Paul Miller of Glengowrie was the successful State finalist.

The Hon. G.F. KENEALLY: I thank the honourable member for her continued interest in the Young Driver of the Year Award. I should acknowledge and congratulate the honourable member on her initiative in 1985 in trying to encourage the State Government through the Division of Road Safety to introduce such a scheme. So, her continued interest in the matter is well known and appreciated. The young driver award was very successful. There was, as the honourable member pointed out, 500 entrants throughout the State. It received wide publicity and wide acceptance. It highlighted the need for young people to improve their driving skills, particularly their defensive skills.

The motivation behind the young driver award is to try to improve the standard of driving amongst young people where, unfortunately, a high number of accidents and deaths occur. The success of this initiative is such that at the moment consideration is being given to a national Young Driver of the Year Award. Of course, that will need the support of other States, but at least South Australia has given the lead in this area. For our own part here in South Australia, it has been decided to have the award again this year and next year. All road safety programs need to be continually evaluated. A stage is reached where, if the money spent on a road safety program is not cost effective, the future of that expenditure must be considered. At this stage, this award is in our view cost effective, and a decision has been made for it to be held in the next two years.

LEAGUE FOOTBALL VENUES

Mr M.J. EVANS: Will the Minister of Recreation and Sport seek representation on the proposed SANFL commission which will determine the future venues for league football matches in South Australia? The SANFL is presently considering the establishment of a commission to review the allocation of ovals and venues for league matches in South Australia in order to rationalise the playing arrangements. While there can be no doubt that the commission members appointed by the league will be more than competent to address the professional football questions that would arise during the commission's investigations, there is some concern in the northern districts that the interests of the community will not be so well represented. There is much more at stake for the public who follow the game and who live in the outer suburbs, both south and north of Adelaide, and it has been put to me by concerned followers of the game at Elizabeth that the Government should be represented on the commission to ensure that social, recreational and economic factors associated with the massive community investment in these venues should be protected by the representation of the Government on the proposed commission.

The Hon. M.K. MAYES: I am not sure whether the honourable member wishes the Government to be represented or that he thinks the community should be represented to have, I assume from his question, community input in relation to the relocation. I can say that from my own electorate's point of view, Sturt has just moved from Unley Oval to Adelaide Oval following agreement with South Adelaide and the South Australian Cricket Association. I have heard on the grapevine that the SANFL is looking at a number of suggestions regarding a rationalisation of ovals and playing at league venues. Certainly, they are keeping ovals such as Unley for seconds matches and training facilities. It is important that the community has some input in considering what would be the future venues for major league matches.

I will be happy to look at the question. I have not yet determined whether the Government should have an input or whether it should seek discussions with the SANFL in relation to Government input. I am sympathetic to the view that the SANFL should take the community response into account, and I will be happy to take up the matter with it.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION: SIGMA DATA

Mr OLSEN (Leader of the Opposition): I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

Mr OLSEN: I refer to the Premier's statement in the House on Tuesday when he said (referring to the Lands Department contract recently awarded to Sigma Data):

> There is no South African shareholding or any other financial interest of any sort in the corporation.

He also said that there are no South African shareholders or directors in Sigma Data. Those statements are not correct. Recently, a leading South African retailer, Dion Friedland, was party to a 25 per cent share purchase in the privately owned Sigma Data. As references for further information about Sigma Data I cite the *Australian* of 18 February, the publication *Computing Australia* of 17 February, and an article attributed to Robert Kennedy in the business section of the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 14 February.

In making this statement I make no comment as to whether or not the Opposition approves of such a relationship between the State Government and a company with South African links. However, the facts the Premier purported to give the House on Tuesday are incorrect and this contract appears to be inconsistent with the Labor Party's attitude to trade with South Africa.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the House to order, including the member for Mawson and the Leader of the Opposition.

POULTRY MEAT HYGIENE BILL

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

OIL REFINERY (HUNDRED OF NOARLUNGA) INDENTURE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 5 March. Page 910.)

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): We support the Bill, certainly to the second reading stage, so that it can be referred to a select committee—at which stage I am sure that all will become clearer than it is at the moment. Those of us who received this and a similar Bill only yesterday have not had an opportunity to make any inquiries about them or to have a Party meeting to consider our attitude. However, on my reading of the Bills I think they appear to be reasonable. I await the deliberations of the select committee so that the matter can become clearer. With that in mind I support the Bill to the second reading stage so that a select committee—which Standing Orders dictate must be set up—can be set up.

Bill read a second time and referred to a select committee consisting of Messrs P.B. Arnold, Gregory, Goldsworthy, Payne, and Robertson; the committee to have power to

send for persons, papers and records, and to adjourn from place to place; the committee to have power to sit during the recess; the committee to report on the first day of next session.

MOBIL LUBRICATING OIL REFINERY (INDENTURE) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 5 March. Page 911).

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I support this Bill, for the reasons I advanced in support of the previous Bill.

Bill read a second time.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE (Minister of Mines and Energy): I move:

That this Bill be referred to the Select Committee on the Oil Refinery (Hundred of Noarlunga) Indenture Act Amendment Bill.

Motion carried.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Adjourned debate on motion for adoption.
(Continued from 5 March. Page 918).

Mr OLSEN (Leader of the Opposition): In rising to support the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply, I first want to recognise the contributions to this House and to public policy-making and implementation of those members who retired or were defeated at the election. From this side, I refer to Allan Rodda, John Mathwin, Michael Wilson, Dean Brown and Scott Ashenden.

Allan Rodda was the gentleman of Parliament. John Mathwin was a tenacious member in representing his constituents. Michael Wilson undertook detailed and comprehensive planning, the benefits of which will be enjoyed by present South Australians and future generations, in the form of the O-Bahn bus. Dean Brown was a principal participant in the proceedings of Parliament and in the development of Liberal Party policy while in Government. Indeed, Technology Park stands as a tribute in some small way to his contribution in this place. Scott Ashenden represented his constituents in the north-eastern suburbs in a way one could only describe as really genuine and sincere. Each of these members made a distinctive contribution both to this House and to the Liberal Party. I have already informed them of my gratitude for their service not only to the Party but indeed to the Parliament and to the people of South Australia. I look forward to the early return of some of these former members to this Chamber.

On the other side, Jack Wright and George Whitten have also retired. Whatever our political differences (and there were many) it was impossible to doubt the earthy sincerity both brought into this House in their support of Labor Party philosphy and policies. I wish them, as well as other members who have retired, a long and happy retirement.

Much has been said and written about the result of 7 December. The Premier can derive a great deal of satisfaction from the election. He is personally very popular with a significant number of South Australians. I referred to that on election night—and commended him for it. Also, he was seen to have led a Government which, according to the majority of voters, deserved a second term.

The Liberal Party—and I—respect that result. The reasons for it must be and are being analysed in depth and at length by us so that we are an effective Opposition during this parliamentary term and, at the end of it, are seen as a viable alternative Government. In considering the election result, I point out that the Liberal Party still has a solid base of support from which to challenge the Government over this parliamentary term and to mount our next election effort. Our vote on 7 December was higher than in 1973—and just two years later the Liberal Party came within 300 votes of toppling the Dunstan Government. It was also higher than in 1977, and I do not have to remind members opposite what was achieved within two years of that result.

At the same time, I do not underestimate the task in front of us. We face a Government which ran a very clever and successful campaign in the run up to and during the election. From a position in which, according to published opinion polls and the private polling of its own Party, the Government was behind in February, the tables were turned on us during the second half of last year. In particular, the Government was successful in establishing the perception (the false perception) that the Liberal Party was negative. I say that it was a false perception because no Opposition, at any previous election in South Australia, placed before the electors such a range of policies as we did last year. Further, no Opposition before has sought to define so clearly the choice between the major Parties for the benefit of the electors. But our policies and the Liberal choice were rejected because in the end we lost out in what I would call perception politics.

Here, I refer not only to perceptions created by things like the Grand Prix and ASER, important though they were from the Government's point of view. Of more importance was the perception which Labour was able to establish of the Liberal Party generally: that we were negatives, that we are uncaring, and that we support a form of capitalism which only emphasises profits, turns on selfishness and greed, and benefits the privileged few at the expense of the many—while Labor's brand of socialism, so Labor claims, emphasises people, turns on sharing, and is for the wellbeing of all.

I illustrate this point about perceptions by referring to two issues—interest rates and privatisation. The issue of interest rates was particularly damaging to the Liberal Party during the election. It exposed us as divided. As a result, Labor was able to suggest that, under the Liberals, interest rates would automatically rise, while under Labor, home owners were protected, when in fact the real reason for the current record interest rates is Labor's economic strategy.

I shall have more to say later about privatisation but, concerning perceptions established during the election campaign, a mistake was made in not explaining our policy earlier. This would have allowed us to put in its proper context the deliberate scaremongering of the Labor Party and union officials. The perceptions that Labor has set about interest rates, about privatisation, about the Liberal Party generally, are false perceptions, but they are also perceptions with which the the Liberal Party must come to terms and must change. This can be achieved only by persistent and consistent communication by the Liberal Party: not only in South Australia but throughout Australia, because the perceptions of a political Party know no limits set by State borders.

Recognising this, immediately after the Tasmanian and Western Australian elections, I called for a meeting of federal and State leaders of the Liberal Party. That meeting will be held in May and it must consider, I believe, some fundamental changes in the way the Liberal Party communicates with the electorate, to change some of the perceptions to which I have referred. In conceding that, I do not suggest that from now on we must become preoccupied with perceptions, with image. That would only debase the political process by further increasing the unfortunate preoc-

cupation of political debate with perceptions rather than ideas. Too often today, political action is feigned to bolster perceptions rather than derived from a set of clearly established principles, philosophies and policies. As a result, Government decision making lacks coherence. Long-term planning is difficult if not impossible.

Liberals must not desert the battleground of ideas, where political struggle must continue to be waged. We must continue to question our assumptions, but we must not turn our back on the enduring Liberal values which emphasise liberty and a sense of justice based on laws that shelter individuals from excessive demands of the State and of other individuals. What we must do, in seeking wider acceptance for our values and ideas, and the policies we derive from them, is to get closer to the people.

This must be a key objective for the Liberal Party: to get out more amongst community groups, amongst kindergartens and schools, amongst organisations representing youth and the aged, the underprivileged, women, cultural and sporting interests, so that we tackle face to face the false perceptions of the Party and establish where they have been created. A political Party must be community based rather than just election based. If the Liberal Party is once again to represent the needs, the concerns and the aspirations of present and future generations, we must talk more with those people who do not get to sit at the boardroom table or at the best banquets in town.

This does not mean that we will pander to every special interest group which knocks on our door. Many of these groups have been able to bind themselves to government and obtain public funds so that they now form a considerable constituency. They can raise legitimate and important concerns. But that is no reason to put the single interest before the public interest—to allow special interest groups to have total command over total resources.

Because overriding the sum of all the special interest groups which have been able to exploit government is the much larger constituency just seeking a fair go—a constituency which believes that opportunity, challenge, self-reliance and family ideals are the best means for ensuring economic and social success. It is a constituency which also recognises that government is a consumer and not a creator of wealth.

We are now celebrating South Australia's Jubilee. At this milestone in our history, we are remembering what South Australians have achieved in such a relatively short time. We are being reminded of the values behind our achievements, of the hard work, battling against the odds, reward for taking risks and nurturing the family as the enduring basis of society but, above all, a commitment to individual freedom.

It is here that the role of government becomes crucial. No individual, no family, no business—large or small—can meet their potential or lift their sights, with the weight of government around them. Today, that weight has become a burden that ordinary people, taxpayers and small businesses have been forced to carry, and it is unacceptable. It is a great issue and the Liberals are prepared to debate it. In doing so, we are challenging, I know, Australian traditions and prevailing attitudes of government intervention and powers accrued over a very long period by government at all levels. The memories and experiences of the great depression and the war are still with many Australians to keep them convinced that high levels of government intervention in the economy remain necessary to ensure social justice and national development.

Liberals do not suggest that economic intervention can be buried overnight, or that it should be. We do not argue that the State's safety net should be removed from under those who are in genuine need, although that is how the proponents of economic intervention have sought to misrepresent the debate.

What we do argue about is the way in which this safety net has expanded into a mesh which is destroying creativity, daring and economic free choice. It is unfortunate that the Labor Party has been prepared to conduct this debate on the basis of the sharing of existing power and wealth rather than on the basis of how the future role of government should be changed to generate more wealth and allow more individual freedom—although it is interesting to see, now that the recent round of State elections is out of the way, Senator Walsh conceding at least some of our arguments.

The challenge now for the Liberal Party is to demonstrate how the old, which is no longer relevant, necessary or beneficial, can be gradually phased out so as to neither frighten people or cause loss of income or benefits to those who over a long period have become significantly dependant on the State. We must define what we see as the limits of the State's safety net and persuade the electorate why most people will be more free and better off by being prepared and determined to operate outside of it.

So far, in seeking to meet this challenge, we have perhaps taken too much for granted. We need to question our assumptions much more, because we have overlooked the strength of some of the attitudes and traditions that we are trying to change in the interests of all Australians. We have been seen to be radical—to be heading into the unknown. It is Labor which has become comfortable with the *status quo*. And in a traditionally conservative country, that has worked to Labor's advantage in recent years.

But there is no doubt that more and more people are becoming prepared to question the present order of things, to ask why they cannot get jobs, why their interest rates are too high, and why their country is not yet set on a course of sustained growth so that more wealth is created in which they can all share.

What the Liberal Party must now demonstrate is that it is both aware of the concerns of this constituency and is able to implement policies that are more responsive to them. This is a constituency which does not want to belong to the tax consuming new class—that class which is forcing all taxes to rise, not to cover increased costs, nor necessarily to improve services—but to appease special interest groups.

Such appeasement ignores the need to change direction and attitudes. Unless we do, we will drift on as an increasingly regulated society suppressing the human creativity which is the bedrock of economic growth. It is this human creativity which Liberals want to encourage and to unleash. It is our alternative to Labor's corporate State.

It is our alternative to people being deprived of choice, being deprived of the opportunity for the maximum control possible over the amount of money that they work hard to earn. It is our alternative to bigger and bigger government supported by higher and higher levels of spending funded by more and more tax.

Let me illustrate the choice and the present situation with some figures, comparing three years of Liberalism with three years of socialism in South Australia. Between June 1979 and June 1985, annual State Government expenditure per head of population increased from $1 148 to $2 239. That is an increase of 95 per cent or 1½ times the rate of inflation over the same period. Over the past three years under Labor, the increase was 52.2 per cent, and under the former Liberal Government for the same length of time it was 28 per cent, when inflation was much higher. To fund this massive growth in spending, State taxation and charges per head of population increased by 92.7 per cent, although only 29 per cent of this increase occurred during the three years of the Liberal Government. And there is no reason to suspect that

this trend will not continue under this Government for the next four years.

This will mean that a larger total of public expenditure will have to be financed by a private sector that is already under considerable strain from increasing union demands in areas like superannuation. Indeed, as this Government enters its second term, there are some blackening clouds on the economic horizon. Key indicators suggest that growth in employment will slacken, spending and output generally will be down and the dollar will remain weak, keeping interest rates high.

Australia faces this economic scenario because wages growth and inflation are expected to run well above most other countries. Australia's projected inflation rate for 1986 is well over twice the forecast for the major OECD countries. This and wage demands pose continuing threats to business confidence, our international competitiveness and, therefore, our growth potential. And in South Australia, the backbones of increased economic activity recently—housing, rural output and motor vehicle production—are all facing slow-down.

I now turn to a detailed analysis of some of the State's key indicators. The State Bank recently published a comparison of indicators of economic activity which shows that in the 12 months to March 1985 South Australia experienced the lowest population growth of all States of .7 per cent, compared with the national average of 1.2 per cent. More recent ABS figures show that this trend is continuing.

For the 12 months to the end of June last, the State's population growth remained a constant .7 per cent while the national figure had lifted slightly to 1.3 per cent. In addition, during the June quarter 1 486 South Australians left for other States, which resulted in this being the only State to record a net migration loss during the period of 686 people.

Over all of 1984-85, 4 654 South Australians left to live in other States, equivalent to the population of Naracoorte. The employment indicators also show that we have lagged behind national trends. Over the 12 months to January 1986 the increase in employment in South Australia was 3 per cent compared with national growth of 4.4 per cent. And, while the Premier, in 1982, promised a dramatic jump in jobs under Labor, his record has been something else.

Between November 1982 and January this year, employment growth in South Australia was 2.8 per cent—the lowest of all the States and only just over half the national growth of 5.5 per cent. In that time, unemployment has also worsened. The current rate of 9.2 per cent compares with 8.8 per cent when the Premier came to office. During 1985, the number of people unemployed in South Australia increased by 0.2 per cent while nationally, the number fell by the same amount. Once unemployed in South Australia, the wait to get back into the work force is far longer than in any other mainland State.

The latest ABS labour force figures show that the average duration of unemployment in South Australia is 54.4 weeks—10 weeks longer than the national average. Of particular concern is that 32.3 per cent or 17 413 of those recorded as unemployed in South Australia during December had been without work for 12 months or more.

Turning to the cost of living, during 1985 consumer prices increased in Adelaide by 8.4 per cent for five consecutive quarters, Adelaide's CPI has been higher than the national average. In motor vehicle registrations, South Australia recorded a decline of 15.6 per cent over the year to December 1985 compared with a marginal national decline of 0.3 per cent. It is in the building industry where the wheels are really coming off the economy. According to the State Bank, total building approvals in South Australia were down 43.6 per cent in November—almost four times the national decline.

In December, this deteriorated even further, with activity in South Australia down 50 per cent on the year before compared with a national decline of 9.1 per cent. In housing, the number of loans by banks and building societies in South Australia declined by 23.5 per cent during 1985. Only Western Australia recorded a bigger decline, and South Australia's was almost three times the national drop of 9.2 per cent.

The latest news about capital investment in industry is also sobering. New fixed capital expenditure in South Australia fell by 16 per cent during the September quarter, and that was the largest drop of any State and more than five times the national average. A recently published in-depth analysis of manufacturing industry has shown the extent to which fixed capital expenditure in this vital sector of our economy has remained poor.

The figures are from the ABS survey of South Australian manufacturing establishments for 1983-84 and are the first definitive analysis of the performance of manufacturing industry since 1982. They show that between July 1982 and July 1984 the number of manufacturing establishments in South Australia fell by 110, resulting in the loss of 14 224 jobs. The figures also show that turnover by South Australian manufacturers was down by 7.8 per cent since June 1982 (only one State recorded a bigger downturn), and a 37.7 per cent reduction in fixed capital expenditure compared with an all-States average reduction of 32 per cent.

While the Government spent the past three years talking up the State economy, it has in fact presided over the greatest downturn in manufacturing over the past 50 years in South Australia. With interest rates remaining high, it is difficult to see how manufacturers will be able to support the scale of investment necessary to reverse this downturn and create more jobs.

I have put a series of figures before the House because it is important for this Parliament and the public to appreciate the economic uncertainty that South Australia still faces. Such an appreciation is vital if solutions are to be developed and supported for the problems we have. The Opposition accepts its responsibilities not only to expose the Government when it is not acting in South Australia's interests but also, in a positive sense, to put forward what should be done. In economic development a deregulated and more competitive State economy is essential if South Australia is to confront what is the key issue in our economic future—our ability to increase our exports, especially into the massive potential markets of the Asia-Pacific region.

An export-led diversification of our economy over the next 15 years can be achieved through a co-operative approach between the public and private sectors to confront the underlying rigidities and difficulties that our economy faces. The Liberal Party will use this parliamentary term constructively to further develop and refine our economic policies and our policies in other key areas affecting all South Australians. We approach our task and our responsibilities with commitment and determination.

On election night, I emphasised that we had just waged a State campaign and that as State Leader the buck stopped with me. I repeat that today. I am confident that the Party is now learning from some of the mistakes made last year and, while our numbers may be diminished for the moment, this has only increased our resolve to work for a better South Australia for all South Australians. This is what politics is about. It is much more than a job. My approach to it, certainly to policy making, to debates and decisions in this House, is to ask myself what I can do to make South Australia a better place.

I know the aspirations of my children. They want a good education, a good job, a chance, an equal chance, to make their way in life in the way they see fit. I am sure that those aspirations would be common to most South Australians. We differ, of course, on how to meet these objectives, but I hope that by our conduct in this House and publicly we can do more to show that politics is not a gladiatorial contest between leaders; that it is not a system in which the more powerful will win at the expense of those who are less able to represent their views; that it is not about patronage and privilege; but that it is all about a contest of ideas between people—a fair, objective and principled debate between the major Parties with one aim—a better South Australia.

Mr OSWALD secured the adjournment of the debate.

ACTS INTERPRETATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 5 March. Page 932.)

Mr S.J. BAKER (Mitcham): The Opposition supports what is in many ways a simple Bill. It covers the contingency arising should a tribunal, court or body become extinct and there be no appropriate body to hear ongoing cases. It deals with the feminine and masculine gender as expressed within the Statutes and makes other minor alterations. From our perusal of the Bill, we see nothing nocuous about it. Indeed, there is some sense in the provisions contained therein, and we support it.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clause 1 passed.

Clause 2—'Saving of operation of repealed or expired Act as regards rights and liabilities thereunder.'

Mr S.J. BAKER: In the second reading explanation it was stated that there could be a possible difficulty with the interpretation of existing section 16 of the Act. Under what circumstances is this likely to occur? I am unaware of any circumstances that have arisen to date where, because of the change in nature of a body, the existing claims on that body have been unable to be dealt with. Has the Minister received any information to indicate that some part of the system has become unworkable under the existing section 16?

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER: On the information available to me this amendment provides a degree of flexibility within the administration of that section. I do not have any experiences or examples that I can give the honourable member.

This clause provides for the amendment of section 16 so that an office, court, tribunal or body can continue in existence and, if necessary, appointments can be made for that purpose on the repeal, amendment or expiry of a provision in order that investigations, legal proceedings and remedies may be instituted, continued or enforced in relation to matters occurring before the repeal, amendment or expiry. That is the intention of clause 2 and it is clearly explained in the legislation. I undertake to ascertain further information for the honourable member on some of the specific instances where it has been seen necessary to frame the clause in that way.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I have been disturbed by some of the Government's proposals in relation to the Acts Interpretation Act. One proposal was that we let the courts interpret the statutes for us, but that is nonsense. The proposal was noised abroad by the Labor Party that, if the statutes were not clear, we should send them off to the Supreme Court or some superior court for it to tell us what the law means.

They should pour through the *Hansard* debates. Lord knows whether or not the people debating the matter understood the law. When we are having trouble with the Acts Interpretation Act we should not shunt our responsibilities off to the courts. I deplore that thinking and shun any suggestion that we should go down that track. The last thing that will help clarify legislative matters is to involve the courts. If one wants lawyers to have a feast, one asks the court for a determination. When we are interpreting Acts and the law is not clear, to suggest that we send it to a court to clarify it is quite wrong. If the law is not clear, Parliament should make its will perfectly clear by clarifying the Act if necessary. I implore those who draw up the legislation to make it simple. I do not know how the new members who have just come into this place are getting on, but one problem I had when I first arrived here was reading through legal documents, and understanding what a Bill was about was fairly confusing. I plead with legislators to keep Acts simple.

The man on the street is concerned about what goes through this place, and the laws we make should be simple enough to understand. This links up with what I said last night. What are we here for? We are not here for the great high-flown plans of the Government, although that is part of it. We are not here just to entertain the media. We are here to look after the fellow in the street. To suggest that the law lacks so much clarity that we will shunt it off to people in an ivory tower somewhere else to tell us what we are trying to say does not appeal to me one bit.

We went through this charade when we did not know whether or not the President of the Upper House had a vote. It suited the purposes of the previous Administration to give the Speaker of this House a vote—not only a casting vote but a deliberative vote. Likewise, that was to apply to the President of the Upper House, but apparently that was not clear. The suggestion was to shunt it off to a court to tell us what we meant. If we do not know what we mean and have to send it there for it to say what we mean, there has to be a touch of insanity somewhere in the system—and there is a lot of evidence of that from time to time.

The Hon. M.K. Mayes interjecting:

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I have a fellow spirit at last on the front bench. It is a feast for the lawyers, and that is the last thing I want. Parliament is the sovereign court of the land. I think the member for Murray Mallee made the point last night that this is the highest court in the land and the place where the laws are made. If we do not understand the law, let us clarify it. To seek an interpretation of what we are on about by shunting it off somewhere else in order to satisfy some immediate political purpose is pretty short-sighted. That aspect of the Act needs a great deal of examination.

The suggestion that we read the *Hansard* debates to find out what it is all about is not terribly helpful, either. New members coming in here and picking up a fairly complex Bill will find the legalese hard to understand. To suggest that what members say in debate may have real meaning or throw some light on what it is all about for a person in the High Court or Supreme Court is a bit unrealistic. If the law is not clear send it back to Parliament to make it clear.

It may seem fairly trivial, but debating any legislation requires clear thinking. Because of the late nights I do not want members to interpret my languid demeanour as indicating any lack of depth of feeling in this matter. This issue strikes at the very heart of democracy and concerns the status of Parliament in the community.

Clause passed.

Clause 3—'Abrogation of presumption that re-enactment, etc., constitutes parliamentary approval of prior interpretation.'

Mr S.J. BAKER: Like the member for Kavel, I always thought it was understood that the law was made in this place, yet no control over its construction quite often the law had to be tested in the courts before it could be assumed that it was being interpreted as Parliament meant it to be. Will the Minister explain the provision in more detail?

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER: There is a presumption at law that the re-enactment of a provision constitutes parliamentary approval. It appears that that presumption, which of course is artificial, has been diminished to some extent by decisions of the courts. They have raised doubts as to whether that practice should be followed. It certainly is tenuous to argue that Parliament re-enacts provisions having considered earlier interpretations by the courts. The South Australian Law Reform Committee in its ninth report recommended that presumptions should not be applicable in this State: that is the reason, and it is on that recommendation that this legislation has come before us.

Mr S.J. BAKER: I thank the Minister for his reponse. I, like my colleague, was delighted not to see the original proposition come before this House. The proposal was to refer the difficult sections, or allow the courts to look at *Hansard* to determine the intent of the Government. I remember a recent debate on workers compensation where the Minister got a whole lot of things wrong, and I would hate to think that the courts would interpret what he said as being what the Government intended. I take the Minister's point. I would assume that it is the right of any Government to change legislation either because it has become unworkable, because the interpretation is too wide, or because there are problems, difficulties or anomalies being caused by its wording. This would not in any way affect the role of Parliament to make the laws and the role of the courts to interpret them.

Mr PETERSON: New section 18 provides:

> The enactment or re-enactment of a provision that has been construed in a particular manner (Judicially or otherwise) in this State or elsewhere creates no presumption that Parliament has sanctioned or approved that construction.

You, Mr Chairman, have recently received some media coverage over the need to make things clear and there have been other references to our responsibility to make legislation clear, that I fully support. However, does this clause mean that, if a court makes a decision and interprets a law in a certain way, that removes it from ever being used as a precedent in law? It says that it is not the way we are meant to interpret it. We make a law or a provision, it goes out as a law and a court interprets it in a certain way, but that does not mean that is how we meant it to be, as I read this clause. If that is so, does that remove the precedent in law that you can refer to a case as having a decision made under that law in a certain court as a precedent for the law being applied another time in the same way? Is that clear? If we are saying that the law is interpreted but not in the way we meant it, does that mean it cannot be used as a precedent in law?

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER: No, I do not think that is the position. The purport of what you are saying is that the position of Parliament is paramount and it is Parliament that writes the law, and as the member for Kavel just explained and asserted, that is the supremacy of Parliament in our system. I think that tenet of our parliamentary democracy is being re-established, reasserted by implication with what we are doing here. The courts interpret the law from time to time, but the court must have regard each time to the original intention of Parliament. Obviously, they consider how other courts and other jurisdictions have interpreted it, and that is an aid, if you like, as to how one can construct the reasonable interpretation of what Parliament originally intended. The court is obliged on each occasion to review what is the intention of Parliament in these circumstances.

Mr PETERSON: Does that not support the contention that, if there is a dispute over the interpretation or application of the law, it should come back here for clarification rather than another court? If it went, for instance, from a local court to a supreme court for a definition of the law, and it was interpreted in a certain way, that is not necessarily taken as our interpretation. That is taken as the court's interpretation, and to follow the line that has been taken earlier, does that not support the contention that it should come back to this place for clarification and not to the court?

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER: I suppose the unwritten Parliament of our federation has been the High Court because it has been in the business of writing law for some time. Its interpretation of legislation I suppose has brought controversy; for example, that court's interpretation of taxation measures in Australia. The court is not in a position to adjourn the matter and refer back to the legislation to tidy it up. Our system does not operate in that way. The court has to make a decision on the matter before it. Often in judgments it is noted that the law is unclear in this area and it is suggested that the matter be attended to by the Legislature in due course. As I said earlier, this proposal that we are looking at has come about as a recommendation of the South Australian Law Reform Committee, which recommended that the law be clarified in this regard as an aid to the courts, to those who practise in the courts, and indeed to the community. So, the law is in fact as clear as we can possibly make it.

Clause passed.

Clauses 4 and 5 passed.

Schedule.

Mr M.J. EVANS: I take it that we have the assurance that the schedule is entirely inconsequential in the sense that it changes no policy and only rearranges words. Unfortunately, I received the Bill only a moment ago and have not had a chance to study it in detail, so I would appreciate the Minister's assurance.

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER: I cannot give an absolute assurance but I will have the honourable member's point thoroughly checked by Parliamentary Counsel. I think that it can be taken for granted.

Mr S.J. BAKER: That point has been clarified in the Upper House. The Attorney has given a firm assurance that we are not changing any force of law but are only making amendments which are consistent with the major part of this Bill and other small changes to make it easier to interpret.

Schedule passed.

Title passed.

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER (Minister of Education): I move:

That this Bill be now read a third time.

Mr DUIGAN (Adelaide): I rise at the third reading having missed a number of opportunities earlier because of my lack of experience in the forms of this House. I will not take up the time of the Parliament unduly other than to indicate that I believe that one clause of this Bill which is about to go through this House deserves comment, particularly on the eve of International Women's Day, which is next Saturday.

Clause 5 is relevant to that day, because it recognises at last that the language of Statutes brought before this House

should be gender neutral. If it had not been already noted by members in reading the Statutes that are now being prepared by Parliamentary Counsel—and Parliamentary Counsel has been drafting all legislation over the past 12 months or so very much in gender neutral terms—clause 5 puts beyond doubt the Government's intention and, indeed, Parliament's intention to ensure that sexist language does not appear in South Australian Statutes. I have particular pleasure in supporting the third reading. I believe that it is the end of a process which has taken some time to ensure that gender neutral language and the true recognition of equal rights between men and women are recognised in South Australian law.

I am sure that, for one, former Justice Dame Roma Mitchell will be extremely pleased to see this provision coming out of the Parliament, because I have just had the opportunity to read an article by her in a magazine called *Australian Feminist Studies,* where she traces the way in which women have been treated in and by the law over the past 40 years or so. She concludes her article by saying that what was needed was the education of all people. She said that it was necessary to have equality in legislation and where appropriate a special recognition of the needs of women; but she said that, whereas the legislation can in some respects achieve this, it cannot be the only way in which this objective can be achieved. She said that it has to be achieved also by education from the cradle onwards to ensure the rights of women are equal and recognised as being equal to the rights of men in our society.

I think that this Bill as it comes out of Committee and is read a third time will contribute significantly to that attitudinal change which will have to occur if we are to achieve wholesale recognition of the equality of both sexes in our society. I have pleasure in supporting the third reading.

Bill read a third time and passed.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Adjourned debate on motion for adoption (resumed on motion).

(Continued from page 1045.)

Mr GROOM (Hartley): I have agreed to limit my time in this debate, so I propose to be brief and, I hope, to the point. I formally congratulate the new office-holders of this Parliament and extend my congratulations formally to all new members on both sides of the House and wish them well. Personally, I place on record that I am pleased at being returned and I thank my constituents, Party workers and members who contributed to our victory locally and our return to government.

I want to raise in this debate the topic of occupational superannuation. After more than a century the Australian work force is on the brink of obtaining universal superannuation. These advances are due largely to the determination of the trade union movement and Labor Governments. The objective is to see that through superannuation all Australians continue in retirement to enjoy something like their accustomed incomes. The situation with regard to the development of superannuation is reflected in statistics. In February 1974 the Australian Bureau of Statistics figures showed that 29 per cent of persons in civilian employment (including employers and self employed persons) had superannuation. Of that 29 per cent, 36 per cent of male employees had superannuation and 15 per cent of females. In 1982-83—some eight or nine years later—the Bureau of Statistics census figures showed that 22.4 per cent of the work force had superannuation. By August 1983 further research indicated that 72 per cent of persons who exceeded a wage of $420 per week had superannuation, and only 30 per cent of persons earning between $220 and $240 had superannuation.

The *Advertiser* of 14 January 1986 published figures relating to the August 1985 period. Those figures showed that 61.7 per cent of Government workers had superannuation of some form or another, and only 29.5 per cent of non Government workers had superannuation (the total amount of the work force was about 39.5 per cent). So, today in comparison with 1974 there has been some advance—at least a 10 per cent increase in the number of employees with superannuation. Today, something like 40 per cent of the work force has superannuation. If we include self-employed persons, there would be a range of somewhere between 40 per cent and 50 per cent. The figures show that only 29 per cent of females enjoy superannuation, whereas 50 per cent of male employees enjoy superannuation.

Apart from a few exceptions, portability is virtually non-existent and superannuation schemes are dominated by company managers, and workers and unions have little say. However, things are changing. It has been an enormous struggle on the part of Labor Governments and the trade union movement to bring about universal occupational superannuation. The current plight with regard to the availability of superannuation is a condemnation of the attitudes of previous conservative governments with regard to working people, because conservative governments have tended to dominate this century.

Indeed, in 1938 the Lyons Government passed the National Insurance Act, which was an early form of superannuation. Even though it passed Parliament it was never proclaimed. In fact, Menzies resigned from Cabinet over the failure of the Lyons Government to proclaim the Act because he said it had reneged on national superannuation. However, when in government he had 23 years to do something about it—and he did nothing. He and other conservative governments allowed the situation to linger. That was a cynical act on the part of Menzies, who simply used it as a gimmick to resign from the Lyons Cabinet.

Notwithstanding clear evidence in past decades, the need for superannuation was first recognised more than a century ago, and plans were introduced in both the public and private sectors. By 1900 all public sector plans established before this date were eventually discontinued because insufficient moneys were being reserved to provide benefits, although a few private plans established by some large financial institutions continued to operate. After 1900 there were two major advances in superannuation: in 1916 the State Superannuation Fund of New South Wales was established (which was something of a unit purchase scheme); and in 1922 the Commonwealth Government established its Superannuation Fund.

By the time of the Second World War the emerging pattern reflected two types of superannuation. First, self administered and self invested funds were established by employers for their employees, and this included banks and life assurance companies. These schemes were basically pension schemes. The second type of superannuation scheme was an endowment assurance plan. This was effected with a life assurance company and provided lump sum benefits with the option of conversion of the insurance endowment plan into life annuities.

During the 1950s and the 1960s full employment encouraged many employers to establish new plans or revise existing plans in order to attract new employees. During the 1960s the level of inflation increased, resulting in inadequate benefits, especially where benefits were defined in terms of contributions, and the lump sums no longer proved adequate.

Finally, on its election in 1972, the federal Labor Government immediately took up superannuation. In 1973, a national superannuation committee of inquiry was set up and reported in two parts. The final report, presented in March 1977, recommended that national superannuation must be established and supplemented by occupational superannuation schemes. A minority report from the insurance industry, not surprisingly, recommended that the existing age pension scheme be extended and the existing schemes continued. The Asprey committee on taxation in 1975 criticised the favourable taxation treatment of lump sums compared to pensions. In that year, too, a conservative Government was re-elected and, needless to say, superannuation took a dive. Since then, its greatest push has come from the trade union movement supported by the Federal Labor Government that was elected in 1983.

Australia is one of the few developed countries that has no proper superannuation scheme covering all the work force. The goal of Labor Governments and the trade union movement is for all of Australia's 6.8 million working people to receive superannuation benefits.

Mr Lewis: Who pays?

Mr GROOM: The employer pays, and he is rewarded through the labour of the employee. Employees are entitled to superannuation. I know that the member for Murray Mallee is a member of a conservative Party that has restricted superannuation schemes for the past century, whereas the goal of the Labor Government and the trade union movement is that all of Australia's 6.8 million working people shall receive superannuation benefits. In the past, superannuation has typically been a benefit that has been available mainly to the higher paid sections of the work force. A major breakthrough was the establishment of the building industry superannuation scheme in 1984.

Mr Lewis: That's a breakthrough all right.

Mr GROOM: Yes, it is a major breakthrough, because the scheme will cover 100 000 workers and is a jointly administered scheme. Our conservative opponents fear that such a scheme will change the nature of society, and rightly so, because it is estimated that the cumulative investments of the building industry superannuation scheme will reach $350 million after five years, $1 billion after 10 years, and $5 billion after 20 years.

Mr Lewis interjecting:

Mr GROOM: I give full marks to the member for Murray Mallee who, judging by his interjections, obviously supports the trend in occupational superannuation. The building industry superannuation scheme is a breakthrough for Australian workers, who will have a say through trade union representatives in a jointly managed superannuation scheme. The building industry scheme was employer funded because all superannuation, whether contributions come from employers or employees, is ultimately funded by the employer. The contributions must come out of the employer's earnings, but it is the labour of working people that produce the benefits in the first place. The storemen and packers have had an industry-based superannuation scheme.

Mr Lewis interjecting:

Mr GROOM: I know that the member for Murray Mallee is frightened of the enormous wealth that these schemes will generate and for the first time in history conservative forces will not dominate the economy. Indeed, they are irrelevant to the political process, especially when one considers that the conservative forces have not won an election on mainland Australia in the last six or seven years.

The Hon. T.M. McRae: Not since 1980.

Mr GROOM: I am indebted to the member for Playford. Not since 1980 have they won an election on mainland Australia. They are quite irrelevant to the political process. The conservative head-in-the-sand attitude is reflected in society's passing honourable members opposite by. That is because industry and the trade union movement, as a consequence of the leadership provided by the Federal Labor Government and supported by State Labor Governments, have got in and produced superannuation on an occupational basis through jointly managed schemes and, for the first time in history, working people will have a say in the management of their moneys.

As I said, the storemen and packers have had an industry based superannuation scheme since 1978. The vehicle for bringing about universal occupational superannuation is the ACTU's 3 per cent productivity claim.

Mr Lewis: What is that?

Mr GROOM: If the honourable member opposite wants to debate that, I shall be pleased to do that at a future time. If he does not recognise that companies are making record profits in Australia as a consequence of the labour of working people, I feel sorry for the member for Murray Mallee. Companies are making record profits in Australia and there is an entitlement for working people to benefit from that productivity increase. I am pleased to say that it is the leadership of the union movement and Labor Governments who have been the only forces in Australia that properly recognise, benefit and reward working people in Australia. Working people cannot rely on members opposite to increase their economic position. The vehicle is the 3 per cent productivity claim, and this will be taken as superannuation under arrangements based on new industry schemes.

Mr Lewis: Quack, quack, quack!

Mr GROOM: The honourable member should not bring his problems into this House. The fact of the matter is that the occupational superannuation schemes will be backed up by legislation providing for a safety net scheme for itinerant workers and people who are out of work—to answer an interjection that the honourable member for Murray Mallee made five or six minutes ago. Itinerant people and people who are out of work from time to time will benefit through a safety net scheme.

What has been the reaction of the conservative forces in society? It is typified by the reaction of people like the member for Murray Mallee that I have heard today. Their reaction has been one of near hysteria. In this respect one has only to look at some of the newspaper reports. I refer to the *Financial Review* of 13 January 1986, which stated, 'Liberals take super tax issue to the street'—hysteria. Des Keegan, that noted journalist in the *Australian*—

Mr Ingerson interjecting:

Mr GROOM: The honourable member is now on record as saying that he supports the type of articles written by Des Keegan as a person who has his feet on the ground. What did he say in the *Australian* in his hysterical reaction? It was the typical conservative reaction which has dominated Australia and which has pulled Australia back this century. In the *Australian* of 3 December he states:

> Compulsory superannuation a grab for power by union bosses.

Never mind the benefits that working people will obtain as a consequence of occupational superannuation. What about the emotional toning which he writes:

> Compulsory surrender of superannuation funds is a sellout by the Hawke Government and a breach of fiduciary duty by union bosses to workers. It is a naked power grab based on workers wages.

How pathetic. What a pathetic reaction to a major reform initiative that will benefit all Australians. I now refer to the 2 December 1985 issue of the *Age*, which states, 'Plan to fight super claims'. It was a hysterical reaction. 'Employers blistering attack on super campaign', says the *Australian* of 2 September 1984. As a consequence, to feed the flames and to ensure that working people do not benefit justly through their labours, we get a new employer organisation.

Because the existing employer organisations have really not had to listen to the hysterical voices of members opposite and have had to deal with the market place as it is, and have entered into jointly managed superannuation schemes, it is a consensus approach to politics, and a new way of life for the future. However, the existing employer organisations have entered into negotiations and jointly managed schemes.

What has been the reaction of the right wing conservative forces in this country? It has been to scrap the existing employer organisations and start a new right wing reactionary employer organisation to thwart the development of Australia.

The Hon. T.M. McRae: Led by Katherine West?

Mr GROOM: I do not want to dignify her by injecting her name into this debate, or by mentioning the diatribe that I have heard her go on with. Once again the conservative forces are out of step with community needs.

The Labor Government and the trade union movement are to be congratulated for their determination to bring about a major reform that will benefit Australia and all Australians.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before calling on the member for Victoria, I remind the House that it is the honourable member's maiden speech, and I ask that the House extend to him the usual courtesy of hearing him in silence.

Mr D.S. BAKER (Victoria): Thank you very much for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker. First, I would like to thank the Governor for his speech in opening the forty-sixth Parliament and, on behalf of the electors of Victoria, I extend to him congratulations on his service to South Australia and also to his wife, Lady Dunstan, for her support in his service to the State.

I state my loyalty to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, as Queen of Australia, and look forward to her visit to this State in its Jubilee year. I congratulate the Speaker, on his elevation to the position of Speaker of this House.

I also extend congratulations to the Government on its return to office and, although I disagree with its fundamental philosophy, I acknowledge the will of the South Australian electorate. I congratulate new members on their election success and I hope this Parliament provides a fruitful term for them.

I must pay a tribute to the former member for Victoria, Allan Rodda, who served the State and the electorate of Victoria for just over 20 years. I know he was held in high regard by both sides of the House, and I hope I continue representing that electorate of Victoria with similar graciousness.

The electorate of Victoria was named after Queen Victoria and has remained a district in State Parliament since the original Parliament in 1856. Some distinguished South Australians have represented the electorate, and I have listed those who have served in the Ministry since that time.

In 1858, George Charles Hawker was Transport Minister and Chief Secretary. He was also Speaker of the House, and his portrait hangs at the end of this Assembly. Randolph Isham Stow was Attorney-General in 1862, and Henry Kent Hughes was Minister of Transport in 1868. In 1871, Edwin Henry Derrington was Commissioner of Lands, and in 1877 the Hon. Lavington Glyde was Minister of Transport and Commissioner of Lands.

In 1884 Friedrich Eduard Heinrich Wolf Krichauff was Minister of Public Works. He should be given due recognition for introducing the first Bill as a private member to encourage forestry in South Australia. Although that Bill did not pass, it was the first step in establishing the Woods and Forests Department several years later. It led to the appointment of the First Conservator of Forests in this State, J. Ednie Brown. In 1890, John James Osman was Commissioner of Lands.

In 1902 Andrew Dods Handyside was Minister of Public Works and from 1905-20 the District of Victoria was represented by Archbald Henry Peake, who later became Premier of South Australia. He also held the portfolios of Transport, Attorney-General and Education. The District of Victoria was held from 1965 to 1985 by Allan Rodda, who held the portfolios of Works, Marine and Fisheries and Chief Secretary.

Adam Lindsay Gordon, the famous South Australian Poet and horseman, represented the District of Victoria in 1865. A monument stands on the edge of the Blue Lake, Mount Gambier, to one of his rather reckless and famous horse riding feats. The members for Adelaide and Newland, as former residents of Mount Gambier, will testify to his fame. He took his own life on 24 June 1870 at the age of 37, and is the only South Australian to be commemorated with a bust in Westminster Abbey in Poets Corner.

The electorate of Victoria has seen prodigious development since the end of the Second World War. This was enhanced by the increase in drainage works and the bringing into production of some of the most productive land in the State, the development by the War Service Land Settlement Scheme and improved world prices for primary products.

The South-East is now the most productive area in the State and I have made some comparisons with total State agriculture production figures to show its importance. I seek permission to have included in *Hansard*, the tables of productivity in the four counties of the lower South-East. It is of a statistical nature only.

Leave granted.

AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION VICTORIA ELECTORATE

Which embraces most of the Four Counties of Buckingham, McDonnell, Grey and Robe.

	Tonnes
Meat Cattle	
Total State Numbers	650 700
No. in 4 Counties:	
Buckingham	28 207
McDonnell	55 402
Grey	143 271
Robe	102 568
Total	329 448
Percentage of State Total	50.6
Sheep	
Total State Numbers	16 367 500
No. in 4 Counties	
Buckingham	1 001 478
Grey	1 477 844
McDonnell	1 128 223
Robe	1 756 200
Total	5 363 745
Percentage of State Total	32.5
Milk Cattle	
Total State Numbers	161 900
No. in 4 Counties:	
Buckingham	2 193
Grey	29 652
McDonnell	1 001
Robe	1 266
Total	34 112
Percentage of State Total	21.1
Pigs	
Total State Numbers	416 500
No. in 4 Counties	
Buckingham	8 858
Grey	10 042
McDonnell	31 237
Robe	2 499
Total	52 636
Percentage of State Total	12.5

	Tonnes
Wheat Production	
Total State Production	2.843 million tonnes
Production in 4 Counties:	
Buckingham	73 494
Grey	2 690
McDonnell	22 920
Robe	12 250
Total	111 354
Percentage of State Total	3.9
Oats	
Total State Production	180 481 tonnes
Production in 4 Counties:	
Buckingham	13 474
Grey	1 169
McDonnell	5 044
Robe	4 368
Total	24 055
Percentage of State Total	13.3
Barley	
Total State Production	1.816 million tonnes
Production in 4 Counties:	
Buckingham	30 777
Grey	12 628
McDonnell	9 136
Robe	6 279
Total	58 820
Percentage of State Total	3.2
Field Peas	
Total State Production	68 216
Production in 4 Counties:	
Buckingham	3 836
Grey	1 409
McDonnell	182
Robe	664
	6 091
Percentage of State Total	8.8
Crop Hay	
Total State Production	237 886
Production in 4 Counties:	
Buckingham	2 672
Grey	5 056
McDonnell	2 016
Robe	5 559
	15 303
Percentage of State Production	6.4
Pasture Hay	
Total State Production	585 880
Production in 4 Counties:	
Buckingham	41 531
Grey	70 610
McDonnell	24 453
Robe	33 007
	169 601
Percentage of State Total	28.9
Oil Seeds	
Total State Production	9 356
Production in 4 Counties:	
Buckingham	479
Grey	4 432
McDonnell	726
Robe	3 121
	8 758
Percentage of State Production	93.6
Lucerne for Seed	
Total State Production	1 203
Production in 4 Counties:	
Buckingham	790
Grey	—
McDonnell	111
Robe	69
	970
Percentage of State Total	82.8

	Tonnes
Clover and Medic Seed	
Total State Production	5 207
Production in 4 Counties:	
Buckingham	376
Grey	46
McDonnell	1 022
Robe	656
	2 100
Percentage of State Total	40.3
Vines—Grapes	
Total State Production	311 150
Production in 4 Counties:	
Buckingham	—
Grey	2 256
McDonnell	16 542
Robe	11 112
	29 910
Percentage of State Total	9.6
Potatoes	
Total State Production	120 748
Production in 4 Counties:	
Buckingham	7 925
Grey	20 108
McDonnell	540
Robe	2 330
	30 903
Percentage of State Total	25.6
Onions	
Total State Production	34 320
Production in 4 Counties:	
Buckingham	440
Grey	6 991
McDonnell	1 250
Robe	160
	8 841
Percentage of State Total	25.8
Conifer Plantations	
Conifer Plantations in 4 Hundreds	59 161.3
Percentage of State Total	83.2
Softwood Production	
Total Softwood Production in State Forests	1 650 530 cub. met.
Production in 4 Counties	1 496 509 cub. met.
Percentage of State Total	90.6

Fishing

The greatest percentage of the State's lobster catch is landed at the fishing ports of Kingston, Robe, Beachport, and South End. $12.5 million worth of lobster is caught annually.

TABLE I

Gross Value of Agricultural, Commodities, Victoria Electorate in Dollar Terms

	Victoria as % of State Total	Gross Value ($m)	
		Total, State 1983-84	Est. Victoria 1983-84
Meat cattle	50.6	275.2	139.2
Sheep and lambs shorn	29.3	280.2	82.1
Sheep and lambs (meat etc.)	27.9	74.7	20.9
Milk cattle	21.1	74.0	15.6
Pigs	12.5	49.6	6.2
Wheat	3.9	466.1	18.2
Oats	13.3	21.5	161.9
Barley	3.2	273.5	8.8
Field peas	8.8	11.6	11.6
Crop hay	6.4	16.5	1.0
Pasture hay	28.9	44.3	12.8
Oil seeds	93.6	2.6	2.5
Lucerne for seed	80.6	3.1	2.5
Clover and medic seed	40.3	8.1	3.3
Vines	9.6	73.3	7.0
Potatoes	25.6	39.6	10.1
Onions	25.8	15.5	4.0
Forestry products	61.4	38.9	23.9
Total values		1 768.5	531.7

Mr D.S. BAKER: The statistics show that, of the total number of meat cattle in this State, 51 per cent are in the District of Victoria, that 32 per cent of the State's sheep are in the South-East, as are 21 per cent of the State's milk cattle, hence the Opposition's intense interest in dairy Bills that have gone through this House.

Oat production represents 13 per cent of the State's production, and pasture hay represents about 30 per cent of the State's production, making it very evident that the South-East is the fodder bowl of the State. We produce 94 per cent of the total oil seed production in the State, 82 per cent of the total lucerne seed production, 40 per cent of clover and medic seed production and 10 per cent of the total tonnage of grapes in this State.

We have the two premium wine growing districts of Padthaway and Coonawarra, as members who dine in Parliament House will know because those wines from my district feature prominently on the wine list. Further, 26 per cent of the State's potato tonnage is produced in the South-East. Softwood production represents 91 per cent of the State's total production and in fishing the greatest percentage of the State's lobster catch is landed at the fishing ports of Kingston, Robe, Beachport and South End, representing $12.5 million worth as an annual catch.

Most importantly, of the total State agricultural income of about $1.7 billion, the South-East contributes $531 million towards that income. These figures are more impressive when we realise that, although in area we comprise less than 2 per cent of the State, we produce nearly one-third of the State's agriculture wealth in dollar terms. It is, however, no use producing this income if our input costs are rising at a staggering rate and forcing people off their farms and out of work in the rural communities. It is fair to say that rural small businesses are reeling under the cost price squeeze.

I would like to deal briefly with the rural crisis. I must bring to the Government's attention the plight of the rural communities, not only in the District of Victoria but in the whole of South Australia. It is, of course, a fact that since the last election the Government holds only two rural seats in South Australia, and both of those are in industrial areas. Concern has been expressed by the Government and the new Minister of Agriculture who, incidentally, claims to have a farming background.

But, unless you have actually experienced the heartbreak of bush fires, floods, droughts and having a total year's income lost, or experienced the trauma of running a small business knowing that your business and the jobs of those employed by you are dependent on the whims of the weather, the Government or union policies over which you have no control, then you do not understand the deep seated militancy which is starting to surface in the bush. The rural sector, which produces the largest proportion of the State's and the nation's wealth, is not only taken for granted but slowly and arrogantly is being destroyed by Government policies and union activities that do not understand the importance of the export dollar.

This feeling has been fuelled recently by statements made by the State Minister of Agriculture and his federal colleagues that the main cause of the rural recession is the US Farm Bill and policies of the EEC common market countries. Although we applaud President Reagan's recognition of the plight of American farmers, we want to make it quite clear that we are not looking for similar subsidies. Australian farmers are among the hardest workers in the community and, by world standards, are among the most efficient. However, because of Federal and State Government policies, they find themselves in a parlous situation.

Let us look at some of the facts: the income of sheep farmers will drop by 51 per cent this year, and beef producers' incomes will fall by 22 per cent. The bottom 12½ per cent of farmers in cropping industries will have a negative income of $54 500. Land prices have fallen 20-30 per cent in the last few months and will keep falling while the present policies are being followed. These problems are not only confined to farmers: all small businesses are feeling the effect of Government actions.

I believe there are four areas where Governments must act: to balance their budgets; to control taxes and charges; to consider a wage policy which does not ensure continued inflation; and to reduce high tariff and protection policies.

First, to balance their budgets. It is a fact that a country such as Australia cannot continue spending more than we earn. This nation continues to slide into debt, causing increases in State and Federal borrowings. We have, in floating our dollar, given the world a chance to judge our economic management, and judge it they have; there has been a massive devaluation of our currency. The only way we have been able to attract funds into this country is by raising interest rates. We now see interest rates at 20 per cent plus, kept falsely high to help fund a Government that cannot, or will not, live within its means.

Secondly, I refer to the control of taxes and charges. As was highlighted during the election campaign, taxes and charges in this state rose by a staggering 55.2 per cent during the life of the last Government.

Over the past five years, across all industries, the rate of farm inflation has been running at three times the increase in farming returns. Major cost rises in this period have been: interest rates up 84 per cent; fuel prices up 63 per cent; and electricity costs up 64 per cent. By contrast, crop returns are up only 6 per cent and livestock returns up 22 per cent.

The recent announcement by the Federal Government on fuel pricing shows the lack of interest by the Government in the rural communities, whether primary producers or not. Grain growers have had some relief, and this we welcome, but one of the major cost imposts on non-city dwellers—transport—has not received any consideration.

The Federal Prices Surveillance Authority has set a maximum wholesale price for fuel throughout Australia of 49.59c per litre excluding the unleaded petrol premium of .31c per litre and franchise fees which in this State are 2.51c a litre. I seek leave, Mr Speaker, to have inserted in *Hansard* a table showing the price breakdown of each litre of fuel purchased at the service station, and it also shows how the proceeds are shared. The table is of a statistical nature only.

Leave granted.

FUEL PRICE BREAKDOWN

The price of a litre of fuel is made up of the following:

	cents
A. *Commonwealth Government Charges:*	
1. World parity price or federal excise levy	18.68
2. Pipeline royalties	.91
3. Excise duty	10.44
	30.03
B. *The Oil Company Share:*	
1. The producer	7.87
2. Refiner and marketer Including unleaded petrol levy of .31c/litre	12.00
	19.87
C. State Government franchise fee	2.51
D. Retailers margin	3-6
E. Freight to country areas up to 5.6c per litre, depending on location.	

Mr D.S. BAKER: Commonwealth and State Government charges have the greatest impact on the rural producers' cost structure: 62 per cent of the cost of each litre of fuel purchased goes to Government. Transport costs are reflected in all our costs, and fuel of course is one of our largest production expenses. We cannot be competitive with this impost. Transport has received no consideration in the recent announcements.

The third area to which I refer is an inflexible wage policy. The popular view of this Government seems to be to pour more and more dollars into remedial schemes to help alleviate poverty and unemployment. While it is necessary in modern society to provide assistance in these areas—I acknowledge we all have a moral obligation to look after the needy and the disadvantaged—to continue along these lines does not tackle the real question. The cause of the problem is left unattended. No country can exist with a wages policy which is locked into inflation, especially when the creators of our wealth, our exporters, are operating on a free market. We cannot have a fixed and rising input cost with a fluctuating selling price on export markets. Wages must be flexible enough to reflect the ability of industry to pay and also to reflect the economic situation.

Make no mistake: the small business community and primary producers have no option other than to retrench labour and increase mechanisation in the present climate, and, of course, the union movement has only one goal: less work for more pay, and the unemployed are left to the Government. The present accord between Government and unions is the greatest con and sell out by Government of its economic responsibilities. The recent deal by Government on productivity and superannuation is blatant disregard for this country's economic future.

The fourth area where Government must act is in the continuation of high tariff and protection policies. It has been estimated that it costs each Australian farmer in excess of $9 000 to protect Australian manufacturers who benefit from tariff protection to prop up employment in their industries. It must be realised that we are enjoying a false high standard of living in this country which cannot be justified when we look at our productivity or competitiveness. If we continue to pursue these policies there will have to be a severe reappraisal of the expectations of all Australians.

So, in putting the plight of the rural communities before the Government, I cannot stress too much the need for the reappraisal of government policies towards country people and rural communities. The rural community has for many years been prepared to forgo some of the trappings of city life to build a future for their families. But now, with falling incomes, the imminent capital gains tax, the quarantining of off-farm incomes, the assets test (which is a tax on the thrifty), and the reckless use of union power (such as in the Mudginberri meat dispute), members of the rural community have been pushed too far. Any Government, Federal or State, that fails to take heed of the militancy that is now evident in the bush does so at its own peril. Everyone in this country must be accountable to our civil laws.

The most abhorrent thing in today's society is compulsory unionism, which cuts across every principle of our democratic concepts. Even homosexuals and lesbians, under a Labor Government, have the right to express their will, but the decent working man has to pay to secure his job. Section 45 of the Federal Conciliation and Arbitration Act, as demonstrated in the Mudginberri dispute, places every individual within the law, especially the law breakers in the union movement. I wish the people on the Government benches would realise the damage they are permitting to the rights of the individual. No-one, whether employer or employee, should be allowed to use blackmail or standover tactics.

Having spoken on the rights of the individual, I read with interest the Labor Party's strong advocation for introducing a Bill of Rights to protect the individual's right to choose. The main publicity from Parliament at present seems to be concern at the electoral system operating in Queensland but, as most analysts agree, the electoral system operating in Queensland is just as damaging to the Labor Party in that State as the alleged fairness to the Liberal Party of the one vote one value system operating in South Australia.

I hope that in the final analysis, if the Bill passes, it will address the dilemma of the decent working Australian who has no wish to be involved in compulsory unionism. I hope the people in South Australia who voted Labor realise that their candidate was chosen 75 per cent on the vote of Trades Hall and 25 per cent by the person who has a free choice as to the Party he or she supports.

I now touch on the subject of privatisation. As stated previously, taxes and charges have risen 55.2 per cent during the term of the last Government. Clearly this cannot be allowed to continue. This State Government must curb its big spending policies and, if it has the will to do so, it must cut the size of government: in other words, get out of those areas that can be better run by private enterprise, which is more accountable and more efficient. The issue of privatisation, or denationalisation, was canvassed widely during the election in the seats of Mount Gambier and Victoria. We had one television station and one radio station to get the facts over.

We pushed heavily the selling of Housing Trust homes to long-term tenants, the selling off of the charter bus services and the State laundry. We countered every scare tactic used by two Premiers, masses of Ministers and the Public Service Association. I think everyone visited the South-East, except the Minister of Agriculture.

The Hon. H. Allison: Great cooperation from the Minister!

Mr D.S. BAKER: That is right. In both seats we had a resounding win. There is no other answer to the lowering of taxes and charges than getting Government out of areas that can be better handled by private enterprise, and I defy the Government to show any other way. I will quote from the summary of a study conducted last year which, of all things, recommends transferring the Commonwealth Bank to private enterprise. It is very interesting to see how an independent study questions the need for the Government to be involved in the finance industry. I quote from that paper:

A study by postgraduate students at the Melbourne University Graduate School of Management has called on the Federal Government to sell the Commonwealth Banking Corporation.

Study group leader, Mr Paul Coughlin, said:

The Commonwealth Bank has consistently under-performed in relation to its private competitors. It has served Australian taxpayers particularly poorly. The bank has been granted tax advantages worth hundreds of millions of dollars. Yet, we as taxpayers have seen precious little return on our investment.

The study revealed that over the past 10 years the Commonwealth Bank has been given tax breaks worth more than $350 million. Over the same period the Federal Treasury received dividends of $168 million. In other words, the Government has lost $182 million over the past decade through ownership of the Commonwealth Bank. Ironically, the Federal Government received more in income tax from each of the three major private banks than it does in tax and dividends combined from the Commonwealth Bank.

The study showed that in 1983-84 the Commonwealth Banking Corporation paid $98 million in dividends and income tax to the Federal Government compared with income tax payments of $171 million, $230 million and $334 million by the National Australia Bank, the ANZ and Westpac, respectively.

Following on from the poor performance of the bank and the inadequate returns paid to the Federal Treasury, the study recommended that the bank be sold to the public. It was estimated that the sale would raise approximately $1.437 billion. The sale figure compared favourably with the present value of estimated future dividend payments amounting to $689 million. Substantial recurrent budget savings would be available by using the proceeds of sale to reduce interest bearing Government debt.

The sale of the Commonwealth Bank will provide a welcome opportunity for employees and customers of the bank to invest in bank shares. This will place Commonwealth Bank employees on a par with private bank employees who benefit from share ownership schemes. It is to be hoped that private ownership will provide bank management with a greater incentive to improve performance. The study also concluded that there was no reason

to regard the bank as a people's bank. Interest rates charged to customers were similar to those of the private banks.

The Hon. R.K. ABBOTT (Minister of Lands): I move:

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

Motion carried.

Mr D.S. BAKER: The proposed selling off of half of South Australian Oil and Gas to the public, as advocated by the Liberal Party during the last election campaign, was not only a sound business deal for this State, but its success would have precipitated further investigations into getting government off people's backs and out of their pockets. The smear campaign mounted by the Government did nothing but confirm its lack of ability in economic management.

In closing, I cannot stress too much the electorate of Victoria's concern that those who are prepared to sacrifice, those who are disadvantaged by distance, those who take the risks needed to produce one-third of this State's agricultural wealth are being forgotten. We are concerned that this Government is not interested in creating an environment in which private enterprise can operate and personal effort be rewarded. It is fair to say that those who are particularly involved in the production of the nation's wealth are being overlooked. As that wealth increases the whole nation benefits. As it declines the whole nation suffers. As one astute observer put it:

Wealth is like the ocean: as it rises all vessels rise with it, from the largest ship to the smallest boat.

With a fair go we can produce the wealth, and every citizen's standard of living will rise with us. Let it flounder, and every citizen will flounder with us.

Mr PETERSON (Semaphore): With pleasure I rise to speak again to the Address in Reply debate. I welcome all members, new and old, to this Parliament. We are the duly elected representatives of the community and I hope that our considerations over the next four years will benefit the State. I also hope that the time in this Parliament of all new members and previous sitting members will be fruitful and satisfying to them. I thank my supporters and helpers for their help at the last election. That is three straight, and they are working towards the fourth.

I protest at the move to cut speaking time during the Address in Reply. We are now on time limits so that everyone can have a go at the Address in Reply, and that is a retrograde step. In future, more time should be made available. I also protest at the way the Bills have been thrown up to us this session without proper time to consider them or take them to our constituents and electorates for consideration. Later today we have to consider another piece of legislation when we might be able to look at that aspect.

Paragraph 20 of the Governor's speech in opening the Forty-sixth Parliament states:

My Government will continue to pursue high standards in the provision of health and welfare services. Health services to meet the needs of communities in the rapidly growing areas of Adelaide will be expanded.

It goes on to talk about hospitals. Once again I raise my concern, and the concern of every member, for the elderly in the community, particularly those in nursing homes. I have previously raised this matter and I notice that some adjustments were made at the federal level to the allowance given to nursing home patients. However, the crisis is occurring once again. I have received a petition, signed by 1 656 people which states:

To the Honourable the Members of the House of Assembly, in Parliament assembled—

The humble Petition of the undersigned Residents sheweth:

That as concerned South Australians we wish to express our concern strongly over the current situation of nursing homes in this State.

As you are aware there has been pressure applied to the proprietors of nursing homes by the Department of Community Services to reduce the number of nursing hours.

It is impossible to maintain an adequate standard of nursing care for the elderly residents in these homes. Already with the current nursing hours the only work that is able to be given is basic nursing care, so that with increasing cuts in hours the standard of care must fall.

These elderly residents have made a valuable contribution to our society, both in terms of their productive working life (during which they paid taxes) as well as accumulated knowledge which they share with future generations.

We strongly believe that at this time of their lives they are entitled to at the very minimum a high quality of nursing care.

Your petitioners therefore pray that your Honourable House will cater for the needs of the elderly by maintaining an adequate level of service.

I will be forwarding that petition to the Minister of Health for his information. He is well aware of the conditions that prevail; in fact, he is well aware of the dangerous area we are moving into with the aged in our community. In the *News* on 11 September 1985, talking about the restriction of fees that applied at that time: he was quoted as follows:

The freeze could reduce us to the levels of care provided in other States.

There is a dispute between the States. The States do provide a different level of care and obviously, with a different level of care, a different level of financing is required. He is aware of that, and so is the Commonwealth Government. Dr Cornwall went on to say:

We are not prepared to budge on our levels because we believe they are needed to provide adequate care.

Recognising the problem that we have in South Australia with the ageing population, Dr Cornwall is reported as follows:

We have a higher percentage of old people than any other state, and the level of dependency is the highest in the nation. Dr Cornwall said were alternatives to traditional funding methods, but he was not yet prepared to publicly 'air' them.

That was some months ago, and we still have not seen them aired. He continues:

One thing we can't do is let the Commonwealth shift the burden from the federal area of responsibility back to the States.

That is exactly what is happening. Last November a $3 a day interim additional payment was made to the nursing home people, and that is not to be increased on. Traditionally, every November an increase is made to the allowance given to these people, but he has made a statement that he will not make any increase until the other States catch up with us. That is not on. Every member of this Parliament, of whatever Party and from whatever electorate, represents elderly people who need or will need nursing home care. Perhaps we are too blase in this place, because most of us probably will go out of here on a payment that will mean that we may not have to throw ourselves on the mercy of the Government to be looked after.

The Hon. H. Allison: Here's hoping.

Mr PETERSON: Let us hope that is right, but I also think we should fight—

The Hon. H. Allison interjecting:

Mr PETERSON: Well, the Federal Government has to meet it, and that is the problem that we have. We have the Minister of Health saying that he will not let it happen, but Senator Grimes was quoted in the *Advertiser* on 25 February as saying that he was willing to discuss the problems of South Australia in this regard—meaning the level of fees—but that those discussions must contain a willingness by the South Australian Government to consider the problems of high cost in this State. This State does provide good service, but that is not brought about by the nursing homes themselves. I urge every one of us to consider that it is brought

about by the conditions that apply under industrial awards, and I have no dispute with that. They are properly awarded in the Industrial Court.

Nurses, nursing home staff, cooks, and so on are covered by an award and paid at a certain level, and that is how it should be. The nursing profession was recently given a 38 hour week, which of course affects the hours available to the patient at the same level of pay to the nurse. What level of care do we have to remove? What do we do? What do we take away from these people? Let us not forget that every nursing home is assessed by the Commonwealth Government on the daily fee that it can charge. It is told how much it can charge, and it cannot vary that charge. It is laid down, and nursing homes are assessed and given a rate to charge per day. Every patient who goes into a nursing home is assessed by the Commonwealth Government. Patients are not admitted if that type of care is not required. So, there are two aspects: the nursing home cannot charge more or less than it is allowed, and the patients are assessed as having the need for that care. Now they are saying, 'You are not going to be paid for that; we will take it away.'

Mr Lewis: That is what is happening to the farmers.

Mr PETERSON: Well, I have heard some speeches here about farmers, and believe it or not, I have sympathy for many of them. Many farmers are well off, but many, as in any other profession or occupation in this country, are struggling to make ends meet. There are levels of dependency and need in the farming industry, as in any other form of employment.

To get back to the topic of nursing homes, the people are assessed and the level of fees is struck. Now, we are being told that they cannot get any more money until they pay for their nursing home care. I did ask a question in this House some time ago on behalf of a constituent. I am being asked what are the alternatives. I do not know, and I still ask somebody in this House to come forward and tell me.

The Hon. P.B. Arnold interjecting:

Mr PETERSON: Well, the matter of teachers pay is a totally different thing, but I agree. Nurses are not overpaid compared to teachers. Several assessments of this situation have been made. I understand that a Commonwealth nursing home survey was carried out by Ms Rhys Hearn, but never made public. There are findings in that survey, so why was it not made public? We, as a Parliament, should ask for that to be made public. The Commissioner for the Ageing, Adam Graycar, I believe has a task force doing a survey, and I understand a preliminary report was to have come out in February. Has it not come out? Has it not been done, or has it been suppressed because it says things that people do not want released?

Mr Lewis: That is right.

Mr PETERSON: I do not know, but I would like to know, to tell people what is in these reports. With these assessments being done, with problems in the nursing homes, and with the Commonwealth Government saying that there will be no more money, what is the future of the nursing home patient? As a Parliament, we should be asking this. I have raised this matter several times. We have several types of elderly person nursing home care. We have the deficit funded type home, many of them very luxurious. I do not deny the right for nursing home patients to be cared for in that manner, but there has to be an equalising somewhere. It is ridiculous to have deficit funded homes where people pay to go in and live very well (and that is their right), but those homes are deficit funded by the Commonwealth Government. They are then supported by Commonwealth money for any shortfall.

However, down the road—and I have this in my electorate—there is the privately owned nursing home. If we want to limit their profit, then that is acceptable as long as the patient receives the proper attention and care. We cannot take nursing care from these people. If they are assessed as being medically and physically in need of care, let them be admitted, but the Commonwealth Government is saying that, even though they are at that stage, it will pay no more money.

We have the national wage case coming up shortly, and there will be an increase in wages with that. Again, I do not deny anybody's right to that, but the patient has a right to be able to pay that increase, to maintain the care. The Minister of Health has said that he does not want any decrease in care here; none of us wants that. I hope that every member of this House has visited nursing homes and looked at the care.

Mr Lewis interjecting:

Mr PETERSON: Many people out there are getting old. There is a change coming called 'grey power'. It will happen when people finally come to realise about these things. When the largest slice of the population has aged and is close to the time when they need care and find out that they cannot afford it, there will be problems. You deserve problems if you do no look after these people. It is their right to be looked after—just the same as other groups (and the group mentioned earlier by a member) including teachers, homosexuals and other pressure groups or interest groups. In my opinion the aged have a greater claim to the right to care than does any other section of our community. The community that we have today is a result of their efforts, their sweat and toil, through the children they bore and their work in the community. They made the community and they should be looked after. I gave my word that I would limit my time because other people want to speak.

The Hon. H. Allison: You are interesting.

Mr PETERSON: I try to be interesting and I try to make a point for people out in the community. We spend hours here debating Bills that people in the community do not know or care about. The laws we make are filed away until someone is caught and fined under that law. We are here for the people. We are voted in by the people, we are kept here by the people and we will be voted out by the people—people for whom we care or do not care. Every member has a mother and father or an uncle and aunt and, in fact, one day every member will be part of the aged in our society. I ask members to think about this and about the people out there.

Mr Lewis interjecting:

Mr PETERSON: It is making many lawyers rich—I know that much. In conclusion, I refer to Adam Graycar, who is well aware of the situation. As I have said, he spoke prior to November last year. The point he makes is valid because what he has said will come up again in November this year. South Australia's Commissioner for the Ageing, Dr Graycar is reported as saying:

> South Australia was on the verge of a social welfare crisis with most beds in nursing homes expected to be financially out of reach of pensioners before November . . .

That was last November. They received $3 which will take them through until this November, but there will be no more after that. Dr Graycar continued as follows:

> . . . Fewer than 850 beds out of a total of 3 500 would then be available to pensioner patients and none by early 1986.

We can transpose that to 1987. When that crisis comes I hope that every member here is prepared to stand up and support these people. Why not help them now; why not get some answers now; and why not set it up now and remove the worry for these people? They deserve better than the treatment they are receiving. I gave my word that I would restrict my comments, and I will do that. Let us make this an issue for the House and not wait for the crisis. Every

member here has been elected to help the people—nursing home care is an issue in this State.

Mr KLUNDER (Todd): I rise to support the motion. I think by now all the old members have been sufficiently farewelled and the new members sufficiently welcomed for me not to go through the list again. However, I would like to say that I miss my old mate George Whitten. As an ex member for Newland, I am very pleased to welcome the new member for Newland, who is sitting on the back bench behind me.

I rise on a matter that I believe to be of grave concern to this House. It is a matter, to my mind at least, that raises considerable doubts as to whether the Leader of the Opposition has the right to continue leading his Party. The Liberal Party and its Leader, as I will show, engaged in a very cynical, dishonest and persistently nasty and deliberate misrepresentation of the truth prior to the last election. It is time that the chickens came home to roost. I will begin by sketching in the background to these charges. There is now general agreement that the Liberal Party's pre-election campaign was less than successful. On election day, before the results were known, Matthew Abraham summed it up reasonably well in the *Advertiser* when he said:

> The Liberals have switched from privatisation to interest rates, then back to the old standard of taxes. So, by the end of the fourth week their campaign strategy appeared to be a tangle of frayed ends.

However, there was one promise that the Liberal Party and its Leader made consistently during the campaign. That promise was that the Liberal tax package would save the average family $6.55 per week. That promise was made time and time again.

I now refer to an article on page 2 of the *Australian* of Friday 6 December (the day before the election) by Louise Boylen. She begins her article:

> Two serious discrepancies became apparent in the South Australian Liberal Party's tax policy yesterday.

Two things are immediately important: first, the date she refers to is two days before the election (Thursday 5 December) and, secondly, as she goes on to say:

> The Leader of the Opposition, Mr Olsen, admitted business would be the major direct beneficiary of the Party's promised tax cuts, not the average family as previously suggested.

Of course, one wonders why something as important as this came up in the *Australian* and not in the *Advertiser* or the *News* or on television in South Australia. One might perhaps question whether or not the information was provided to the *Australian* because that publication has only limited circulation in this State.

Members interjecting:

Mr KLUNDER: It is interesting to hear the Pavlovian response from members opposite. They are still so married to the nonsense they talked before the election and so bankrupt of ideas that they cannot get away from it and announce some new policies; they are hanging on to the old policies. Describing the interjections of members opposite as 'Pavlovian' is probably right because we can probably talk in terms of the Opposition as the political equivalent of a pack of chihuahuas yapping away without doing very much about it. The article continues:

> The Opposition has promised a range of tax cuts that Mr Olsen has said would be worth $6.55 a week to the average family.

It is worth quoting what the Leader of the Opposition actually said in his policy speech, as does Ms Boylen, as follows:

> A Liberal Government would—
> Reduce electricity tariffs by 7 per cent.
> Abolish the Financial Institutions Duty (FID) of 4c in every $100.
> Increase the stamp duty exemption level from $50 000 to $80 000 for first-home buyers.
> Remove the land tax levy of 1c in every $20 of the value of metropolitan properties.
> Lift the payroll tax exemption level from $250 000 to $400 000.

I now come to the information which I assume was supplied to Ms Boylen by the Leader of the Opposition. This information knocks the ground right out from underneath those promises. The article states:

> However, the two promises affecting the average family which has already bought a home—

that means that there are only two promises which apply to the average family—

> reduced electricity charges and the abolition of FID, would increase its disposable income by just over $1 a week.

That means that the people of South Australia were misled, because they were told that the average family would receive $6.55 a week. Let us look at the evidence. The article continues:

> The tax policy stated the average electricity bill was $119 a quarter or $476 a year.

That may or may not be true, but let us not worry about it.

Mr Lewis interjecting:

Mr KLUNDER: Perhaps the member lives particularly high off the hog. The article continues:

> A 7 per cent reduction in this would be equal to $33.52 a year or 64c a week.

That now takes care of 64c out of the $6.55 promised by the Liberal Party. The article continues:

> The abolition of FID, which will be phased out over four years, would give a two-income family earning the average male after-tax wage of $287.30 and the average female wage of $203.60 an extra 38c a week if it saved its total salary and then used the complete amount to pay bills through the banking system, therefore subjecting it to double taxation.

That is highly unlikely, but let us take the full 38c a week and we come to just over $1. Louise Boylen continues:

> The removal of the land tax levy would benefit only those who own a business or rental property because the levy does not apply to the family home. Similarly, payroll tax exemptions would directly benefit only employers.

So, there is the answer to the promise of $6.55 a week by the Liberal Leader: it turns out to be at most about $1. Yet this is the man who went on television and said, 'No ifs and no buts.' Regarding the second point, which concerns the cost of the so-called savings, I quote again:

> Mr Olsen said yesterday the estimate that the average family would gain $6.55 a week from the package had been obtained by calculating the total cost of the complete tax package and dividing it by the number of households in the State.

Mr Lewis: That's honest.

Mr KLUNDER: The honourable member may think that it is honest, but I wonder whether he will still think it is honest in a moment. I contend that the Liberal Party well knew that it was misleading the average family to whom it promised $6.55. It worked out the cost of the entire package, divided the total by the number of households in South Australia, and then said that, therefore, the average family would benefit by that much, when it was clear that business and other groups, not the average family, would benefit.

To me, it sounds like a deliberate fudging of the figures in order to get the results that one might be able to sell to the people whom one wanted to vote for one. But, then, incompetence shines through what I consider to be misleading information in the first place. I shall quote again from Louise Boylen's article. I presume that the following statement is her own work because she does not say that it came from the Leader. The article states:

> The taxation and finance policy, issued with his platform speech, shows that tax cuts would be phased in over four years and in the fourth year forgone revenue would amount to $93.4 million a year. However, there are more than 358 800 families in the

State, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics and, if the $6.55 a week figure is multiplied by that number—

and we must remember that the Liberal Leader claimed that he arrived at the figure of $6.55 by dividing the total cost by the number of families—

the result is $2 350 000 a week. This would mean that the cost of the tax cuts, when fully implemented, would be $122 200 000 a year.

That is nearly $30 million more than the Leader admitted, so there is a $30 million mistake in the figures used by the Liberal Party. We have simply reversed the process that the Leader said he used to get the figure of $6.55. I claim that the Liberal Party deliberately misrepresented the situation to the electors by making an error of many millions of dollars. Whether it was $30 million, $25 million or $20 million is irrelevant: it was a considerable sum.

Mr Lewis interjecting:

Mr KLUNDER: If the member for Murray Mallee wishes to quarrel with my statement and fiddle with figures, I put it to him that that is what the Liberal Party did before last year's election. What I have said so far would probably be enough to make any Party wonder whether it should keep a Leader who has shown himself willing to preside over such a cynical misleading of the electorate.

What I have said so far, however, is not the main thrust of my argument. I remind members that the information that I have given so far was given to the *Australian* on the Thursday two days before the election. Presumably, the most favourable interpretation that one can put on that is that the Leader was not aware of the flaws in the arguments that he was presenting to the electorate and that, when he discovered the flaws, he decided to clear everything, to make a clean breast, and to start being honest with the electorate.

However, two considerations stop my endorsing such a favourable interpretation. The first is that the Leader would show himself up as a completely incompetent fool who was not aware of what was in the package that he was presenting to the electors after his 'No ifs and no buts' campaign and his assurance that all the Liberal policies had been carefully costed. However, I do not support the theory that the Leader is more incompetent than he is mendacious.

The second reason why I cannot endorse the interpretation that I gave is that, if he was presenting the information in order to clear the air as soon as he found that things were going wrong, I cannot understand why he did not present it to the *News*, the *Advertiser*, and the radio and television stations of South Australia. Never before has he shown such a reluctance to go to the media.

The final and really important crunch, clearly showing that the Liberals and their Leader are a bunch of cynical manipulators of the truth and that they could not give a damn about the truth if truth stood between them and power, is that on Saturday December 7 (election day) an advertisement, taking up nearly half of page 15, appeared in the *Advertiser*. It was headed in large print as follows:

Liberal tax cuts will save the average family at least $340 per annum.

By coincidence, that turns out to be the same as the $6.55 a week in the Liberal Party tax package that was promised consistently throughout the election. It is in fact the same promise. That clearly exposes the hypocrisy of the Opposition. On the Thursday before the election, the Leader admits that he is wrong, yet two days later he produces exactly the same advertisement (not this time in the *Australian* with a limited circulation but in the *Advertiser*) on election day in the hope that people will read that rather than any other information.

Obviously, if the Leader considered that he was being horribly maligned in the *Australian*, he would by now have made no secret of the fact that he would sue the *Australian* for every cent that it owned. It is the old campaign trick all over again: a fistful of dollars. I suppose that Opposition members may claim that it was another instance of their incompetence and that they had forgotten to withdraw the advertisement, although it would have cost about $1 000. However, it cannot be overlooked that each and every occasion when the Liberal Party would have to retreat into an argument that it was incompetent was also an occasion that benefited them in a political sense.

The Liberal Party has been caught out. The Party and its Leader, who must take the ultimate responsibility, have waged a dishonest cynical campaign aimed at getting back into Government at all costs by foul means or fair, and foul if it could not gain government by fair means. There is nothing to be proud of in this sleazy little exercise by the Opposition, and I am surprised that the Leader can sit in his place in this House and look anyone straight in the eye.

Mr BLACKER (Flinders): I support the motion. I thank His Excellency for the way in which he opened Parliament this year and for his address on that occasion. I noted that His Excellency referred to the Government's concern about the rural situation. He said that declining world commodity prices and high interest rates were causing farmers great hardship and that his Government would work with the rural industry in this State in planning for the future of the industry and would vigorously represent the concerns of that industry at the national level.

I guess that one could take up that statement easily and argue with the Government because, obviously, we cannot sheet home to overseas interests all the blame for our rural problems. Certainly, there is an influencing factor there, but there are many things on our own doorstep that we could do to help our rural industries.

The matter is adequately brought home in a letter from a family who wrote to me on 16 January this year. I will read this letter into *Hansard* because it typifies the plight of many rural families in South Australia. These people are probably in their early 40s, and they have two sons, the elder one of whom is now 24 and the second son a couple of years younger. I will not mention names, because the letter reflects the position of other families in similar circumstances. The letter states:

Dear Mr Blacker—

the letter was sent to the Prime Minister, the Premier and me—

The time has come when we are compelled to voice a strong protest to the Government re the policies towards people whose only desire is to support themselves and create employment for their family.

Our elder son left school aged 17 years and is now 24 years and recently married. We created employment on our farm for him, not seeking unemployment benefits, and a farm worker at no cost, as so many do.

Last year to create the same opportunity for a second son and a home for the other we purchased a second property—not asking for any handout and expecting to work long and hard to pay this debt. Our budget was worked out very thoroughly and soundly but we could not work out your budget and see that to cover your mismanagement our interest rate would go from 13.4 per cent to 22 per cent at a cost of $39 000 to us.

Just what are you trying to do to people who work extremely hard to make their own opportunities? We only want a fair go. It appears that you have no thoughts for this type of worker, but choose to hand out to the fellow who is happy to be the 'bum'.

As a delegate for Southern Eyre Peninsula to a South Australian sporting body, I visit Adelaide monthly for a meeting. I have contact with a typical middle class city family of two sons—one completed a boilermakers apprenticeship and now says, 'Why work? It's far better to drift around. If you are desperate you can pick up casual work for a day or two. It's great on the beach'. The other son quit with six months of his time to serve as an electrical fitter apprenticeship and has not worked for a couple of years, choosing to sit around playing a guitar. We work like crazy to pay taxes to support this attitude. It makes you wonder

just how silly you are to try and make jobs for your kids instead of letting you support them. It boils down to pride in yourself and your upbringing; that is what you are destroying, and you are creating a 'race of bums'.

The State Government had the audacity to put a ceiling on home loan interest rates. Don't you think the farm boy's home is just as important? We certainly did not notice a ceiling rate. It is just as difficult to find the money and pay the interest, we can assure you. The trouble is they do not earn you enough votes. Why not get into line? The same deal for everyone. To top off a degree of difficulty, Mr Hawke, your Government blatantly discriminated by firstly imposing a $55 anti-dumping fee on high analysis fertilisers and then, because you fear for the Labor Government in Western Australia, you exempt West Australian farmers.

Surely, Mr Bannon, you will stand up and be counted on this one. Even a blind man could see through this.

Mr Blacker, may we please expect your full fighting effort to object to this ridiculous state of discrimination, and use your voice in South Australia to speak volumes. We can't take much more!

Those last few words 'We can't take much more,' highlight the position of many people and families who are so desperately trying to eke out a living in rural areas and make ends meet. As the House can see, this family with two sons negotiated the purchase of a property only a couple of years ago and now face an increase in interest of $39 000. Obviously, that will put these people in much difficulty if it does not force them out of business if the situation continues.

I now refer to an article in the *Weekend Australian* of 22-23 February 1986 headed 'Australia: Argentina of the 1980s?' The article was written by Des Keegan after he recently returned from a trip to South America. He discusses what he sees as disturbing parallels between the Australian and Argentine economies, as follows:

> Is Australia caught in a time warp that will have it heading down the same sad path as Argentina?... Australia and Argentina, the envy of war-torn nations in 1945, have traded the rich man's table for the international beggar's bowl. The parallels are electrifying.
>
> A time warp shows Australia today following Argentina's bleak path; we both owe $70 000 million to foreign bankers and we have both assailed and weakened out dynamic rural and mining industries.
>
> The ALP blandly ignores the warning trail of social rabble and victims of Argentina's postwar socialism. Labor is seduced by proven folly that led to poverty, anarchy and a republic lost on the River de la Plata.
>
> General Juan Peron launched his populist assault on properous Argentina in 1945: Gough Whitlam unleased his populism in November 1972 and a million civil servants have since been hired to fix things that were not broken.
>
> These two conceited power brokers shunted their societies off the rails; socialist momentum has since gathered force under the Hawke-ACTU Government. Producers and innovators are now targets of venom and never-ending taxes and labour burdens. The rot, once in, is hard to purge—from the body politic.
>
> Australian business people know things have gone badly wrong: they know there is an anti-business tilt under Labor, State and Federal. But people remote from market discipline, particularly public servants and union capos, find it hard to believe we are in trouble after 40 years of modest growth. A grevious shock lurks around the corner .
>
> Argentine Caudillo Juan Peron took a vibrant economy. Perhaps the fifth richest society on earth in 1946, and impoverished it through a corporatist State of unviable industries, rampant unionism and socalism. Industry and equity depends on natural market rhythms rather than socialist dictators.
>
> Argentine workers still eat a lot of beef but they have toppled from high living standards to something approaching Malaysian levels. The two working classes have met—Malaysia ascendant, Argentina declining.

The report continues:

> Per capita income is about a fifth of Western societies and Argentines live in dread of further impoverishment; yet figures from Buenos Aires matched Australia in the top wealthy nations in 1920. We have striking similarities.

It further states:

> Argentina is at a crossroad and can go with Alfonsin to something better, or it can follow statistics and socialist sirens to perdition. It already has a Third World economy.
>
> Australia runs the same risk by assaulting its producers and favouring its public sector. Yet our public debate is about unwanted bills of rights, propaganda on rights of children to go on the dole and a host of possibilities for public expansion . . .
>
> Argentina can fix its foreign debt quickly if it allows funds to flow immediately to rural, mining and oil areas. After all, the country's exports could be doubled with a whiff of common sense and just reward for enterprise.
>
> The nation's exports have been severely depressed for 40 years because the Government ripped off nearly everthing the farmer earned. This could be remedied overnight even with poor world markets.
>
> Argentine exports are running about $13 000 million a year and imports are a mere $8 500 million; Australian imports and exports are each about $36 000 million a year.
>
> Argentine mines and farms could overnight revitalise the economy with fair taxation. The numbers are quite small; a few billion dollars a year would change the entire complexion from despair to hope. Revolutions are not seeded in optimism.
>
> Australian farmers, our major exporters, have taken to the streets lately fighting against unjust expropriation of wealth and substance.
>
> A society cannot prosper when its efficient miners and farmers are ripped off with taxes. The Argentine model shows why. Australia is also prepared to pay layabouts in grain elevators up to $800 a week while an entire wheat farming family has to exist on $5 000 for a year. Remote wage fixing authorities have diverted the farmer's substance to protected areas free from world market pressures.

I could go on with that article and would thoroughly recommend that to every person in this State have a good long look at it. Whilst we may find some fault with it, the similarity between what happened in Argentina and what is happening now, albeit 30 years later, is quite frightening.

The average farm income is expected this year (1985-86), according to Bureau of Agricultural Economics figures, to fall by some 66 per cent to $6 700. More than one-third of the total number of farmers will not earn any income this year, and more than 12 per cent will have a negative income of $25 000. When any person or any family is facing the prospect of a negative income, particularly of that magnitude, how long can they continue to do so? I could quote figures but the point has been made that the farming community is in a desperate plight. It concerned me to hear the Premier's reply when I asked him about relieving the Minister of Agriculture of other portfolios to allow him to concentrate exclusively on the plight of the rural industries. I did not make that request tongue in cheek, as some members accused me of doing. I made it as a result of an article that appeared in the Melbourne *Age* stating that Premier Cain had divested Minister Walker of all other portfolios so that he could spend his full time and concentrate full effort on the problems of the rural industries.

I do not have a lot of love for Premier Cain, but to his credit he took a country tour. He went out into the western areas of Victoria and saw for himself first-hand the plight those people are experiencing. Upon returning to Melbourne he decided that the issue was so serious that he should take this stand. When I asked that question of the Premier in this State his response was that he did not know there was a rural crisis or that the Minister had any problems. That concerns me, because the plight of the rural industry has been put before the Government many times, and for the Premier to respond in that way is of great concern to me. Either he is trying to turn a blind eye to it or he does not care. I do not think that that is the makeup of the man, as he is a caring person. Somewhere along the line the message has not got through about the plight of the man on the land.

When I see statements like the one in the Governor's speech passing off the plight of the rural industry as being an international problem and not so much a local problem—when I see some of the platitudes offered in that

speech—I become concerned. One does not know where the matter will end. Contributing to some of these difficulties is the high price of fuel. Members have heard me speak on many occasions about what is happening with fuel pricing throughout this State. I firmly believe that many people have been manipulating, or power broking, to the disadvantage of country dwellers. Why should any citizens of this State have to pay 17c per litre more for petrol out of a bowser than any other citizen of this State pays, simply because of the locality in which they live?

One could argue that it involves freight, but it is not all freight: probably less than a quarter of that figure is for freight. There is manipulation within the market, and the Government of the day must come to grips with that matter. I do not like to be ripped off, and I am sure that if members here were ripped off in a similar way they, too, would take exception. The Minister of Consumer Affairs is not prepared to take on the fuel companies. I have correspondence in files now three inches thick gathered over the years during the terms of this and previous Governments which have not been prepared to tackle the fuel companies. They have not been prepared to go to the companies and ask that they at least treat everyone equally in this State. If there is a freight component, country people can accept it if it is a valid cost.

We can go back to when an Australia-wide fuel equalisation scheme was introduced by the Federal Government. If freight were the only component in fuel pricing, prices Australia-wide would be within .4 of one cent across Australia. We all know that the fuel freight system was there but that pricing never got that close. Often there was an 8c to 10c per litre difference. There were five or six different aspects of fuel pricing to consider, and Governments of the day have a lot to answer for. Fuel has been marketed within some areas of metropolitan Adelaide below the recommended retail price. Whilst that is going on, what hope is there?

To give an example, it would be physically possible for a retailer in the country to bring a truck down to Adelaide, buy petrol from the bowser at the same price offered to the consumer here, take it back to his area, retail it and make more out of it than he is making at the moment. That is because fuel companies are manipulating and trying to create demands on the various outlets to build up their throughput so as to hold a larger market share. In so doing they are creating that market share to the disadvantage of other people. With a 17c per litre difference between outlets, one becomes quite concerned. That 17c per litre varies from day to day. The week before Parliament commenced, I came from Port Lincoln to Adelaide and saw 17c per litre difference between the prices at two bowsers that I passed in the one day. I have a list of fuel prices applying in such places as Port Augusta, Port Pirie, Whyalla, Port Lincoln, Crystal Brook, Mambray Creek, Wudinna, Elliston, and Kimba down to Adelaide. The figures were taken on 18 February. I seek leave to have the table of these prices inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it. It is of a purely statistical nature, listing fuel sites and their appropriate prices.

Leave granted.

FUEL PRICING

Port Augusta	c per litre (Super)
Shell West Side	59.6
B.P. West Side	59.5
Ampol (Highway)	59.6
Stirling North (B.P.)	59.7
Shell Meteor (Highway)	60.5—(highest)
Golden Fleece (Highway)	59.5
Mobil (Highway)	59.5
B.P. Stirling Road	58.9
ESSO Stirling Road	56.9—(lowest) (difference = 3.6c)
Port Pirie	
Ampol	57.7—(lowest)
Shell	57.9
B.P.	59.4
Mobil	59.9—(highest) (difference = 2.2c)
Whyalla	
Shell (Self serve)	59.5
Ampol	59.9
B.P.	59.9 (difference = 0.4c)
Port Lincoln	
Ampol	59.9
Mobil	59.9
Shell	59.9
Crystal Brook	
Ampol	58.9
Mobil	56.9—(difference = 2.0c)
Mambray Creek	55.9
Wudinna	60.3
Elliston	62.5
Kimba	
Shell	62.0
B.P.	62.0
Cleve	58.9
Ceduna	
Mobil	61.0
B.P.	63.3
Shell	63.3—(difference = 2.3c)
Streaky Bay	
Mobil	61.8
Adelaide	
Shell (Cavan)	48.9
Shell (Morphett Vale)	48.6
Shell (Klemzig)	47.9—(lowest)
B.P. (Cavan)	48.9
B.P. (Glenelg North)	48.9—(highest) (difference = 1.0c)

There is no doubt that if we were to carry out a similar survey, a day before the meeting of the association, the price variances would be different. However, the matter is one of contention and needs to be examined thoroughly.

Mr BLACKER: Whilst it does not show a disparity of 17c on that day at those sites, there is certainly a variation of some 14c or so, and it highlights the problem that exists. The Government must tackle the issue if it is going to maintain any credibility and if it has a genuine desire to treat all South Australians as equals.

One of the issues of concern highlighted tremendously by the abalone diving industry is the need for a decompression facility at Port Lincoln. There has been a tremendous push for that facility, and it has been stated that an accident will happen to a recreational diver or somebody else who gets into deep water. I understand that there have been a number of evacuations from Port Lincoln to Adelaide, the Government having to charter pressurised aircraft for these people suffering from decompression sickness.

That in itself is a tremendous cost to the taxpayer, and I believe that when members analyse the facts they will realise that it is probably far better to provide a hyperbaric facility in Port Lincoln rather than have the high number of evacuations. A recent survey identified some 341 cases of decompression sickness. That is frightening, I was not aware of it. I believed that there were isolated cases of the bends. Of those 341 cases, some 12 required evacuation, that is, bringing patients from Port Lincoln to place them in a decompression chamber so that they could be properly treated.

Not many weeks ago a person who was diving—I believe he was employed by the museum, although I stand to be corrected about that; he was not a professional diver, and that is my point—was doing research work in, I understand, 6 metres (20ft) of water. That person had decompression sickness or a case of the bends so severe that it was necessary for him to be evacuated to Adelaide. If we are not careful there will be a fatality.

I wonder now why we have not previously had a fatality, bearing in mind the risks that we are taking. Some would argue that the people involved in diving are professionals and know what they are doing, and should be taking their own risks. While that argument can be loosely used, I do not believe it is fair because the knowledge of decompression sickness now, compared to what it was 20 years ago when these divers commenced diving, is vastly different.

I attended a seminar in November where Dr Des Gorman, who is considered to be Australia's, if not one of the world's, best authorities on decompression sickness, gave a talk and showed video film of some of the problems that can occur with that condition. Frankly, its effect on the brain is horrifying. We should realise that we have had examples like that in our State, and it behoves the Government to do everything possible to help.

In the recent grain trade re-enactment the flagship *Falie* has visited many, if not most, of the ports in my electorate. I have probably had more visits from the *Falie* than any other member in the House! While I have not been able to attend all those functions, I have attended three. On each occasion I have had nothing but the highest praise for what occurred. I was present at Streaky Bay when the vessel arrived. Although it did not come into the jetty under sail. it steamed in from Perlubie beach, creating the right atmosphere in the town, with many people dressed up in colonial costumes. It was a grand occasion.

I attended a damper breakfast at Port Kenny, where grain was loaded into a dinghy and carted to Venus Bay, and winched on board the *Falie*. That, too, was a great success. It was disappointing that the people of Elliston could not share in the celebrations or activities of the grain trade re-enactment because of the risk to the vessel in crossing the reef, but they understood the position.

I am informed that the re-enactment at Farm Beach and Tumby Bay was equally successful, although the vessel was some three hours late at Tumby Bay. It was with considerable disappointment that the people of Arno Bay missed out. On the surface there appears to be little explanation for the vessel by-passing Arno Bay, and I do not wish to buy into that argument. The locals believed that it would have been possible for the *Falie*, if it could not travel within half a kilometre of the jetty under its own steam or by sail, then it could have been towed in and out. To an outsider, that would seem a reasonable request, but those on board and in charge of the decision making decided that they would not come within three nautical miles of the beach. So, the people at Arno Bay were bitterly disappointed; and I share their disappointment. It seemed reasonable that the vessel could be towed in or sail to within a kilometre offshore, because there were plenty of power boats to ferry people from Arno Bay to the *Falie* and back. The local people do not believe that a reasonable attempt was made to carry out the re-enactment. I was not present, so I cannot comment; I can only say what I was told.

However, I was present at the Port Lincoln re-enactment on the Friday before last at the Settler's Fair, which was an outstanding success. The *Falie* was in Port Lincoln for three days. The public knew that it was going to be there—

Mr S.G. Evans: Did it sail in?

Mr BLACKER: No, it motored in under some considerable difficulty with somebody sitting in the engine room holding the pump rack of the diesel motor, because the governor had blown apart. When the vessel was repaired, it participated in filming the Matthew Flinders re-enactment. That film is being prepared by the Port Lincoln High School and the players' costumes have to be seen to be believed. It is a credit to the high school and to Mr Vernon Lewis, a teacher at the school (a brother of the member for Murray Mallee), who has played an important part in it. All members of this House, hopefully, we will see that film one day because it is as near as possible to the re-enactment of the landing of Flinders at Stamford Hill.

Some good things have come out of it, and I believe that the *Falie* visit, in total, has been most beneficial in bringing home to the people, particularly of Eyre Peninsula and other seaports around the State, the great importance of the seafaring trade in the development of Eyre Peninsula, bearing in mind that in those days, when sailing vessels came in, sea transport was the only means of transport. Those people who know the coastal regions sometimes wonder now why there are so many little ports only six or eight miles apart with quite substantial jetties (or in some cases they used to have substantial jetties). It is for that reason that the reliance on sea trade was so great, not only in opening up and developing the area, but in exporting grain. My father and some of his friends can recall four and five square riggers at Tumby Bay, which would be a tremendous sight. All of us would like to be able to see that.

A massive development is taking place at Lincoln Cove, at Porter Bay in Port Lincoln. This development will be a boost to the tourist industry. It is shaping up and at present one can see the layout of the bays and the chambers. The sea has been banked off and dry excavating some of the main basin is proceeding. Some sheet piling is on site and work is commencing on the side and edge treatments. An amount of $1 million per month is being spent on what will be a world class development for the off-shore sailing industry. The depth of water in the commercial basin where fishing vessels will be located is some 17ft and the recreational basin has a 15ft low water mark. It has the capacity to be able to handle larger vessels and, more particularly, international type sailing vessels that we see occasionally and, hopefully, will see a lot more of as we get to the final development stages.

[*Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.*]

Mr BLACKER: I have mentioned some of the things that have been happening in my electorate in the past 12 months or so, and perhaps more particularly within the past two to three months, in respect of the marina complex. I can only say that the people there are indeed quite delighted with what is happening.

Since the Minister of Education is in our presence, there is a little incident I would like to raise, and it relates to a problem which the Minister made some valiant attempt to rectify, but regrettably time and communications prevented him from doing so. Approximately two weeks ago I received a phone call from the Aboriginal community in Port Lincoln, expressing some concern that their programs through the Technical and Further Education College were unable to proceed because of the unavailability of a toilet complex.

Whilst the project as proposed seemed to be a logical one, because of the difficulties in the relocation of transportable buildings and the resiting of the temporary accommodation for the college pending the construction of a new college (for which I understand tenders closed this week), the Port Lincoln Aboriginal TAFE program was unable to proceed because of the unavailability of toilets.

There was a toilet block on site. It was owned by TAFE, but, for it to remain there, it had to be transferred to the ownership of the Port Lincoln Aboriginal Authority. The dilemma and (if you like) the stupidity of what happened was that when it became known that the program could not proceed because of the lack of a toilet block, and when it became known that a toilet block did exist in Port Lincoln, another section of the department said it would like that toilet block back in Adelaide.

I am not aware of the value of that block, but I know or I suspect that the cost of the freight back to Adelaide was probably about the value of the block itself. We have the rather ridiculous situation of the need for a facility in Port Lincoln; the facility was in Port Lincoln; and then we had the bureaucracy saying it had to be transferred back to town.

I passed a message to the Minister, who immediately took the matter up. This was on the Thursday, just a fortnight ago today. The next day when I returned to my electorate office I was greeted by two Aboriginal members, the co-ordinator of the Port Lincoln Aboriginal organisation and one of his colleagues, to thank me for my part in what they believed to be retaining the toilet block in Port Lincoln.

Sir, the irony of the whole situation was that these two gentlemen came to thank me, because the truck had arrived to pick up the toilet block to transfer it to the new site. When the truck loaded the toilet block, instead of transferring it to a new site in Port Lincoln, it brought that unit right back to Adelaide.

I think it is an outrageous thing to occur. It is bureaucratic nonsense. This small item was in a poor state of repair, due for considerable upgrading and maintenance two years ago, and had not been used. When there was a need there by the Aboriginal community, everything should have just worked out nicely. When I reported to the Minister that the block came back to Adelaide, I think he, too, was incensed that it should occur that way. I believe somebody needs a gentle smack on the backside for that. It was mishandling and it was a sheer case of commonsense not prevailing in an important issue.

One other issue I would like to take up relates to education facilities in my electorate. The Minister would be aware, (and particularly the Minister of Technical and Further Education now, being formerly Minister of Education would be acutely aware), of some of the shortfalls in the facilities on Eyre Peninsula. I refer quite specifically to Wudinna, and then, secondly, to Cowell and Lock. Those three area schools are in quite desperate need of upgrading, and whilst I appreciate that the millions of dollars might be required is not available, one of the dilemmas that has been occurring for all three schools, but more particularly the Wudinna Area School, is that every time a proposal is put up they are told, 'Hang on a moment; the school is programmed for a total redevelopment.'

Over the past six or eight years (going back to when this area was part of the member for Eyre's electorate) this school council has been told to, 'Hang on a while; You are being programmed for a complete school redevelopment. There is no point in wasting a few thousand dollars here and a few thousand dollars there because you will be totally redeveloped.' The prospect of total redevelopment was good, and certainly long overdue, but I now find that I do not believe that the Wudinna Area School is even on a list.

That concerns the local school council and the local school community, because over the past eight years, and probably even longer, they have been given the false belief that school facilities would be given to them. The same situation does to a degree occur at the Cowell Area School and the Lock Area School, but one of the growing problems in rural areas is the availability of curricula opportunity, particularly for those in the higher secondary education areas.

I do not know the short answer. I believe it is unrealistic that we can have a full scale of curricula opportunities, particularly for the matriculation levels, but there must be some way in which students in these areas can be assisted. In the metropolitan area, if a certain type of curricula is not available at one school, it is usually only 8 or 10 kilometres away that those opportunities can be afforded at another school. That is not the case in the country areas, because it is a difference of not just 8 or 10 kilometres but more likely 100 or 120 kilometres. Of course, the practicalities of students travelling those sorts of distances just to pick up the subjects of their choice obviously are difficult.

I was interested in an article which appeared in the *Advertiser* only a couple of days ago suggesting that South Australia may pioneer national school computer links. I believe this has a lot of potential, because if education programs, and more particularly those of the matriculation level, can be taught through the greater use of computers and through the videotex type system, maybe those extra curricula opportunities could be provided to country students.

I am not aware of the technicalities of that, but I do know that the Western Area Director of the Department of Education, Mr Dennis Ralph, has been in the forefront in trying to pioneer, if you like, this type of project. Sir, the videotex operation is now well established in stock sales, where people can, by arrangement with the stock firms, view a television screen, sight the stock, and bid for them through the telecommunications system.

There is no reason that I can see why such a facility could not be established to allow a tutor-student contact through the electronic system medium to enable them to undertake subjects that would not normally be available to a smaller rural school. The problem is that in many of our area schools only eight or ten students may be taking matriculation and in some cases it can be even fewer. So, it is not feasible for a school to offer a wide variety of choices.

One issue that I meant to mention when I commenced my speech concerns what is actually happening now in the termination of the Address in Reply debate. I am indeed very concerned that many members of this Chamber will not be able to participate in this debate. I mentioned last night that it is an absolute insult to the Governor. More particularly, it is a blatant infringement of Standing Order 44, which definitely requires that the Address in Reply debate take precedence of any other debate. It is indeed a principle that worries me, if this House can so lightly dismiss the Standing Orders. It is not just a matter of dismissing the Standing Orders that we abide by, or would like to think that we abide by; we are also casting a slur on the Governor and the role that he fulfils.

Mr D.S. Baker: It's the tradition of Parliament.

Mr BLACKER: Yes. I have been in this Parliament for six terms, and in that time it has almost been sacrosanct that the Address in Reply comes first. It is only in extreme circumstances by motion of the House that Government business can be brought on to intervene in that process. Not only do we have that situation, but also it is maintained that the Address in Reply comes first because it takes precedence of private members time. By putting Government business time in the middle of the Address in Reply, the Government is denying private members an opportunity to speak at all. Standing Order 44 states:

> No business beyond what is of a formal character shall be entered upon before the address in reply to the Governor's opening speech has been adopted.

On the strength of that, I believe that this House has acted out of character to start with, and certainly with considerable disrespect to the Governor. I intend making my views known to the Government, because I do not think it is right that this should occur. I am endeavouring to find out what is the protocol in such circumstances. If we allow this to go unchallenged, obviously further disrespect for the Governor, the institution and the practices of this Parliament may well slip by, not deliberately in the first instance, but unintentionally.

Another issue that I wish to raise (and I notice that the Government has referred to it), is the abolition of the 10 per cent surcharge. This surcharge was applied to recipients

of power in some seven district council areas, six of those being in my own electorate. It was a long-standing arrangement that I believe was established under the Playford Government, and it was initiated at that time when bulk power was sold to the electricity authority in those respective areas. Prior to that, each of the district councils had its own generation facilities. However, it became more economical and—let us face it—much more practical for those district councils to be able to buy the power in bulk from the Electricity Trust of South Australia. They then distributed it amongst their ratepayers or the people who were involved in SWER lines or the power grid that operated within their respective district councils.

That 10 per cent became a source of annoyance and this became a discriminatory tax on certain areas of my electorate. I guess the irony of it was that those areas that were being charged the extra 10 per cent had the main power lines pass right through them to the southern part of the electorate which was not paying the surcharge. So, in the eyes of the general public it seemed to be quite a ludicrous situation. However, the Government, in removing the surcharge, unintentionally created a few problems, because many of the people involved in the distribution of the power, in the maintenance of the lines, and so forth, formed a sizeable part of the working group in those communities.

In Elliston, for example, six families were engaged in the electricity network. By removing six families from Elliston, the labour force was reduced probably by half, as it is only a small community. Therefore, there was a social and community impact upon that community when those personnel had to be phased out. Obviously, the District Council of Elliston was very concerned about the impact that the scheme would have. I understand that they have reluctantly reached a compromise. They did not want to say to their ratepayers, 'We will not go in with the Government and have the 10 per cent taken off.' Obviously that had to be, as they were caught in a bind. So, those families suffered a setback, because they either had to be relocated or change their form of employment, if indeed they could find an alternative means of employment.

Prior to the commencement of the lobster season, I was contacted by a fish factory, and in this respect I am again talking on power matters. The fish processor concerned was not afforded equal opportunity with other fish processors in the supply of power. At that time I wrote to the Minister asking that he give due consideration to all fish processors being treated as equals. If one fish factory could be afforded a reduction in tariff because of the quantity of power that it consumed, why should other fish factories not be afforded equal opportunities? The Minister responded fairly quickly saying that he was having the matter further investigated. He has just now contacted me to say that he has granted a reduced tariff to all fish factories that use that form of processing. Some 13 fish factories throughout the State will benefit by it. Admittedly, we are talking about only some $15 000 savings, but $1 000 for each factory is a considerable saving and one that is worth fighting for. I am pleased that the Minister has seen that.

Probably one of the greatest issues that is facing country people concerning health care is the drastic shortage of doctors. I understand that seven doctors are leaving Eyre Peninsula. This is creating tremendous problems in relation to health care for country people. I have been invited to attend a meeting next Wednesday at Lock, where the Cleve Hospital is trying to come to grips with the problem. I do not know what the answer is. The real problem is that we cannot attract doctors to go to the country areas. The number of doctors who are training to be just the average family GP is now considerably reduced, and many doctors for the sake of their families lifestyles are tending to specialise, and of course specialists tend to go to the metropolitan areas.

As a result, with this drastic shortage of doctors, we are finding that the remaining doctors are being grossly overworked to the stage where they will not stay. It will be impossible to maintain doctors in country areas. On the strength of that, I ask the Government seriously to look at this problem because it is not just an isolated problem; it is indeed a very serious one.

Together with the problem concerning the doctors is also the shortage of nurses. Only four years ago we had a surplus of nurses in this State, but because of a change in the training system and because some regional city hospitals no longer have the rights to train nurses, we now have a drastic shortage of nurses.

The position seems to go from riches to rags, as in a few short years we have gone from a situation of surplus to one of drastic shortage today. The shortage of nurses and of doctors is placing country health care at serious risk. The Minister has had differences with doctors in various fields. I am not taking up the case for the doctors: some of them have not acted in the best interests of the community. However, it is essential that the Government of the day recognise the problem that has been caused by the shortage of doctors and nurses in country areas and that, unless something is done, people will be seriously disadvantaged.

It is not right that someone suffering only a minor ailment must travel 100 km or further for treatment, but that is the present situation. In central Eyre Peninsula, the central hospital is sited at Wudinna, whence it is 80 km to the nearest hospital. The one doctor there is grossly overworked. Streaky Bay has one doctor; Elliston has one; and Cummins, where previously two doctors operated, has only one. Formerly, Cleve had two doctors and I am not sure of the present position there. Further, the two doctors at Kimba intended to shift but I believe that they have been encouraged to stay. Just before Christmas, I was told that seven doctors on Eyre Peninsula were on the move and unless those doctors are replaced and a stable health system is established, there will be some seriously disadvantaged people on Eyre Peninsula.

The final matter to which I refer concerns the problems of vegetation clearance. As members know, I have, at every possible opportunity, fought for adequate compensation for persons who are involved in the application of the vegetation clearance regulations and the relevant restrictions. Three or four weeks ago, I received a letter from one of my constituents who lives in central Eyre Peninsula. He has applied for a rural loan of over $100 000, which is a relatively small loan. After he applied, he rang the department to ascertain when he would get an answer to his application, only to be told that his application was unlikely to be processed within 12 months. That constituent is irate, because he is paying 22 per cent interest on his temporary loan and it will therefore cost him more than $22 000 to sit around waiting for a Government department to consider his application.

None of us would expect to do that, yet here is an applicant, wishing to clear land in order to provide food for his family, who has been denied the opportunity to get on with the job. He asked in his letter why the Government cannot second officers of the Department of Agriculture in order to eliminate the backlog of applications and get on with the job. He points out that, if he has been asked to wait 12 months, many other people must be inconvenienced in a similar way. I put it to the Government that that is a fair and realistic approach, and I trust that the Government will do everything possible to remedy the situation.

Again, I support the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply and thank His Excellency for the way in

which he opened this session of Parliament. My only regret is that all members are not given the opportunity to take part in this debate to which they are entitled, because every member has the right to address his or her concern to the Governor.

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

STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

The Legislative Council intimated that it insisted on its amendment No. 2, to which the House of Assembly disagreed.

Consideration in Committee.

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

That disagreement to the Legislative Council's amendment No. 2 be not insisted on.

This matter, which was canvassed last evening in this place, concerns the display of SGIC shareholdings. The Government believed that the advice given to the Committee was correct, but another place has seen this matter in a different light. The Government does not believe that the principle involved is such as to require that the Houses should have to go to a conference of managers. I have therefore moved the motion.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Government has made a wise decision. When this matter was discussed in this place last evening, I said that there was no reason why the SGIC should have to make certain information available. After all, it had nothing to hide. The Minister suggested that it was not normal commercial practice. However, the SGIC is not a normal private company. I congratulate the Government on finally accepting the Legislative Council's amendment, because it is reasonable.

Motion carried.

CRIMES (CONFISCATION OF PROFITS) BILL

The Legislative Council intimated that it had agreed to the House of Assembly's Amendments Nos 2 and 10, that it had agreed to the House of Assembly's Amendment No. 1 with amendments and that it had made a consequential amendment.

Consideration in Committee.

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

That the Legislative Council's amendments to the House of Assembly's amendment No. 1 be agreed to.

As I understand it, the effect of these amendments which are in front of members is that the Bill will now apply to indictable offences and offences specified in the Acts referred to in the amendments: the Fisheries Act, the Lottery and Gaming Act, the National Parks and Wildlife Act, the Racing Act, and the Summary Offences Act. I have spoken to the Attorney about this matter. He does not believe that the principles are such that it is necessary for the Assembly to insist on its amendment as originally proposed, and therefore I urge that the Committee agree to the motion.

Motion carried.

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

That the Legislative Council's consequential amendment be agreed to.

Motion carried.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT: MISUSE OF GOVERNMENT MATERIALS

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD (Minister of Employment and Further Education): I seek leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: Further to the question asked of me yesterday by the member for Hanson and the question today by the member for Todd, I now advise the House that I have received copies of some receipts pertaining to the issue raised in the questions. These receipts were collected at short notice and refer to materials purchased for construction of the trailer pictured in three of the photographs forwarded to me by the member for Hanson. I am awaiting further advice as to receipts for materials relating to other items pictured. Details of the receipts are as follows:

5.8.85 Basic Steel Supplies for tubing (docket no. 23) $43.00;

30.8.85 ANI Austral Steel for sheet steel (docket no. 7425) $161.48;

7.11.85 Industrial Engineers & Spring Makers for axle, hub and shaft (docket no. 56948) $171.20;

12.11.85 Industrial Engineers & Spring Makers for hydraulic override coupling (docket no. 058098) $107.

The following note is provided with the receipts:

The trailer floor pan and sides were purchased five years ago with three other sets from Basic Steel Supplies, Edwardstown. Trailer mudguards and tail gate assemblies were obtained from Delta Engineering in conjunction with those purchased by Mr (name deleted). signed (name deleted).

I have deleted names from this ministerial statement: however, they appear on the papers I now table. As further information comes to hand I shall keep the House informed.

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 4 March. Page 844.)

Mr S.J. BAKER (Mitcham): The Opposition supports this measure. It facilitates the amalgamation or consolidation of a number of statutes mentioned in the Bill. A far greater mind than mine has checked most of the points involved and has found that they are satisfactory. The Opposition supports the Bill.

Bill read a second time and taken through Committee without amendment.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD (Deputy Premier): I move:

That this Bill be now read a third time.

I thank members for their cooperation in agreeing to deal with this matter at this time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

STANDING ORDERS

In Committee.

(Continued from 5 March. Page 963.)

Proposed new Standing Order 45.

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

Insert proposed new Standing Order as follows:

45. Unless otherwise ordered, the House shall meet for the dispatch of business on each Tuesday and Wednesday at 2.00 p.m. and each Thursday at 11.00 a.m.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: As I indicated in the second reading debate, the Opposition (and I believe we have the support of the other non-government members of the House) accepts the principle of Thursday morning sittings. I think it will become clear as the Minister proceeds a bit further that we have achieved a commonsense approach to the way in which Thursday morning sittings will operate. In fact, it is not possible to have a second-rate sitting of the House, and that is now not contemplated. The Opposition supports the motion.

Motion carried.

Proposed new Standing Order 45aa.

Mr S.G. EVANS: I move:

To insert new Standing Order 45aa as follows:

45aa. The House shall meet for the dispatch of business on at least 80 days in each financial year, of which 16 days shall be allocated for private members' business. Eight of those 16 days shall be reserved for items of business introduced by a member of the Opposition.

I believe that my amendment has been circulated; the Deputy Leader has asked me about it, but I am sure that it has been circulated and that he will find a copy on his desk.

What I am seeking to do is obvious. There is a responsibility on Parliament to sit more frequently than it does at present and that can be achieved only by writing it in Standing Orders, as applies in the United Kingdom and other Parliaments. We have a much bigger Public Service now, with more Government departments and many more areas in which we should question the Government. The State's economy is moving much more rapidly and Parliament should sit more frequently to ensure checks and balances of the system.

It is a joke to think that when we finish this week or next week we will not sit again until August. Elected members need the opportunity to challenge and question the Government, and that can be done only when Parliament is sitting. The Opposition should not have to resort to sensational tactics, with Parliament no longer being a place where members can question the Government. Before the 1970s there were not so many departments or such a fast moving economy, technology was not so advanced, and there were not so many agencies in the community.

Indeed, we have increased the number of Ministers to cope with the increased workload, yet the chance for Opposition and Government members to question the Government to ensure that it is conducting the affairs of State properly has not increased commensurately. Often if a problem arises a member will want to ascertain whether his concern is warranted, and the only place to do that is in Parliament. That is where one begins questioning without disclosing too much detail or jeopardising the name and reputation of the people involved. A matter can subsequently be aired elsewhere if the member is correct in his concern.

Further, it is no use writing to Ministers to get information because, whatever the colour of the Government, answers take longer and longer to come back, except possibly in the case of simple queries. Sometimes it takes six, eight or nine months for a reply in response to a legitimate query of a constituent, a group or organisation. Governments just ignore the individual, despite representations by elected members of Parliament in such circumstances.

There needs to be stipulated a minimum number of sitting days. It is interesting to note from *Hansard* the number of sitting days in past years. In 1966-67 we sat for 73 days, and then from June to November 1967 we sat for 57 days. In 1969-70 the session lasted 68 days, and from June to December the following year, 64 days. Other years vary between 54 days and over 80 sitting days. Clearly, in recent years Parliament has not sat for long enough, yet members are paid to represent the people. In earlier days members could be part time, as some are now, although not as many as previously. The workload is greater, as I stated last night. In the change to Standing Orders just made, private members time is guaranteed on Thursday, but it is still not significant in terms of total sitting hours of Parliament.

In our changing society there are so many more issues to consider, and the Opposition needs a chance to test Parliament on behalf of constituents on a wide variety of matters. So, an extra eight days—a total of 16 days for all members who are not Ministers—in a year of 365 days is minute. Counting Thursday together with Tuesday and Wednesday, we will have about 50 hours of extra sitting time, and it may be as high as 70 hours. Nevertheless it is less than two weeks of working time during which Opposition and Government backbenchers can question the Government.

This is the way to prove one way or the other whether late nights are the Opposition's fault, whichever Party it is, and not the Government's. If we stipulate that we must sit for 80 days a year and never sat after 11 p.m., I would be surprised. If we went late then people could say we were fools, as the member for Mawson has recently said. I believe that members of the community believe we are cheats because we do not sit often enough.

We should spend sufficient time here to fulfil our obligations as elected members and serve the people, and 80 days is a reasonable requirement. We need guaranteed extra time for members, and we need to sit at least 80 days a year, a period that is still only a small part of the year. It is important that the Government front up for that period—six months—so that we can raise matters of concern to constituents.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: The Government opposes the amendment. It is not realistic to prescribe the number of sitting days. It is part of the tradition of Parliament that proper safeguards exist to ensure that the people's elected representatives have an opportunity to address grievances. Indeed, the whole budget process and the process of obtaining Supply is possible only through making available to private members the opportunity to address grievances. Obviously, we have to re-examine from time to time the appropriate forms of the House that enable us to represent our constituents, but I do not believe that this is one of them.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I am not quite sure whether this amendment was conceived in the expectation that new Standing Order 45a would in fact be accepted and that this was an attempt to get some sense into the private members area, but it is our view that, as new Standing Order 45a has not been proceeded with and as private members business is now, in our view, adequately catered for, new Standing Order 45aa does not appear to be necessary. For those reasons, we do not support this further amendment. If new Standing Order 45a had survived (and Lord help us!) there might have been some sense in carrying it further, but in the present circumstances I do not believe that there is any sense in that.

The Hon. B.C. EASTICK: I want to take up a point made by the Deputy Premier: he indicated that there was a need for a review of Standing Orders from time to time, and that is a reasonable approach. Will the Deputy Premier indicate to the House that he would expect that the Standing Orders Committee, which has been appointed by this Parliament, would fulfil its true purpose during the term of the Parliament? I know that the Deputy Premier cannot speak for that committee, but he is the Deputy Premier and he has direct contact with the majority membership of that committee. With the Deputy Premier's concurrence we can expect that that joint standing committee will be expected to attend to a necessary review of the Standing Orders.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: What we do tonight will address only a small proportion of the Standing Orders, and it is competent for the Standing Orders Committee to consider any recommendations for change. I would not want to suggest that, in whatever form we eventually recommend to the House that these changes should take place, we have done more than just skim over the surface of some of the areas that perhaps the Parliament should consider for the better functioning of what it is trying to do. Obviously, the Government would have no objection to the Standing

Orders Committee fulfilling its traditional function and considering any further propositions for amendment of Standing Orders.

Mr. S.G. EVANS: I am disappointed that both major Parties in this Parliament do not see the need to ensure that a Government brings Parliament together more often. If any member wanted to amend new Standing Order 45aa, they could have done so, perhaps to provide a guarantee of 60 days or to delete the private members rights that I was trying to establish. But members were not even prepared to do that. They just wanted to say, 'We will come here when we feel like it.' If we come back in August and if we do not sit for much of December, the most time we are likely to get on Thursdays is 40 hours debate on private members issues for the whole parliamentary year.

Never in my time in this Parliament (and that is 18 yrs now—and I thank the people who sent me telegrams pointing that out) have we completed private members business or given each individual, who wants to have a proposition tested by Parliament in debate by all those who want to participate in the debate, that opportunity. There is always a rush on the last night of a session to complete the motions and to vote where appropriate. If that is not a sham in relation to members representing their district, what is? Each and every member who has served for some time in this Parliament knows that to be the case.

In response to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I point out that this amendment was not subject to the insertion of new Standing Order 45a. It is quite clear in my mind that in this modern day and age we should not let Governments hide by not meeting, and for the Deputy Premier to suggest that Budget debates and so on provide an opportunity to test a Government is just not on, because that occurs for just a couple of weeks of the year. Something major could go wrong at any time after next week, and the real test in the Parliament would not be available. We could not even move a vote of no confidence in a Minister. A Minister might rip off the State or do something unconstitutional, but there is no power to take action. The Government can sit back and say, 'We will not even meet in August; we will wait until we are short of money.' It could be taken to the nth degree to save time. We cannot say that that sort of thing will not happen, because we know that it could.

I will cite an example in relation to private members business. Some matters on the Notice Paper involve regulations. If an individiual wants to move for the disallowance of a regulation, he can do that only in private members time and he must deal with it in 14 sitting days, or at least give notice before the Parliament that he has an interest in it within 14 sitting days of the matter appearing on the Notice Paper for the first time. When the Parliament meets again, the first day is not a private members day and, under this new Standing Order, neither is the second day. There is no power, opportunity or right of an individual to move for disallowance of a regulation under the Standing Order we have just passed: that has been taken away, because a motion cannot be moved.

Possibly a notice may hold the matter, but we should also have the right to debate. We may be able to hold a matter until a point can be debated, and I believe that is possibly the case, but the opportunity to debate the motion has gone. If a regulation is involved, such regulation is already operative and it would continue to operate no matter how bad it is until next August. Any regulation that any individual may feel is improper (and he may be able to prove to Parliament that it is improper or should not apply) will remain operative until next August, but members say, 'Don't worry. What about tradition?' Where is the tradition in the Standing Orders that we are amending anyway? Where is the tradition that we are holding up in relation to the recent decision that was made in the House against all the promises and guarantees that were given? Tradition no longer counts. We know that. On this issue we are said to be moving forward. We are told that we must change the Standing Orders to keep up with modern practice, because there is a bigger responsibility in running the State and the Parliament. Let us make people responsible and ask them to come before the Parliament.

A minimum of 80 days is stipulated, but I do not care if any member wants to amend that to 60 days. Members are not even prepared to commit themselves to the electorate and say that they will come here for a stated number of days. If there was a minimum of 80 days, we could cut out the night time racket to the benefit of staff and the families of members. There are more younger members with families at home than perhaps there have been in recent years, although there have always been some. We could make the procedure a lot more responsible in relation to them, and thus we would not have to worry about the midnight provision. If we sat for 80 days, we could always finish earlier. I cannot understand why a group of people who are paid to represent their district are not prepared to say, 'Yes, we will come to Parliament and in government we will make members front up for 80 days a year'. I put my view in the strongest terms possible and ask members to support the new Standing Order.

The Committee divided on the motion:

Ayes (2)—Messrs Blacker and S.G. Evans (teller).

Noes (38)—Mr Abbott, Mrs Appleby, Messrs L.M.F. Arnold, P.B. Arnold, D.S. Baker, S.J. Baker, Becker, Blevins, Chapman, De Laine, Duigan, Eastick, and M.J. Evans, Ms Gayler, Messrs Goldsworthy, Gregory, Groom, Gunn, Hamilton, Hemmings, Hopgood (teller), Keneally, and Klunder, Ms Lenehan, Messrs Lewis, McRae, Mayes, Meier, Oswald, Payne, Peterson, Plunkett, Rann, Robertson, Slater, Trainer, Tyler, and Wotton.

Majority of 36 for the Noes.

Motion thus negatived.

Proposed new Standing Order 45a.

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

Insert proposed new Standing Order as follows:

45a. No vote shall be taken between 11.00 a.m. and 2.00 p.m. on a Thursday, nor may the House be counted out.

I indicate a procedural arrangement: we are treating the paper that I laid on last week as being as close as possible to a Bill with a series of clauses. Whilst it may seem rather strange that I not simply refuse to move new Standing Order 45a, in view of that procedure it is necessary for me to move it and then argue that it be left out.

The matter was canvassed by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition last evening, as well as by several other honourable members. The Government's concern was that in providing this additional time Ministers also need time to administer and that if Ministers were required to be here for that additional two hours each week on a Thursday morning, that would involve time generally used for various activities that would not normally attract a pair and, therefore, there might sometimes be difficulty about a Minister being in the precincts of the Parliament.

If a Minister is sitting in his office up in town receiving delegations or talking to senior public servants and others, it is just as easy for that business to be transacted down here. There is no problem about that at all. However, there are occasions on Thursday mornings when a Minister may be required to be doing something out of his office and outside this place in circumstances that would not normally attract a pair.

If, for example, the Minister of Water Resources has to go down to the Ottoway depot, that is not normally something for which we would ask for a pair, nor should it be granted.

In making this concession, the Government realises that, without some reasonably flexible pairing arrangements, we could be creating problems for ourselves in the normal conduct of Government business outside this place. I am merely asking the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, in any response he might make, to assure us that the Opposition would be reasonable in granting pairs in these circumstances. Obviously, I give the commitment that the Government would also be very reasonable in the requests that it puts up.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Government is being sensible. I would not say that it is a concession to the Opposition. In fact, the Thursday morning just would not work in the way the Government had it structured and it would have had problems getting around the constitutional difficulties, but we will not canvass all that again. The Government is being sensible in that the Thursday morning session will have some meaning because matters will be able to be progressed and votes taken with private members business proceeding satisfactorily.

I put on record that the Opposition is always reasonable. The Minister made a plea for reasonableness. I do not see any problem with what the Minister has put to us. He obviously wants it on the public record in case there is a row down the track. We grant pairs, as I understand it, when Ministers go about ministerial business. We do not grant pairs when members of the Government are out politicking, and we certainly would not be interested in giving pairs if Ministers were simply out politicking in their own or someone else's electorate. However, if they are out on genuine ministerial business—whether at a function or carrying out an administrative activity—there will be no argument with us.

Normally at night Ministers are not required to be out on administrative business at such places as Ottoway as those places are not operating at night. Pairs are granted for official ministerial business such as conferences, openings of functions, and the like. If it is simply a request by a Minister to go to his department or to go out on administrative business, there will be no problem. If the Opposition is of the view that the Minister is out politicking in either his own or someone else's electorate, in our opinion the present ground rules would apply. I give the Minister an assurance that we are happy to cooperate with reasonable requests of the type he has outlined to the Committee.

The Hon. B.C. EASTICK: There are two issues I would like to raise briefly. What the Deputy Premier proposes is capable of being achieved, as indicated by the Deputy Leader. I put two propositions to the Minister: if a situation arose where a number of Ministers were away (and, therefore, other members were paired), it is conceivable that a vote which required a constitutional majority would not be achieved; therefore it would be necessary for the Government to give an assurance in reverse to the house that a particular vote which required a constitutional majority to process a Bill could be taken in Government time later that day.

There would not be any further debate on the issue on that day, but it would process the Bill so on the following week the matter could be properly considered. The same situation applies if a satisfactory suspension of Standing Orders is required to consider new measures or new clauses in a private member's Bill which is before the House. I suppose it is not likely that there will be eight Ministers away (and therefore eight members paired outside) or one or two may be ill or overseas on parliamentary business. However, we must accept that such a situation might arise and, if we are dealing with meeting the requirements of a Minister, I believe that we also have to accept that the Government would seek to meet the requirements of the procedures to allow debate to continue.

There is a classic case (which members may recall), in relation to a ruling given from the Speaker's Chair during the course of the 1979-82 Government, to continue the debate on the passage of the Prostitution Bill. A traditional vote was required, regardless of the personal feelings of the Speaker of the day—who could have exercised a personal vote but would have been doing an injustice to the parliamentary system.The analogy is not direct, but it is within that same vein that I believe we ought to be approaching this matter. If that assurance can be given in reverse, I can see no difficulty with the proposition before the House.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: I am quite happy to give the member for Light those assurances. I would have thought that the second of the two situations was the more important. Obviously, in the first situation that he envisages the government of the day will support the measure, anyway and, of course, it is not unknown in those circumstances.

The Hon. B.C. Eastick interjecting:

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: Yes, but in those circumstances the outcome is desirable for the Government, and it is not unknown for Governments to, as it were, take over a measure to ensure its further passage. In any event, the assurance is given. In the second case, the assurance is also there. It is, of course, something that has always played on the minds of Whips over the years; that the people on the other side of the House might use their numbers to capriciously withhold suspension of Standing Orders. In all the time during which the member and I have been here, I do not think that we have ever seen that. That has been a recognition of the conventions and rules of fair play of the House. By extension, of course, it is also understood that you do not play the pairs game in such a way as to also, as it were, capriciously withhold those numbers. So, both of those assurances are readily given.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: So that it is perfectly clear, when we are talking about co-operation in relation to pairs, we are talking about Thursday mornings. At all other times, of course, the arrangements which obtain in relation to pairs (which I think is written down) will apply.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: That is right.

Mr S.G. EVANS: I had the responsibility of being Whip for some time, and I think that I was reasonably lenient over those years. Members on the other side know that pairs were given sometimes for things that may not have been quite within the bounds. If my own bosses had known that, they may not have been too happy. One thing that has to be watched is the Minister who says he is going to a certain function, actually attends the function and then goes somewhere else instead of returning to the House.

I have one example, and I will not say who it was (members can draw whatever conclusions they like). The person went to a function and did not come back, but was seen by somebody else at the races. Therefore, there is a responsibility for the Whip's protection on the person who arranges the pairs.

Going back to the first point raised by the member for Light, before the pairs are issued for a Thursday morning it should be possible in most cases to assess whether a constitutional matter will be discussed and put to a vote before the pairs are given. If that were the case, the pairs would be looked at more seriously than if it were a run of the mill Thursday.

Motion negatived.

Proposed new Standing Order 50.

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

To amend Standing Order 50 by adding the following proviso:

Provided that if the Speaker is satisfied there is likely to be a quorum within as reasonable time he shall announce that he

will take the Chair at a stated time; but if at that time there be not a quorum the Speaker shall adjourn the House to the next sitting day.

This matter was first raised in respect of Thursday mornings as some sort of amendment to the original Government provision that the House be not counted out on a Thursday morning. When it was clear that it would be unreasonable to proceed along that track, the matter still before us was whether we should amend our procedures for the adjournment of the House when there was no quorum present.

What I put before Committee applies in Federal Parliament where, if a quorum is called and no quorum is present, the Speaker stands the House adjourned until a particular time (usually the next meal break). If at that time there is still no quorum present, the House stands adjourned until the next day of sitting. The lack of a quorum is something which would be regretted—it is something which would be a strike, as it were, against all honourable members who failed to respond to the ringing of the bells at that time.

However, one can imagine circumstances arising in which both sides of the House would have preferred that the House continued to sit later in the day, and that was prevented because of the lack of a quorum at an earlier time. If we cannot raise a quorum on two occasions during that day's sitting, that is the end of it—on our heads be it. But the Federal Parliament has found this a reasonable procedure. It has far more members than we do from which to make up a quorum—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: But proportionally not as big. We are 17 out of 47. I urge the adoption of this amendment to Standing Orders.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: We are not going to have a row over this, but it highlights the *ad hoc* nature of this whole exercise. The Opposition has not discussed this change. I am aware of it because I have had some discussions with the Deputy Premier, and I have had to make snap decisions on behalf of the Opposition (which is not a satisfactory state of affairs).

The member for Light put the whole debate in its proper historical context and sequence at about 1 o'clock last night, when the alleged discussions about these Standing Orders and the attempts to give them some semblance of credibility on the grounds that they had been discussed in the right forums were laid to rest by him. The consultative mechanism set up for the bipartisan approach to changes to Standing Orders was not followed, despite a rather hysterical outburst from the member for Mawson. The member for Light, more than anyone else, put the historical account of what happened in its proper perspective.

This amendment has just bobbed up for consideration out of the blue. No Opposition member, except me, have seen it, because I had discussions with the Deputy Premier prior to dinner. That highlights the unsatisfactory way in which this whole exercise has been conducted. I say that without malice; it is a statement of fact. Nonetheless, I cannot see much wrong with it, and suspect that the same applies to other members of the Opposition. For that reason we do not propose to jack up and have a row over it. However, I protest at the way in which this whole exercise has been conducted, and that is highlighted by this new amendment suddenly bobbing up out of the blue.

Mr LEWIS: I have some difficulty in understanding this amendment. It states:

. . . provided that if the Speaker is satisfied there is likely to be a quorum within as reasonable time he shall announce . . .

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: It should read:

. . . within a reasonable time . . .

Mr LEWIS: What is a reasonable time? That is not mentioned in Standing Orders. Presumably the Speaker could occupy the Chair for the two hours, wating for something to turn up, in Micawberish terms.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: I apologise that I did not pick up that typing error. It should read, 'within a reasonable time'. The Speaker is, of course, the servant of the whole House. It is the Speaker's responsibility to interpret the will of the House in terms of the custom and practise of the House. The problem we have in introducing something new is that there is no custom or practice that applies here, and I guess that the Speaker would have recourse to whatever custom and practice is used in the Federal Parliament. As I understand it, and as I attempted to explain when I first rose to my feet when talking about this clause, in the Federal Parliament (if the most recent incident is to be taken as a guide) the Speaker would simply adjourn the House to the end of the following meal break, and he would then call the House together. That is the practice, and that is what I assume would obtain here.

The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy: What if the quorum is not there at 8 p.m.?

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: In those sorts of circumstances the Speaker has to consider whether a quorum is likely to be obtainable within a reasonable time, particularly if the agreement between the Government and the Opposition is that the House sit its normal time, that is, 10 p.m., and then goes to an adjournment debate. I do not see that this rules out the possibility of two Opposition members who are dead keen to speak on the adjournment debate at 10 p.m. putting a point of view to the Speaker that he should call the House together at 9.45 p.m., so that the right for the adjournment is preserved.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: You cannot have it forthwith until you are satisfied that you will be able to get a quorum. It is a matter of judgment and consultation with honourable members to ensure that the desires of all members are upheld to the extent that that is possible.

Mr S.G. EVANS: The Deputy Premier has asked us to accept this amendment, and I, like others, have just received it. In 18 years I do not think that we have ever failed to get a quorum.

Mr Lewis interjecting:

Mr S.G. EVANS: Well, it is only lost for the one night. The House gets up and we go home. In all the years I have been in this place I do not know that we have lost a quorum, although we have come lose when in Opposition. Both Parties have deliberately taken their members out, especially when the count was 19 all, with so-called Independents in the Chair. At that stage the Opposition deliberately took members out at 19 all and had the Government of the Day panicking. Both Parties have done that. That was deliberate and it will happen, whether or not this provision is included. The Oppsition made the Government of the day front up and stop their members from sleeping in the corridors; or play on the piano, 'Thy God may be nearer to thee' or something, when someone is in a room with a heart attack (as happened one night in the Parliament—and that person was the Speaker).

The Deputy Premier has not given us one example of why we should accept this amendment. I do not support it because it has never been necessary in all my time in Parliament. The Deputy Premier must have a record of how many times a quorum has failed to be achieved over the past, say, 80 years; I believe it is very few. It is ludicrous for the Government to seek two provisons when it has 29 members and all it needs is 17 for a quorum. The Standing Orders Committee will meet, and there must be a better way of doing this. Why not leave it and let that committee look at it? We have not been given the opportunity to consider it and people have said that they will go along with

it because they cannot see any problem with it. I cannot see that it is necessary, and I do not support it.

Mr LEWIS: Now that I have been able to clarify the meaning of the proposal I will not support it. I do not think there is any necessity for this change. The Deputy Premier is trying to hoodwink the rest of us simple souls into thinking that the way things have been is the way things will be. Of course, the way things have been is that the Government knows that it has two minutes to get a quorum. We have already seen how this Government treats the Parliament and its proceedings with contempt. It makes changes to suit itself.

I would not be surprised to find that the Government will not bother to provide a quorum if on private members day there was business on the Notice Paper that it did not want considered. As it presently stands, the official Opposition does not have sufficient numbers to make a quorum and would be relying on other members in this place, four of whom are Indpendent, to do that. It may transpire, heaven help us and God forbid, that the Opposition ranks in official terms are even further depleted. I dare say that Government members would be delighted as the prospect of further gains in the number of seats they hold at the expense of the Liberal Party, perhaps.

It may transpire, heaven help us and God forbid, that the Opposition ranks in official terms are even further depleted. I dare say that Government members would be delighted as the prospect of further gains in the number of seats they hold at the expense of the Liberal Party, perhaps.

If the Government wants a Parliament and wants to be able to make the laws to suit the policies which it says need to be implemented, then it should respect the institution of the Parliament as a democratic abstraction of society in which grievances are aired, ideas are brought forth by elected representatives of the people to develop the direction in which we go tomorrow. It is called making policy decisions, and giving the imprimatur of approval of a constitutionally formulated and duly elected Parliament. It is not too much to ask to respect the institution from which you get your power, is it?

The Hon. B.C. EASTICK: I was surprised when, in the public press two or three weeks ago, it was indicated that the Opposition in the Federal Parliament had successfully won a vote against the non-appearance of a quorum in the late afternoon and yet the Parliament reconvened in the evening. I recognise that that would not have been possible under the Standing Orders of this House, that if a quorum is not formed the Speaker leaves the Chair and the matter is resolved by a reconvening on the next day. Subsequently I learnt a little of the background of that incident in the Commonwealth and found, for example, that their Standing Orders are as the Minister has proposed here, which gives an adequate protection for the Thursday situation.

Mr S.G. Evans: It doesn't in private members time. If you lose private members time on a Thursday you don't get it back.

The Hon. B.C. EASTICK: I fully appreciate that. I am talking about losing the Government's day on the Thursday, and that is what is really being protected. There can be no argument about that, I suggest. If we are going to have the guarantee of an extended period of time in which to bring up disallowances and private members time, there must be a *quid pro quo*, as I suggested last night. Whilst there are other aspects, as the member for Davenport points out, the reality is that the advantage is going to be one to the Opposition or one to the backbenchers, because it is the backbenchers, not the Government or the Treasury bench.

The other interesting little sidelight to that incident in Canberra which members on the opposite side, particularly the Ministry, might like to take on board was that the Government Whip had been advised by the Opposition Whip that the Opposition was going to call 'quorum' on a regular basis for every minute over six minutes that an answer from a Minister took in Question Time. On the third call of quorum, to fulfil that promise to the Government, they came up with a fish on the hook. The fish on the hook was the fact that the House got counted out.

I think there might be a message there, but we will not follow through with that at this time. However, I do want to point out we are not doing anything that is not provided for in other Parliaments, and it certainly applies federally, otherwise the position some three weeks ago would have been no further session on that day of the Federal Parliament.

Mr LEWIS: Let me make my position on this proposition quite clear. I have no hangups about the fact that if there is a not a quorum present the House is lost. I have a reservation, and an opposition in fact, to losing the House during private members time on the Thursday because a government could simply make it impossible for private members business to proceed, and I also have a reservation and a complete opposition to the proposition where there is no 'reasonable' time specified.

When I have spoken to some members of the Government and some Ministers and been confronted with the sort of language and indifference that has been put to me in the short time I have been here, I would not say that anything I have been taught in the whole of my life prior to arriving in Parliament would ever be described as 'reasonable' if that behaviour were to be countenanced as part of it. So, given that experience in dealing with some members of the Labor Party, Ministers, I do not believe their understanding of the meaning of the word 'reasonable' is the same as mine, and I do not trust them to be reasonable within the constraints of what I would consider to be reasonable.

Therefore, my opposition to the proposition is that it is not divided into three parts so that the House could test whether we want to rule out the capacity to count out the House other than on the subjective opinion of the Speaker, because we do not have a specified time. Let us look at the example the member for Light just gave in the House in Canberra. After the bells had stopped ringing, that is it; that is the cut-off point. It is already in Standing Orders how long the bells will ring when 'quorum' is called. At that point the count was taken and the House was counted out.

In this case, of course, the Speaker could be advised by telephone, there is a whip around and within 20 minutes there will be sufficient members here, so the Speaker will say, 'Twenty minutes is reasonable in the circumstances', and simply sit there with the House in silence while the members roll up from all over metropolitan Adelaide to get the quorum together. I do not see that as in any sense legitimate. It is again an abuse of the Parliament.

The second measure which I would want to be able to express an opinion on, and a positive opinion about that, is that it should not be possible to count the House out during private members time at all. This was part of the original proposition. Then a government, no matter how strong, could not simply refuse to front up with its numbers and count out the House and abolish private members time effectively for the duration of its term. I think that ought to be put into Standing Orders. That is the sort of arrogance I have seen exercised in other Parliaments, in Singapore, for example. Eventually private members time was written out of the Standing Orders and did not exist. They did not have any Independent or Opposition members for a while, so it did not matter much, I suppose.

The third part of this proposition is that, notwithstanding what I have said about private members time, I believe it should be possible for the Government to lose the House at other times, because it is the Government's responsibility to make Parliament workable. You see, Mr Chairman, I know as well as you would know and other members here would know that during private members time the Government would make damn sure it had a majority of members in this place, because it would not want any private member's motion to get up and get passed if it did not approve of it. So there would be the people here. However, during the time when it suits the Government to be debating its own business it may also suit the Government to send several of its members off to some politicking activity, no pairs or anything—'Don't need them; we have a reasonable Speaker. Aren't we clever? If there is a quorum called we will simply ring up the function and tell the boys to get back here, and the Speaker will sit around with the House in silence for 10 or 15 minutes while they get back.'

The effect of being unable to call the quorum is that ultimately the whole respect for the House and what it amounts to in terms that I have mentioned before, disappears and there remains nothing but contempt for the House in total other than for the fact that it can give the imprimatur of constitutional legality to the decisions that the Government alone wants. That is why I am opposed to this proposition.

Mr S.G. EVANS: I do not agree with the latter part of what the member for Murray Mallee said. A government, if it wants to vote on an issue, has the opportunity to put up enough speakers. The Opposition has the problem to put up enough speakers to hold the debate until they get people in here. I do not think that is part of the argument. The member used the argument that, if they wanted to vote on something, they make sure they have the numbers here in private members time. I am saying that they do not have to guarantee to have the numbers here at any particular time in private members business. They know when the vote is likely to be taken. They can put a speaker up and hold it unless we start to use the guillotine.

They can hold it until they get the numbers here. There is no risk then, but there is a risk with this amendment because the Government has a fear that on the Thursday morning, when it has people away at functions or on ministerial duties and there are, say, five pairs, if a quorum could not be formed the House would be lost, and the Government will lose all its business for the day. We would then have to come back the next day.

However, if we pass this amendment, there would be no risk for the Government's losing its business in that private members time. The only risk is that the Opposition, the private members or the Government backbench members could lose their time. That is the problem, and I cannot see why we need the amendment. I believe that, if we leave the amendment out, Standing Orders will stand. However, if the Government does not help to get the numbers in the morning when it is private members time, and it is not forced to participate in that scene, if the amendment is left out the Government can say, 'The amendment is there; bad luck.' The Speaker will then say, 'Come back after lunch.' There is a massive risk in it. Why did somebody suddenly think of this? I asked earlier for someone to give examples of when real troubles had been experienced with the quorum—in other words when the House had been lost. There have been very few in the history of Parliament. Let us think about why somebody has thought it up. It is to protect the Government business on Thursday, because the private members business can be at risk.

Mr Peterson interjecting:

Mr S.G. EVANS: No, but we are supposed to be getting some guarantees, and part of the guarantee can be eroded straight away. I recall one occasion when we needed a constitutional majority in about April 1970 or a little earlier. An Opposition Party tried to convince its members to stay outside so that we could not form a constitutional majority on the floor to enable the vote to proceed. Some ALP members jacked up and said, 'In principle we will not stick with you.' They gave their numbers in the House. I was involved and I know what discussions ensued in the corridors. A Party deliberately tried to stop the numbers for a constitutional majority being present. I have seen Parties on both sides deliberately take members out to try to beat the quorum provision. People have even walked out, not knowing about the Standing Order, once the bells had started to ring.

The Hon. B.C. Eastick interjecting:

Mr S.G. EVANS: Yes, a member was brought in on a barouche with his neck in a brace. He was sat down at the bottom of the room just in case. That is how I ended up obtaining that particularly comfortable settee that is in my room. There is some skulduggery within Parties at times. It involved sheer bloodymindedness when a man had to be brought down from Adelaide Hospital and sat at the bottom. A man was lying in a room with a doctor treating him because of a heart attack, while others were playing the piano and singing. It happened in this Parliament.

The Hon. Ted Chapman: What the hell has that got to do with this?

Mr S.G. EVANS: I am saying that Parties will go to extreme lengths to win a point. This amendment does not need to be passed. It has never caused any trouble in the past, and I would ask Independents and the Opposition in particular to vote against this in very strong terms. If they win Government down the track, as I believe they will, they can scrub it.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: I have no desire unduly to prolong the debate on this matter. Perhaps I am even a fool for getting to my feet at this stage. Somebody raised the matter of the comparative size of quorums in the various Parliaments. I am indebted to one of my colleagues for pointing out that Mr Speaker addressed himself to this matter in a speech that he made in this place on a previous occasion. I have some figures from that speech (I am dealing with Lower Houses only) which indicate for a quorum in our Parliament, 17 out of 47 members is 36 per cent; 50 out of 148 members in the Commonwealth is 33 per cent; in December 1984 before the Victorian House was enlarged (I do not have the up-to-date figures) 20 out of 81 members was 25 per cent; 20 out of 99 members in New South Wales is 20 per cent; and 16 out of 82 in Queensland is 19 per cent.

Furthermore, apparently the quorum can be ignored by the presiding officer at his discretion in New South Wales, which seems to me an extraordinary provision for Parliament to allow. There is also an element of discretion in Queensland, not for initial calls for a quorum but for subsequent calls. That is possibly the sort of circumstances indicated by the member for Light. So the quorum provision that we have here is a reasonably exacting one by national standards. The Government sees no reason for changing that, but believes it is important that there be a safety point. I hope that it is one to which we never have recourse. However, it will provide flexibility for members to be able to ensure that the House runs in the way that they want.

Mr PETERSON: I think the points made were made honestly and in a straight-forward manner, and I can understand what members are trying to say. The purpose of this Parliament is to debate business and pass Bills, whether they be private members or Government Bills. If we do have a situation where—and I am sure that the Government

would not call a quorum on itself—the Opposition called for a quorum—

Mr S.G. Evans interjecting:

Mr PETERSON: They can, but they put themselves at risk of criticism for cutting into the system as it is. Grievance debates have been lost, because we will get back to the same stage: we will lose our adjournment and grievance debates. Private members business is a very important part of our business. If any member or Party cuts into that, they are cutting into the basic right of every member here. We are in a situation now where private members time is getting more and more difficult to get. If private members time goes and we cut ourselves out of it (and that is what will happen because one of us will have to call for a quorum), we—

Mr S.G. Evans interjecting:

Mr PETERSON: I accept the point—that is my second point. If we do so, we will only harm ourselves. If the Government does it, it leaves itself wide open to criticism. The Opposition would not do it either, because it would be a stupid thing to do. We do not get enough time for private members business now and, if they say, 'If we come back at 2 o'clock, which is our normal starting time on a Thursday, and get on with Government business,' that also is what we are here for. We are here to debate Government business, to pass Bills and to handle legislation.

Mr S.G. Evans interjecting:

Mr PETERSON: Well, any member's business. That is why we are here. That is why this big chamber, these seats, and these microphones to talk into are here—to enable us to debate business. If private members business is cut into, I believe there is a risk for whoever does it, because we will only hurt ourselves. It is our time and our business and, if we let it happen, it is our fault. There are 47 members of this place, and 17 members form a quorum. Thursday morning will be private members time and, if we are interested in it, we will be here. Even if I have to make up a quorum to keep the business going, I will do it, because that is why we are here.

If we adjourn until 2 p.m., I do not see that that is bad, because we shall be debating business, and that is the purpose of our being here. There is the risk of losing private members time. It is a bad thing that we could lose private members time, but there would be a risk in moving that way. We are much closer to being guaranteed private members time under the proposed system than we have been ever before. In this present Clayton's session of four weeks, we have had no private members time. Private members business will be dealt with on at least one day a week and private members on the Government side will complain if they lose some private members time under the new system. Members are not getting any private members time now, so they cannot be any worse off under the new system.

The first hour, from 10 to 11 a.m., should be spent on a grievance debate so as to give six members 10 minutes each in which to grieve, but I regret that has not been recommended in this report. It could be considered in future. I see nothing wrong with the motion as it stands because, if we are brought back at 2 p.m., we shall be doing what we are being paid to do.

Mr M.J. EVANS: Members who oppose this motion are chasing shadows that do not exist. For the Government to succeed in creating a temporary dissolution of the House by withdrawing its members to prevent a quorum is an absurd proposition. The Government would have to remove and withhold all its members except the one who would call for the quorum. Even then, the Government would certainly run the risk of not having its ploy succeed because there would be enough Opposition members and other non-government members, as well as the one Government member who called for the quorum, to create a quorum easily. The Government would then look extraordinarily foolish in the eyes of the public.

When the House resumed at 2 p.m., a censure motion would be moved against the Government for failing to provide a quorum and, in fact, for conspiring to deny a quorum, because it would create an act of conspiracy. In the event, 26 Government members would have to stand in the lobby and conspire not to enter the Chamber. The press would seize on that and the Government of the State would be made to look foolish. So, it would run the risk of losing divisions and losing votes in the electorate at the same time.

No Government could run that kind of risk and at the same time appear actively to conspire to deny the Parliament the right to sit. That is simply an absurd proposition. As the Deputy Premier said, this is a safety net and, although we are not in dire need of it, because the House can usually achieve a quorum, at the same time this is an unobjectionable provision which I believe should be supported as a reasonable proposition.

To suggest that it is the basis for a Government conspiracy to deny private members time on Thursday morning is absurd, because the Government by this motion is agreeing to amend the specific Standing Order to provide such private members time. To object to the motion is simply to tilt at shadows that do not exist. The moment that a Government tried anything like this, it would have to resign immediately because its move could not succeed. I may fear that many things could go wrong and there are many things that Governments can do, but that is not one of the things that I fear from this motion.

Now that the Government has removed the prohibition on voting during private members time (and I consider that this is a sensible amendment), it must maintain its numbers here on Thursday morning or run the risk of losing divisions. Once the Government retains enough members to win divisions, it automatically maintains double the number for the quorum. So I do not see that the fear that has been expressed is legitimate as regards this harmless motion. The Committee should be devoting its time to the much more consequential items that appear later in the list.

Mr S.G. EVANS: It is vital that the Committee protect the rights of members. I refer to the matter of pairs. Pairs are granted when there is not the full complement of members present. The Opposition gives pairs sometimes because Government members have gone to functions in the city, and then Opposition members are free to attend such functions. Under present conditions, with the Opposition having only 16 members, it could be down to 12 members after pairs had been granted. To suggest that political Parties do not connive to beat the quorum is not to look at the matter realistically. When it is suggested that Party members will pull a piano from the dining room so that a member may have a heart attack in order to bring about a death or to have a member sent to hospital, no-one can tell me that any political Party, at some future time will not use extraordinary measures to beat the quorum and so take away private members time. I was Party Whip here for 15 years and I have seen what can happen.

Ms Lenehan: People are more mature now. They change.

Mr S.G. EVANS: I do not believe that. When the bloody-mindedness of Parties comes and the numbers are even, I have seen it. As Party Whip, twice I had to refuse to withdraw pairs. I said, 'If you do that, I will cross the floor and vote with the Government.' When the other side tried to, its Whip did the same as I.

Political Parties will do this sort of thing if the chips are valuable enough. For the member for Elizabeth to say that a censure vote can be moved against the Government later

is not realistic, because the censure will be too late and the right will have been lost. The Government knows that the news media are interested in what happens at the time, not in what happened previously. If the media were looking after the matter of the time available for private members business, they would be condemning the Government for taking away private members time. To say that political Parties will not manipulate the system is wrong, because both Parties have done it.

The member for Semaphore said that it was up to the Opposition to keep the numbers, but the Opposition may not be able to do that in certain circumstances. Government members, including the Speaker, will remember that a number of pairs were given in the Parliament that just ended. We could not scratch up a quorum of 17 members when there was a show in town on a night on which we did not expect to sit. Why include this unnecessary provision? Standing Orders should be left as they are in this regard.

The Committee divided on the motion:

Ayes (36)—Mr Abbott, Mrs Appleby, Messrs L.M.F. Arnold, D.S. Baker, S.J. Baker, Becker, Blevins, Chapman, De Laine, Duigan, Eastick, and M.J. Evans, Ms Gayler, Messrs Goldsworthy, Gregory, Groom, Gunn, Hamilton, Hemmings, Hopgood (teller), Ingerson, Keneally, and Klunder, Ms Lenehan, Messrs McRae, Mayes, Meier, Oswald, Payne, Peterson, Rann, Robertson, Slater, Trainer, Tyler, and Wotton.

Noes (2)—Messrs Blacker and S.G. Evans (teller).

Majority of 34 for the Ayes.

Motion thus carried.

Proposed new Standing Order 51.

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

That this Standing Order be amended by adding the following proviso:

Provided that if the Speaker is satisfied there is likely to be a quorum within as reasonable time he shall announce that he will take the Chair at a stated time; but if at that time there be not a quorum the Speaker shall adjourn the House to the next sitting day.

Motion carried.

Proposed new Standing Order 53.

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

That this Standing Order be amended by adding the following proviso:

Provided that if the Speaker is satisfied there is likely to be a quorum within as reasonable time he shall announce that he will take the Chair at a stated time; but if at that time there be not a quorum the Speaker shall adjourn the House to the next sitting day.

Motion carried.

Proposed new Standing Order 56.

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

Leave out Standing Order 56 and substitute new Standing Order as follows:

56. Subject to numbers 46, 50, 51, 53, 58a and 172, the House may only be adjourned by its own resolution.

This proposed new Standing Order is consequential on proposed new Standing Order 58. The midnight clause is now embraced within Standing Order 56. The House may be able to adjourn by its own resolution. That is subject to various things and to proposed new Standing Order 58a where no vote is actually taken. It is consequential on a decision that we have still to make, but we have to move it in this form as we move through what are effectively the clauses.

Motion carried.

Proposed new Standing Order 58a.

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

After Standing Order 58 insert new Standing Order as follows:

58a. If the House has not adjourned before midnight on any sitting day, the Speaker shall, at midnight, adjourn the House, without a question being first put, until the next sitting day.

This matter has attracted the favourable attention of members in the earlier debate and I commend it to the Committee.

Mr PETERSON: When we pass this provision will it become effective immediately? Do we go home at midnight tonight, if we are still here?

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: These new Standing Orders have to go to His Excellency. There is also a motion that will be necessary for me to move at the end of the debate concerning the renumbering of the clauses and so on. All of that must first take place. It is not likely to take place before midnight.

Mr PETERSON: Can we morally abide by these new Standing Orders now?

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: That matter is completely in the hands of honourable members at this stage.

Motion carried.

Standing Order 59.

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

Standing Order 59 is amended by leaving out ', and before the business on the Notice Paper is proceeded with,'.

This is a non controversial change. Unless we leave out these words it would exclude an urgency motion from being moved at 2 p.m. on Thursday. Of course, we do not intend that that should happen.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: When I waded through these changes it appeared that those dealing with Standing Orders 59, 60, 90, 91, and 119a are to accommodate Thursday morning sittings. I cannot envisage anyone having any problem with those changes, once having agreed to the ground rules for Thursday sittings. These changes are simply to make consequential amendments to Standing Orders to allow the normal sittings of the House and to accommodate the Thursday morning session.

Motion carried.

Proposed new Standing Order 60a.

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

After Standing Order 60 insert new Standing Order as follows:

60a. If at 1.00 p.m. the House or a Committee of the whole House be sitting, the sitting of the House or Committee shall be suspended for one hour.

Motion carried.

Standing Order 90.

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

Standing Order 90 is amended by inserting at the commencement thereof:

Except on Thursdays, when private Members' business shall take precedence between 11.00 a.m. and 1.00 p.m.

Motion carried.

Proposed new Standing Order 91.

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

Leave out Standing Order 91 and substitute new Standing Order as follows:

91. Unless otherwise ordered, Government business shall take precedence over other business except questions—

(a) on Tuesdays and Wednesdays; and

(b) after 2.00 p.m. on Thursdays.

Motion carried.

Standing Order 119a.

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

Standing Order 119a is amended by leaving out 'at the six o'clock or prior adjournment of the House' and inserting 'at 1.00 p.m'.

Motion carried.

Standing Order 124.

Mr S.G. EVANS: I move:

To amend Standing Order 124 by adding after the present contents, 'The time allowed for asking the question and any explanation therto shall not exceed 1 minute.'

I am suggesting in a subsequent amendment that the answer to a question be two minutes. I am suggesting one minute here because a member can ask a question in a minute. I

often have difficulty putting the English language in a concise form—I admit it and have been told it many times. This makes it more difficult for me. However, if we make the time any more than that, the number of questions that can be asked on any given day is less than 20. I have had one question in a month; last year I had six questions for the year. To suggest that one can represent an electorate and raise vital matters by asking only that many questions is ridiculous. If we want Ministers to cut down their answers considerably, those asking the question must also cut down the length of the question. It happens in other Parliaments.

If we make the time for question and answer any more than three minutes, we would get in less than 20 questions per day. At the moment we are lucky to get in 12 or 14 questions. if we do as other people have suggested, namely provide five minutes, or three minutes, for a Minister and no restriction on the person asking the question, we will not get in any more questions than we do now. If time limits are applied, members will use every minute—that has been proven—and we will gain absolutely nothing. Members should realise that in an hour or an hour and a half one will not get in a lot of questions if we allow them to be longer than a minute and the answers longer than two minutes.

At one time in this Parliament we used to get 37 questions a day and the then member for Glenelg, Mr Hudson, asked 11 questions in one day. I ask the Committee to accept that one minute is long enough to ask a question if we want to seek information. I will come to my other amendment later.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I would be prepared to go along with what the member for Davenport is seeking to achieve if I could be assured that the secong leg of the deal could be accomplished, but in fact I am informed that it cannot. Under those circumstances there is no way in the world that I would support this amendment. I only wish that the amendment to Standing Order 125 were to precede the discussion on the amendment to Standing Order 124. However, that is not the nature of the exercise. I have taken some pains to ascertain the likely outcome of the next amendment and, being less than satisfied with the information I have gleaned, there is no way in the world that I will support this dramatic contraction in the ability to ask questions if the Government is still going to be quite unbridled.

I would agree with what the member for Davenport said if the package could be accomplished. Although the Liberal Party has not discussed this amendment outlined by the honourable member, I agree with most of what he has said. Much time is wasted in Question Time, and I canvassed this issue at some length last night and will not go through it all again. I talked about the role of backbench members and the proper role of the media (they were here a moment ago and I had hoped that they would be here to hear me repeat briefly their role in what happens here). I have been quite chuffed by ministerial and backbench comments about the quality of my speech last night. I am worried that something may have been wrong with it. The only person I seem to have upset last night was the member for Mawson, but that is not difficult, anyway. I have had favourable comment about my description of what I think is the proper role of Parliament, taking account of our brethren who sit in the galleries and want to write a story. If we place strictures on Ministers, some of them who cannot or will not stop—

Ms Lenehan interjecting:

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Yes; I would go along with that sort of stricture if we could also get a stricture on the asking of questions, but the roles are reversed. However, the two go together and, knowing that the Government is not going to put any strictures on the time for answering questions, there is no way in the world I will support this one.

Mr LEWIS: In support of what the Deputy Leader has just said, were it possible for me to move that this and the subsequent proposition standing in his name be referred to the Standing Orders Committee to be brought back to this place within the first four weeks of sitting in the next session, then I would do that. However, I cannot, because Standing Orders as they currently exist do not allow me that measure of latitude. So, I have to go along with what the Deputy Leader has said. It is lamentable—in fact, often I am disgusted by—the extent to which members grandstand when asking questions, and it is even more disgusting and contemptuous of Parliament that Ministers filibuster when answering.

Mr S.G. EVANS: If the Government wants to be more concise and make more effective use of the time in Parliament, I plead with it to accept my amendment. Anybody can ask a question in a minute it they so wish. It does not affect the Government. Accept the minute! It does no harm to the Government, and I ask it to take the opportunity of speeding up the process and making proceedings more concise and effective. The Minister stated that that was the purpose of the motion: why reject it?

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: The member for Davenport should bear in mind that as we move through the clauses there will be other areas in which we will be weighing preciseness and conciseness against prolixity. The honourable member must be aware of uniformity, of consistency, in his argument in relation to length of questions and speeches.

Motion negatived.

Standing Order 125.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I move:

To amend Standing Order 125 by adding after 'refers' 'and the length of the answer shall not exceed 3 minutes'.

I would have been prepared to support the amendment to Standing Order 124 if I was of the view that either the member for Davenport's or my amendment to Standing Order 125, which looks for more brevity, were to be accepted. I have more than an inkling that it will be rejected by the Government. A lot of time is wasted in Question Time. The member for Davenport last night gave a good account of the historical changes to Standing Orders, and it was a very high class debate in my judgment.

The Hon. G.F. Keneally: Even the Deputy Leader was excellent.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Now I am getting really worried.

Ms Lenehan: I am the only one who was not praising you, so at least someone is consistent.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The member for Mawson was quite—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Whether or not debate on a previous occasion was excellent is beside the point. Can we come back to the proposition before us.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The member for Light put the matter of consultation in context. The member for Davenport, being the longest serving member, threw up in very clear perspective the changes that have occurred over the past 20 years, and they have all been in one direction. They have all been designed to diminish the role of the backbencher, the representative of the little man in the street, and enhance the opportunity of the Executive to shove its grand plans through this place.

During my time Question Time has been reduced to one hour, but Ministers have not changed their habits in answering questions. They are prolix—to use the word in Standing Orders—some Ministers more so than others. One of the Ministers who has just entered the Chamber can be quite prolix. That is frustrating to backbench members, who do

not get to the matters that are of concern to their constituents. We move the amendment in an attempt to make the best use of the time available, and I think that is reasonable. Obviously, we are prepared to give more latitude than the member for Davenport, with Ministers having three minutes in which to answer a question. If they cannot say what they have to say in three minutes, they are saying too much. This is a genuine attempt to make much better use of Question Time than currently occurs.

Last night we talked about Westminster, where the Prime Minister can answer 20 questions in 17 minutes. Questions are asked and answered in that time. I commend this as a first step, even though the amendment concerning the time for asking questions was rejected. I would be perfectly happy, and I am sure the Liberal Party would consider the second leg of the deal, if the Government were to accept this, I am sure that we would be happy to accept some strictures in relation to the answering of questions. This is a genuine attempt to get more out of Question Time.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: I urge the Committee to reject this amendment. I believe that these sorts of constraints are quite artificial. I have figures in front of me that indicate that the House can improve its performance quite considerably if it wants to. It should determine to do so, but without amendments to Standing Orders. Last night we were given information about what happened to Question Time when the Hon. Len King changed Standing Orders and reduced it to one hour. I do not quarrel with those figures. I suggest to members that there has been some variation in the number of questions that have been asked and answered in Question Time over the years. That in itself indicates that with a conscious effort improvements can be made. The figures in front of me suggest that from 1974 (when one hour Question Time came in) until 1979, all under the ALP Government, there was an average of 14 questions. From 1979 to 1982, under Dr Tonkin's Government, that dropped to 11.6 questions. A dissection indicates that, from 1979 to 1980, 12.9 questions were asked; from 1980 to 1981, 13.1 questions were asked; from 1981 to 1982, 10.8 questions were asked; and from 1982, 9.5 questions were asked. I can recall—

The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy interjecting:

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: I am about to give that. Let not the Deputy Leader be so anxious here, because there will be a degree of *mea culpa* involved in what I am about to say. When the Bannon Government came in, we made a deliberate decision, as Ministers, that we would not repeat the performance that we had seen on the other side of the Chamber from many, though not all, Ministers of the Tonkin Government. In the first year that was borne out. In 1982-83 an average of 15.8 questions were asked during Question Time, as opposed to 9.5 questions in the 1982 session. In 1983-84, 14.4 questions were asked and in 1984-85, 13.3 questions were asked. In 1985 that was down to 11 questions. However, there were some circumstances that arose on three Question Times during 1985 that depressed that figure very marginally below what it might have been: a dissent from a Speaker's ruling by, I believe, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition; the suspension of the member for Bragg; and the naming of the member for Bragg, with the explanation, I think, being accepted. All of those took up some time. Nonetheless, it can be shown that having come into office with high ideals and being able to almost double the output of questions during its first session, the Bannon Government then displayed some of the same sort of malaise that its predecessor had displayed and its performance dropped. Now we come to the last four weeks—

The Hon. B.C. Eastick: What is the common denominator of 1982 and 1985?

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: The last year before an election. If we come to this session we find that to date there has been an average of 12 questions asked per Question Time—still well above what occurred in 1982. However, it is not what I would regard as a satisfactory performance. I make that perfectly clear.

Members interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I do not need any assistance.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: Given that for the most part prolixity at Question Time does issue from the Government benches of whatever Party, rather than from those asking the questions, these figures indicate that there can be a considerable improvement in output if the Ministers take it on themselves to provide that improvement. I have made it clear that I do not believe that the performance of my colleagues in recent times has been satisfactory. I am sure that what will issue out of this debate this evening is a considerably improved performance in the conciseness of the answers that are given.

But I make one point, and I make it very seriously. Members opposite cannot expect Government Ministers to pass up the opportunity to make political points and to raise the temperature of this place somewhat if indeed the questions which are put are in very much the same mould. Continual interjections only invite further ramblings from the Minister because they carry the Minister off into paths not previously presented to him when the question was asked.

So what I am saying to honourable members opposite is that they can expect increased productivity from this side of the House provided that they do not ask for trouble, either in the terms of the sorts of questions they ask or the number of interjections which follow those questions.

Mr LEWIS: Then I, Mr Chairman, would say to the Deputy Premier, *Honi soit qui mal y pense!* Evil to him who evil thinks! Who were the two chaps on the BBC who ran *My Word?* Nordin and that other bloke—'Honey, your silk stockin' is hangin' down'. You have your pants down.

The Hon. G.F. Keneally: No, that is *1066 and All That!*

Mr LEWIS: You are right again. I think that is where the author of '*1066*' picked it up from. Whilst the Deputy Premier can stand there and say that the record in recent times of the Ministry has been better in answering questions during Question Time, I would want to remind him that a number of the answers that have been given have been deliberate stone wall stuff, when both legs and the bat have been in front of the stump and there is no-one in a position to call leg before.

The Minister simply stood on his feet, faced with a difficult ball that he has not been able to judge, let it hit the pads, said, 'I'll get a report', and sat down. That speeds up the number of questions you get in, but it does not speed up the number of answers you get. If you, Mr Chairman, would allow me the latitude to point it out, it is not a question of, in this day and age, leaving the members of Parliament and the Ministers to solve the problem on their own, because the environment in which this Parliament is now operating has altered. It is more of a bearpit in that there is a focus of audiovisual reporting on the proceedings of the Chamber, and star chamber performers, and those who pretend they are, like to be able to make the attempt to steal the limelight. In the process they attract the attention of the cameras, hoping that one or another of the phrases they put before the Chamber in explaining a question or answering it will get to air on the electronic media where people can both hear and see what is happening—

The Hon. G.F. Keneally: That explains it, Peter—

Mr LEWIS: I have never attempted to attract the attention of cameras, favourable or unfavourable.

The Hon. G.F. Keneally: The best profile of all.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Could we come back to the proposition before the Chair?

Mr LEWIS: If I were to attempt to do that I might wear the type of garb I see the member for Mawson dressed in from time to time, knowing I would most certainly be successful in doing it. However, that aside, I am trying to explain to the Deputy Premier that it is not good enough for him to argue just now that the solution to prolixity is in the hands of the individual who has the floor at any given time. That is not going to work, and if it were a valid argument, I ask him in a few minutes to remember the point he has just made when I imagine he will be telling us just the opposite, lecturing backbenchers and other people who are not members of the Executive because of the way in which he believes they waste time.

I want the Minister to understand that, if Parliament is to become more workable and effective in Question Time, in serving the needs of South Australians, then it will have to introduce amendments to Standing Orders which prevent those prima donnas who chase the lens and the focus of attention from doing so at the expense of what should be the function of the House and its relevance to the South Australian community. Why he cannot understand that is beyond me. If the Government opposes this proposition, then it is difficult to understand whenever, if ever, we will ever change the direction in which we are heading at the present time.

Mr S.G. EVANS: I reluctantly support the amendment, because it allows 50 per cent more time than I think is necessary to answer a question. What the Deputy Premier did not tell us in the figures he had of how many questions were asked in this week's Parliament is how the role of asking questions has changed. At one time a Government would be lucky if half the allotted time it could have used for questions was used. In other words, backbenchers of a Government at one time did not ask many questions and nearly all the Question Time was allowed to the Opposition. That is something the Deputy Premier has not told us.

The other critical thing that has happened—and it is really a disgrace to Parliament, with both Parties doing this—is that where there is a matter that the Government wishes to raise, instead of using the opportunity to give a ministerial statement, they have thought to themselves, 'No, we won't do that; we will deliberately use up Question Time to stop the Opposition getting so many questions on.' If we get an issue that is a bit sensational, they will not only stop the Opposition asking some questions but make sure the press gives it a good report, because they have enough writers and press secretaries alongside them. They will get the report up to the press and the press will make sure they print that, because it is easier to print that than listen to a member trying to put his point of view, try to take it down and chase around after that member afterwards.

The press secretary races up to the press, gives it to them already typed out, and it is easier to do that. If there is a borderline decision whether one has a greater story factor to it, the Government one will get in as against a backbencher moving it, when compared with a shadow Minister who does have some backup.

What Governments have done is deliberately produce questions and have the answers prepared. They are matters that should have been brought up as ministerial statements. They have abused the process of Question Time. That is something the Deputy Premier did not tell us in the figures he gave. The Tonkin Government did it and this Government is doing it, just as the one they served in prior to the last election also did it.

Sir, either we believe in the right of an individual to ask questions which concern his electorate, and it does not matter if the press thinks it is a parish pump thing and means nothing to the press. That is not what Parliament is here for. We are not answerable to them. Many of us are not in the category in Parliament in which they are interested. They are only interested in the sensational or those where they use adjectives, not the ordinary run of the mill thing that happens in the electorate, or the member who perhaps does not stop and have a drink with them or socialise with them, as some members do. It is not the character of some members to do that and it is not the character of some press people; I will admit that.

However, there is no doubt that over the years certain members of Parliament, especially Governments with their press secretaries, have been able to play to the press. They have done that by using Question Time to produce dorothy dixers and give the answers that should have been ministerial statements.

The Deputy Premier has not admitted that; nor has he said that that is the reason why the figures have dropped. Also, he has not admitted that the Opposition in the main used to ask all the questions and, when Len King and others under the Dunstan Government cut us back from two hours to one hour, they gave us a guarantee that they would give short answers and that there would be no abuse of the system. From that point on, Government backbenchers started asking question for question in turn with the Opposition until they used up all the time. The same thing will happen in the other field about which we spoke earlier. If the Government wants to do so, it can manipulate the system on private members time on the Thursday, and it can do the same thing as it has done to Question Time.

In supporting the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's amendment, it provides for 50 per cent more time than I would give to answer a question. I hope that the Government will realise one day that it will be over here and that it will have to put up with all this abuse and tirade again. It does Parliament no good; it might get a headline and might get on television, but does not benefit our constituents. I support the amendment.

Mr OSWALD: I support the Deputy Leader of the Opposition on the matter of the three minutes for answering questions. I sit here every Question Time, having allocated questions, going through the frustration of seeing members who have serious questions to put to Ministers knowing that they have no show in the world of asking those questions because Ministers will spend a totally unnecessary amount of time answering other questions. As an example, one day last week 32 minutes elapsed before the third member of the Opposition was able to ask his question. That is absurd. For any Government member that can stand there, as the Deputy Premier did a few minutes ago, and read out statistical evidence of the questions asked over past years is not good enough. It is not acceptable to expect an Opposition to sit back here and wait for 32 minutes into Question Time before its third member has an opportunity to ask a question.

The Government has a very clear responsibility to this Parliament, if it will not allow this amendment through, to get its House in order and say very clearly to its Ministers that three minutes is fair. If one or two minutes extra is needed, then only in the most extraordinary circumstances should that happen. However, it is just unacceptable, as I keep saying, for Opposition members who come in with serious questions that they have been wanting to ask for weeks on end—and I know of members in that situation—and do not have an opportunity to ask them. They will probably not get that opportunity as long as Ministers spend 10 to 15 minutes replying. It is not on; it is not the way to conduct Parliament. I would like to see it stopped. I totally support the Deputy Leader of the Opposition: three minutes is quite adequate. I think that is the way in which this

House should proceed so that members have the opportunity to represent their constituencies in the manner for which they have been elected.

Mr S.G. EVANS: Liberal Party members will acknowledge that, as Whip, I used to get angry if Ministers gave long answers. In fact, those who tended to give long answers usually got the last question of the day so that they went over the time limit or were gonged out and it did not affect other members' rights to speak. If one looks at *Hansard*, it might be possible to pick out who that was at times. That is an example of the extremes that I went to in trying to protect the rights of individuals to ask questions.

The Committee divided on the motion:

Ayes (14)—Messrs D.S. Baker, S.J. Baker, Becker, Blacker, Chapman, Eastick, S.G. Evans, Goldsworthy (teller), Gunn, Ingerson, Lewis, Meier, Oswald, and Wotton.

Noes (25)—Mr Abbott, Mrs Appleby, Messrs L.M.F. Arnold, Blevins, De Laine, Duigan, and M.J. Evans, Ms Gayler, Messrs. Gregory, Groom, Hamilton, Hemmings, Hopgood (teller), Keneally, and Klunder, Ms Lenehan, Messrs McRae, Mayes, Payne, Peterson, Rann, Robertson, Slater, Trainer, and Tyler.

Pairs—Ayes—Messrs Allison and Olsen. Noes—Messrs Bannon and Crafter.

Majority of 11 for the Noes.

Motion thus negatived.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the member for Davenport wish to proceed with his further amendment?

Mr S.G. EVANS: I think it is a very important amendment. However, as I think the cause would be hopeless after what happened with the last amendment, I will not move it.

Proposed new Standing Order 125aa.

Mr S.G. EVANS: I move:

Insert new Standing Order 125aa as follows:

125aa. A reference to a Member in any Standing Order shall be construed as including a Minister of the Crown unless specifically excluded by such Standing Order.

I do not need to explain the amendment further. It is logical that where the Standing Order refers to members it should also include Ministers.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I support the amendment for one reason only. Standing Orders are clear, but I recollect when the Government sought to interpret Standing Orders so that a Minister was let off the hook. It was claimed there was a distinction between members and Ministers in terms of the Standing Order. I take it that that is the sort of situation that the member for Davenport envisages. The amendment should not be necessary if it refers to that case, but Ministers are members. If people want to put other interpretations on Standing Orders and suggest that Ministers are not members, then we must go through this unnecessary exercise. I support the amendment so that that situation will not recur.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: I reject the amendment, which is not necessary. I do not recall the occasion to which the honourable member refers, and I have been here as long as he has.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: I may well have. I do not see that it adds anything to the Standing Orders that we already have. It is unnecessary, and I urge the Committee to reject it.

Mr S.G. EVANS: The Deputy Leader is correct. The Deputy Premier was here when that debate occurred in 1977, when Government numbers were used deliberately to misconstrue what was intended by Standing Orders. The Government of the day said that where Standing Orders referred to 'member' it did not mean 'Minister'. If that interpretation had been applied throughout the operations of Parliament, it could not have operated. On 4 August 1977 then Premier and Treasurer Dunstan, in regard to Standing Orders 123, stated:

At the time of giving notices of motion, questions may be put to Ministers of the Crown relating to public affairs; and to other members, relating to any Bill, motion, or other public matter connected with the business of the House, in which such members may be concerned.

He argued that Standing Order 123 drew a distinction between questions to Ministers of the Crown and answers by them, and questions by other members. He went on to state:

It is only members who are then referred to in Standing Order 125.

Standing Order 125 provides:

In answering any such question, a member shall not debate the matter to which the same refers.

This is an important point: it is the whole basis of how Question Time has been abused by Government Ministers of both philosophies over the years because that Standing Order has not applied. It says that the member shall not debate the answer, and 'members' include Ministers.

The Deputy Premier satisfied me of that because he said that there was no need for the amendment. He admitted tonight that Ministers are members. I want it spelt out clearly in Standing Orders that the malpractice of Ministers debating answers should not continue. I ask every member of the Opposition to stand up and fight for this important provision and debate it for as long as necessary. It should be included so that we cannot return to the time when Premier Dunstan used the numbers and with the assistance of the Speaker who was sympathetic to that ruling (if that is a reflection on the Chair, I apologise) to force that on this Parliament. It is quite clear through Standing Orders that wherever 'member' is referred to it includes Ministers, because it says that members shall be sworn in to the Parliament.

If the Deputy Premier interpets this Standing Order as he said he did—that Ministers are members—then we are giving a direction to the Speaker that there will be no more debating of answers. It is a critical point. This is an important amendment, because it will clear up once and for all the problem of members asking a question and not being allowed to debate it and Ministers then answering with a tirade against the Opposition or any other group in society, or commenting about something that is irrelevant to the question that has been asked. Both Parties have done this. I would like the Deputy Premier to see the benefit of clearing up this matter once and for all so that the interpretation that applied in 1977 would no longer be forced on the House. It is a critical matter in preserving the rights of members from both sides in Question Time.

When the Deputy Premier introduced these proposals he referred to making sure that we used effectively the time available. Here is the test. The Deputy Premier says that the change is not necessary, and I say it is. It will do away with the debating of answers. If the Government does not accept the change, the Deputy Premier is saying, 'I agree that a Minister is a member, but I want my Ministers to go on abusing Standing Order 125.' If a Minister is not a member, how did he get into Parliament?

Mr LEWIS: This proposition will go down in my memory as the Evans 1080 amendment. For the benefit of honourable members, that is the substance called sodium fluoro/acetate. One feeds carrots to rabbits and then, as they are eating the carrots freely, you put the 1080 on them and the rabbits are gone. In this case that is exactly what the member for Davenport has done, and it is commendable because it clears up a practice that I have been appalled by.

We have an admission from the Deputy Premier that the change is unnecessary because members are Ministers and Ministers are members. Not all members are Ministers but anyone who is a Minister is definitely a member. That is how Standing Orders are to be intrepreted. Therefore, if the Government is fair dinkum and if all members have the same view as the Deputy Premier, we have solved the problem. There is no question about that. I have never seen a more effective way of cleaning up rabbits and this proposition does it very well. I support it without reservation.

Mr BLACKER: I, too support the amendment. This is really a test for the Government (if not so much a test for the House), as it has to make up its mind whether it will have two sets of rules—one for Ministers and one for members. The amendment of the member for Davenport refers to all members and as such includes Ministers. The aim is to clarify once and for all the real situation, and for that reason the Government is under trial on this issue. It has to now use its numbers to tell the House that we will have two sets of rules, one for Ministers and one for the members. It is a real test of character and strength in terms of whether the Government is honest with itself and with this Parliament. The Deputy Premier has said that it is unnecessary. He admitted that on a reading of Standing Order 125 all members are equal, but he knows full well that that is not true. The challenge is upon him to accept the amendment moved by the member for Davenport.

The Committee divided on the motion:

Ayes (15)—Messrs D.S. Baker, S.J. Baker, Becker, Blacker, Chapman, Eastick, S.G. Evans (teller), Goldsworthy, Gunn, Ingerson, Lewis, Meier, Olsen, Oswald, and Wotton.

Noes (25)—Mr Abbott, Mrs Appleby, Messrs L.M.F. Arnold, Blevins, De Laine, Duigan, and M.J. Evans, Ms Gayler, Messrs Gregory, Groom, Hamilton, Hemmings, Hopgood (teller), Keneally, and Klunder, Ms Lenehan, Messrs McRae, Mayes, Payne, Peterson, Rann, Robertson, Slater, Trainer, and Tyler.

Pairs—Ayes—Mrs Adamson and Mr Allison. Noes—Messrs Bannon and Crafter.

Majority of 10 for the Noes.

Motion thus negatived.

Proposed new Standing Order 125a.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I move:

Insert new Standing Order 125a as follows:

125a. Whenever a question without notice is answered, it shall be open to the member who asked the question to put a further question without explanation, arising out of and relevant to the answer given.

This is quite a flash of brilliance in terms of innovation of the operation of this House, and I shall be surprised if the Government turns it down. It introduces a supplementary question without explanation as occurs in another place, allowing a matter to be followed up without the intervention of a question from the other side of the House, thus enabling a more logical flow of information if the second question is required. That is what happens in Westminster where a number of supplementary questions are asked. Without further delaying the debate, I urge the Government to accept this innovation.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: I ask the Committee to reject the amendment. I have taken the opportunity of discussing it with my colleagues in another place, and it is in part on their advice that I am urging the Committee to reject it. I point out that the method of asking questions is different in another place: the general spirit of Question Time tends to be somewhat different, and there is not the same sort of arrangement as occurs here whereby there is an equal number of questions from both sides of the Chamber.

A mechanical point to which the Deputy Leader could reply (although it is not that relevant as I do not accept the principle) is whether, a supplementary question having been allowed, two questions would be permitted from the Government side to make up for the fact that two questions have come from the Opposition side. In another place that is not considered important, as it is often the case that there may be nine questions asked from the Opposition side and two from the Government side that take up the full hour set aside for questions. It is a different world there, and the two situations are not comparable.

Mr LEWIS: If the last one was the 1080 amendment, this is the Lane's Ace.

The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy interjecting:

Mr LEWIS: For the information of members who were not here a minute ago, 1080 is rabbit poison and the Lane's Ace is easily the most reliable brand of rabbit trap one can buy. The first question sets the trap and covers the ground, and the second question springs it. It certainly catches for the honourable member asking the question the kind of information that members should be entitled to obtain from the Minister about the way in which Executive Government is conducting its business.

I do not share the cynicism of the Deputy Premier when he urged the Committee to reject the amendment, because it would result two questions from one member on one side of the House and two questions from another member on the other side of the House, and Question Time will be gone. That is a double standard, and it is not implicit in this proposition that, just because a member of Parliament—regardless of the side of the House on which that member sits—asks a question and seeks and is given a supplementary question to ask, two other members who may happen to be of a different political pursuasion should then automatically each be given a question to ask. That is trite and ridiculous, and tends to perpetuate this silly perception of tit for tat.

Question Time was designed to enable members to obtain information from Ministers on matters of concern to them. It was also designed to enable the Opposition—Her Majesty's loyal Opposition—to obtain information from Her Majesty's Ministers about what those Ministers were doing about a particular matter, what action they had taken, what was their policy, and why such action may have been taken. For us to imagine that it is intended to be an opportunity for the Opposition to expose the flank of the Government, and then the next question from the Government backbench to draw off the hounds in another direction and distract the attention of the House—

Ms Gayler interjecting:

Mr LEWIS: You will get your go in a minute.

Ms Gayler: Don't we have any rights? We have questions to ask, too.

Mr LEWIS: Madam Chairperson, please help the honourable lady understand that all members who are not Ministers have the right to ask questions and that at no time in my remarks have I ever implied that Government members who are not Ministers should not be able to ask questions. I have simply said that during Question Time in other Parliaments members ask questions. If one goes into the Parliaments of Victoria and New South Wales, one will see that they do not have a list of people who are going to ask questions alternately from either side of the House. Members who have not been to another Parliament should bless themselves with that experience and go to another Lower House, like the New South Wales Lower House. It is whoever catches the Speaker's eye that determines the sequence of asking questions, not some formally agreed procedure between members on one side of the House and their Whip which is presented on a plate to the Speaker.

When a Minister starts to sit down, if one wants to ask a question, one gets up. The member who is first up and catches the Speaker's eye, gets the call. That is the way it is in the House of Commons. The Speaker is always looking. His eye is focused on the front bench of the Opposition—

Mr S.J. Baker: The House of Commons has 600 members.

Mr LEWIS: I did not say they didn't. Some members over there have not taken their place for periods of up to seven years because there has not been room on the benches for them to do so. In our Parliaments in other States around the Federation of Australia, the proceedings are as I have described them: there is no formal list. The member who first catches the Speaker's eye is the member who gets the call for the question.

I urge members to support this proposition, because it will not only speed up the rate at which questions are asked, in that it will not be necessary for a member to stand up and grandstand for the press: they will simply get up and ask the question without an explanation (as I most commonly do) and sit down. That is the most efficient way of doing it. Following that question, having set the trap and covered the ground, they can spring the trap with the next question if there has been some dirty work at the crossroads by the Executive. If there has, unknown to the Minister, been dirty work by the bureaucrats in the department, that is the only way to stop corruption starting. It is the only way to ensure that the policy expressed by a Government will be maintained, and that Ministers are held accountable to the Parliament for what they are doing and for the competence with which they ensure that their policies are implemented in the departments for which they are responsible. I can see no reason to oppose this new Standing Order.

Mr S.G. EVANS: I support this new Standing Order, but I am not madly enthusiastic. However, I believe that the point raised by the Deputy Premier should be considered. I support it because any opportunity to improve or preserve the rights of members in this Parliament should be taken. Every time Standing Orders have been changed, I have found that private members lose and the Executive gains. Even though it has been explained that we may not lose anything: in practice we always lose.

I want members to look back at speeches made by the Hon. Len King and the Hon. Hugh Hudson between 1970 and 1973, and by Mr Nankivell also. They emphasised strongly the benefit of supplementary questions. They were not necessarily arguing in the context of the Deputy Leader's amendment: they were suggesting that when answers to questions on notice come before the House there should be an opportunity for people to ask supplementary questions immediately. I support the Deputy Leader's amendment, and I hope that the Standing Orders Committee will look at the matter of supplementary questions. It is obvious that this amendment will get rolled. If members look at the speeches I mentioned they will see that there has been strong support for the theme of the Deputy Leader's amendment, and I support it on that basis. At least it enhances the opportunity to gain more information immediately if a Minister has ducked a question, as happens on a significant number of occasions under our present methods. I support the amendment.

Motion negatived.

Standing Order 127.

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

To amend Standing Order 127 by leaving out the proviso.

This is a provision which I think will attract the support of the Committee. It allows a question and answer to be completed beyond 3.15 p.m. Members will be well aware of this problem, which arises if Question Time starts a little late and we run into the 3.15 p.m. problem. This would simply allow the questioner to complete the question and the Minister to complete the answer, and I urge it on the Committee.

Motion carried.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I move:

To further amend Standing Order 127 by leaving out 'one hour', twice occurring, and insert '1½ hours' and leaving out 'that hour' and inserting 'that hour and a half'.

This seeks to extend the period for asking questions to an hour and a half. It seeks to recover some of those lost privileges that have occurred during the period outlined by the member for Davenport, and I agree with him that all the changes to Standing Orders over the whole of that period which he has recited to the House have had the undoubted effect of diminishing the role of the backbencher, his effectiveness, and his opportunity of giving a place in the sun, or more precisely, a place in Parliament to the people he represents.

Perhaps it is not eye-catching stuff, as I have said before. Perhaps it is not going to titillate the appetite of the media, but that is not what it is all about. All the changes have sought to diminish the opportunity of backbenchers to get up in this place and put in a word for their constituents. This amendment simply seeks to redress, in one fairly small step some of what has been taken away over the years, in the main by Labor Administrations. I urge the Committee to accept the amendment.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: The Government does not accept the amendment and would urge the Committee to reject it. We have had one hour's Question Time since 1974. I have indicated earlier how I believe we can use Question Time more effectively. I believe we can raise significantly the number of questions asked and answered, and in those circumstances it is not contemplated that we should extend Question Time by the extra half hour.

Mr S.G. EVANS: How can the Deputy Premier expect us to accept as a proposition that he believes we can increase the number of questions asked in this particular session? People who have held a position similar to his in handling proposed changes to Standing Orders (Hon. Mr King or the Hon. Mr Hudson) gave guarantees, said there would be short answers, said members would not miss out, said there would be better use of time—and that has not occurred.

The Deputy Premier is not in his present position for all time. We all know that. We all move on. Other people take our places and Governments change. That is just not acceptable. The Deputy Premier could not even guarantee that each of his Ministers as he knows them now would abide by a request from him to cut out the debate and just answer the question. No Deputy Premier I have ever known in this Parliament all the time I have been here, not even Corcoran, who was supposed to be the corporal, has been able to guarantee that.

The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy: The colonel!

Mr S.G. EVANS: I am sorry; I deranked him. An hour and a half is not an unreasonable time to allow for questions in a State where we have more departments, more organisations to supervise, where in our own electorates we have more things to worry about which we have to bring to the Parliament, and yet we get fewer opportunities. We do not get more staff or more equipment to carry out the role. Surely an hour and a half to test and ask a Government questions is not unreasonable.

I do not believe there has been one day in the past seven years that I know of when all the members who wanted to ask a question in any week got their questions up. If that is not a clear indication that there is not enough time available for questions, what do we need? Are we saying some questions that members want to ask should not be asked? Surely the Standing Orders should cater so that at

least, on average, each member gets one or two questions a week.

Members might laugh. At one time in this place we were all guaranteed a question a day; some got more. For example, the Hon. Mr Hudson at one time had 11. By his own words he admitted in *Hansard* he had never had more than 11, so I think that is admitting he had 11. So why not an hour and a half? It does not affect our lifestyles. If the Government believes in the democratic system, that a Government should be challenged to make sure it is operating effectively, the Executive should be challenged, give the hour and a half, and if it is not required it will not be used, but if it is used, then it is required. So I ask the Committee to accept the hour and a half.

Motion negatived.

Standing Order 130.

Mr S.G. EVANS: I move:

To amend Standing Order 130 by adding after the present contents 'A Minister shall answer any question within seven days or if the House is not sitting shall inform the member in writing of the answer within the seven days: provided that in either case if the Minister is unable to provide the answer within that time he shall inform the member forthwith of the reasons for not replying. The Minister may then extend the time for the reply by one month.'

Standing Order 130 presently provides:

The answer to a question on notice or to a question without notice previously asked but not been answered shall be given by delivering the same to the Clerk in writing, at least two hours before the time of meeting of the House that day, and that after presentation of petitions, the Speaker shall, if satisfied that the answers are in accordance with Standing Orders direct that a copy of the answer be supplied to the member who asked the question and that such question and answer be printed in the official report of parliamentary debates.

At one time this Standing Order stated that the Speaker had to read the answer. It was not printed; the answer was read out. For members' information as I said last night, the answers came down the following Tuesday. With the change of Standing Orders back in the early 1970s the Government of the day said to members who complained about the reduction in Question Time from two hours to one hour, 'Look, if you have any other questions to put on, put them on notice.'

Up until that time you were lucky if you had any more than 10 or 20 questions on notice in a session. They were directed by the Government of the day, an ALP Government, 'If you want to get more questions on, put them on notice.' Then eventually we came to the point where some of the questions put on notice were a bit ridiculous, but I do not deny the member the right to ask them.

I have tried in this amendment to put an obligation on the Ministers, whoever they may be, to give an answer the following week to the run-of-the-mill questions that should be able to be answered in a week. If they cannot answer them, then they should explain to the member or the House why they cannot answer them. The sorts of excuses I would accept are where there is a lot of research to be done and departmental time taken up in researching a question. Certainly a Minister of the Crown should be able to stand up and say, 'My department has not had time to carry out this massive amount of research, so I want extra time.'

If a Government, a Minister or a department cannot get an answer to a question within five weeks—and that is what I am allowing—it is a disgrace. It is not an effective Executive; it is not an effective Government of the State. At the moment we have people who write questions on notice and they do not get an answer from the Minister, even at the end of the parliamentary session. It is just avoided. If somebody wants to be really smart on the Government side, they put a question on notice so that nobody else in the House can ask a question on that subject. It ties up the subject. A Minister can go along with the member and if a Ministry wants to get down to sheer skulduggery, which it does at times, it just ties up a subject by putting questions on notice. One member of the Opposition can do it to the detriment of the whole of the Opposition and eliminate the opportunity to ask questions.

I plead with the Minister: it is not an unreasonable request. I think it is a reasonable request to put back into practice what was happening at the time we restricted the hours from two to one. The answer used to come the following Tuesday, as long as we had the question on the Wednesday, so that is less than a week. I have extended it. We were told at that time that if we wanted answers to some subjects to write letters to the Ministers and we would get them back promptly. That does not work. I have some matters that have not been answered for up to eight months, and they are not difficult subjects. What business could operate waiting that long for information or not being able to find the information in that time, if that is the reason, or is it that the Government of the day deliberately witholds information from a member? If that is the case, let somebody admit it. Then we would know what the practice is. If we write a letter and the answer could be a bit dicey, we will not get an answer. Admit it. Honesty in government is spoken of at times by the present Premier and those who back him. Let us be honest: what is the reason for the long delays? I urge the Committee to accept the amendment because it is a fair proposition.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I could not agree more with what the member for Davenport has said. There has been an enormous deterioration in the ability of backbench members (or any member for that matter) to get information from the Government via questions on notice. What has happened is quite disgraceful, and this probably is one of the more important amendments that has been moved during this debate. There used to be a genuine attempt by Governments to get answers to questions on notice promptly. Now, I believe there is a deliberate attempt to withhold replies if it is perceived to be in any way politically embarrassing. That is quite disgraceful.

If a member of Parliament wants information from a department, whether or not it is embarrassing to the Government, he should get it promptly. That always happened in this place in relation to questions on notice until the '70s, and the situation has continued to deteriorate. It deteriorated under the Liberal Government, and I know that, having been in government. Questions on notice are vetted by Cabinet. If the answer is embarrassing, they send it away to have it rewritten or just hang on to it. We saw it happen at the time of the last State election. I think answers were deliberately witheld because the Government adjudged that the information could be embarrassing to it—

Ms Gayler: Some of the questions were asked for that very purpose.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: But a member of Parliament should have access—

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Ms Lenehan): The honourable member who is interjecting from out of her seat is out of order.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: 'So what?' I respond to that. If the Government has information and a member of Parliament legitimately seeks that information, he should have access to it. This withholding of information for purely political purposes is to be deplored. If a member wants information that can be readily obtained, it should be obtained, and that position obtained right up until 1973, I think it was, when King changed the Standing Orders and cut back Question Time on the excuse that a member could obtain the information via questions on notice.

Mr S.G. Evans: We were told the practice would continue and we would get the answers on the following Tuesday.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Yes, you would get your answers the following week. It does not happen. I have a very simple question—just one question on notice at the moment—of the E&WS Department. People have been on my back about a sewerage scheme. It is a simple question requiring a simple answer. There is nothing to trick the Government, but I will wait weeks for that.

While I am canvassing this matter, there has also been a marked deterioration in terms of supplying backbench members (or any members) with information from departments, whether by question or by letter. When I first came into this place 15 years ago, if I wrote a letter to the E&WS Department—and I did that quite often—someone in the department was detailed to handle letters from members of Parliament, and there would be a turnaround of letters within a week with the information required.

The Education Department has always been hopeless. I soon gave up writing letters to the Education Department, because it lost the first couple. One would wait for a year—absolutely hopeless! They might be able to teach kids, but they cannot run an office. So, as a new member, I soon learnt the ways of getting information as quickly as I could. The E&WS was first class. It is like the rest of them now. I will probably wait for a few months to find out whether the Nairne sewerage scheme is going ahead. They ought to be able to find it in five minutes and certainly answer it within a week. The whole system of giving some importance to members of Parliament—and this is not any puffed up conception of how important a member of Parliament is, but it is how important his work for the people he represents is—the whole idea of some priority in terms of departments servicing members of Parliament with information has gone to pot, to a most damaging degree, since I have been here. A junior clerk in a department would answer your call and say, 'Hang on, mate, I'll see what I can find out.' Then he would choof off, and that was the end.

The Hon. D.J. Hopgood: What, doesn't come back to the phone? Leaves you standing there?

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: You do not get what you want. I do not throw my weight around when I am seeking information—I never have. I do not go out of my way to antagonise public servants. The Deputy Premier generally agrees with me. The whole business of giving information to members of Parliament has been downgraded. In the minds of whoever is making the decisions in the Public Service, it does not rate any priority at all.

If I write a letter on behalf of a constituent, the constituent is entitled to a reply. The usual acknowledgment is given that the Minister is looking into the matter and that a reply will come in due course. Lord knows when that will be! I deplore the fact that the work of members of Parliament is regarded so lightly by people in the Public Service who ought to know better. Instead of having someone allocated to deal with such requests it is simply the luck of the draw. One soon learns whether to use the phone or whether to write letters. Things in the Education Department have improved slightly, but they are still not good.

The nub of what the member for Davenport is saying is that a backbench member by this device has been downgraded. The process has been politicised in regard to the supplying of information. If there is a hint that the information will be damaging to the Government, one can bet that one will not get it, especially before an election. That is not what it is about. and I enthusiastically support the amendment.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: I urge the Committee to reject the amendment. The Opposition has not referred to the extraordinary increase in the number of questions placed on notice over the last eight years.

The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy: Most are simple.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: Many of them are straightforward, but the sheer volume involved has placed a strain on the capacity of the Public Service to provide that information for Ministers. That creates a situation for any Government where information is refused simply because of the cost involved in obtaining it. I am not casting political aspersions, because I was reasonably adept and creative in Opposition at producing questions on notice, although in that three years I was eclipsed by two, if not three, of my colleagues. Certainly there are members now in Opposition, and the member for Hanson is here this evening, who have placed an enormous number of questions on notice. To be fair, that is one element in the equation that has led to a slowdown in the processing of them.

There is a responsibility on Ministers to ensure that the Public Service prepares the information as quickly as possible. From time to time my ministerial officers refer too much to the Public Service. Sometimes I have had them get back matters because we could answer the question ourselves when it has been straightforward. All Ministers could look at that area because it would mean in many cases a more rapid reply. Where, because of the detail that is requested, it must go to the bureaucracy, there is a continuing responsibility on Ministers and their staff to ensure that it comes back as quickly as possible. The Government would not be keen to see such a restriction included in Standing Orders.

Mr BECKER: I support the amendment, because the most important work of a member is to make representations on behalf of constituents, to seek information and to follow it through the due process. That view has been supported by Government members: Peter Duncan believed that a member should be free to work in the community interest and follow through the questions that are raised.

True, I have placed on the Notice Paper many questions that have been asked, through sheer frustration, as referred to by the Deputy Leader, in getting replies from some departments. Clearly the slickest department is the Department of Agriculture but, as a city member, I have little contact with it. The E&WS Department is not bad, but for some unknown reason the Education Department takes a long time to deal with matters.

If we had an assurance that we could ring a certain person or a ministerial officer, I would not mind that and I could probably reduce my questions on notice. However, when one is banned from talking to public servants in various departments (and this has gone on for all but my first couple of years here) one becomes paranoid and has to use the system.

It is difficult, in the two hours available, as a backbencher to ask more than one or two questions a week. When Question Time consisted of two hours most of us got in five questions a day and anything up to 15 verbal questions a week. The Ministers did not mess around and, if they did not have the information, they would obtain a report. We need a safeguard written into Standing Orders if we are to protect the rights of all members. I have about 69 questions on notice, and some of them have been there for almost 12 months. That is a disgrace.

Question on notice No. 2 is simple and deals with the petrochemical plant. Some land is earmarked at Port Adelaide. Every time that I inquire of the Marine and Harbors Department about that land, I am told it cannot be used for community recreation purposes because it is where the petrochemical plant will go. Question on notice No. 5 deals with the Festival Theatre Plaza, its condition and how much

it will cost to repair. It is anywhere between $3 million and $4 million. That question should be answered.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I have taken advice from the Clerk and I believe that the member for Hanson, by going through questions on notice, is straying wide of the topic covered in Standing Order 130 and the amendment moved by the member for Davenport. I ask the member for Hanson to link his remarks to the Standing Order.

Mr BECKER: I was using that as an illustration. One question on the Notice Paper relates to a 1983 incident, and surely the Minister of Mines and Energy could easily have resolved that one. That is my point: it is extremely frustrating for members of the Opposition when asked by their constituents, what they are doing and why they have not followed a matter through. That question has had to be reinstated twice. It has gone through two Parliaments and will probably go through a third one before I obtain the answer. We need to get the message to the people who want this information. The people are becoming more aware of Parliament and the politics of their State. I refer to the freedom of information existing in Canberra. Much more information emanates from Parliament to the people, and quite rightly so. There is greater accountability of the various Governments than ever before.

The whole spirit of the motion moved by the member for Davenport is quite correct. As the Deputy Premier said, he would answer quite promptly a few of those questions on the Notice Paper if they did not go through the bureaucracy. There seems to be a paranoia within the bureaucracy so that, if one starts asking questions, poking and probing, they look for the defence mechanism and try the big snow. The only other alternative would be for the Government to set up the opportunity for Opposition members to contact a person who would be authorised to provide the answers to certain questions. If it is not prepared to do that, it will have to wear a large number of questions being on the Notice Paper until we have our own freedom of information Act.

Mr S.G. EVANS: There are many more questions on notice than there were before we changed the time for asking questions without notice. The member for Playford was here when that occurred and made a strong speech at the time, which I read last night. Questions were put on notice because Governments abused the one hour Question Time. Once members learnt how to put questions on notice, away it went. Members will look back through the Notice Paper and find that, in moving this motion, I did not abuse the system in any way. I could put plenty of questions on notice, but I did not do that. It happens more often because Governments refuse to honour the spirit of the question on notice procedure.

All questions can be answered in five weeks. If that cannot be done there is something wrong with the system. A man in the community once defrauded other people for about $800 000, and money involved in that is held in the land and business agents consolidated interest fund. I did not put the question on notice until several questions had been asked in the Upper House. I did so to ascertain whether the amount in the fund was equal to the amount that should have been collected for the land transactions that occurred. That detail should have been available within half an hour. The question was not on long but the answer should have been here the next day, as people have lost their life savings through a scoundrel.

The Minister can answer questions that can be answered in a short time and the others within five weeks. If they cannot be answered within that time, the Government can use its numbers to suspend Standing Orders. I am disappointed. The comment made by the member for Newland highlighted what I am driving at. When the Deputy Leader said that Governments of both political persuasions hold back replies before an election, but referred particularly to the Australian Labor Party before for the last election, the member for Newland said, 'They asked the questions merely to get material that would be damaging to the Government at election time.' If we are admitting that the Government had done something wrong or embarrassing and was not prepared to let the public know when asked the question in Parliament, all we are talking about is a total democratic sham. We are admitting to hiding valuable information from the public by not giving it to a person other than a Minister who is an elected member of Parliament.

I hope the Minister does not agree with it and that the honourable member said it off the top of her head thinking that politically it was a good thing not to hand over information. I hope that it was not a deep down thought that Parliament should be denied the information just because an election was near. If that is the case, this place would be a sham, because it becomes power for the sake of power and not for the sake of representing the people.

I ask the Committee to accept the amendment or for the Minister to admit that there is an area of concern and say that he will look for an alternative. If not, I will call for a division again, as it needs to be recorded how people stood as individuals on vital issues such as this. That is why I have divided during the night so that when individuals talk about democracy they can show how they stand on it. I ask the Minister to accept the amendment.

The Committee divided on the motion:

Ayes (15)—Messrs D.S. Baker, S.J. Baker, Becker, Blacker, Chapman, Eastick, S.G. Evans (teller), Goldsworthy, Gunn, Ingerson, Lewis, Meier, Olsen, Oswald, and Wotton.

Noes (23)—Mr Abbott, Mrs Appleby, Messrs Blevins, De Laine, Duigan, and M.J. Evans, Ms Gayler, Messrs Gregory, Groom, Hamilton, Hemmings, Hopgood (teller), Keneally, and Klunder, Ms Lenehan, Messrs McRae, Mayes, Payne, Rann, Robertson, Slater, Trainer, and Tyler.

Pair—Aye—Mrs Adamson. No—Mr Bannon.

Majority of 8 for the Noes.

Motion thus negatived.

Standing Order 144.

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

That Standing Order 144 be amended as follows:

(a) by striking out the word 'The' and substituting the passage 'Subject to any agreement to the contrary under Standing Order 144b, the'; and

(b) by striking out the table following the Standing Order and substituting the following table:

Column 1 Circumstances in which Member speaks	Column 2 Maximum Time Prescribed for Speaking
(a) Address in reply—	
Mover	1 hour
Leader of Opposition, or one Member deputed by him	1 hour
Any Member who is delivering his first speech to the House	1 hour
Any other Member	30 minutes
(b) Second reading of a Bill—	
(i) Introduced by a Minister—	
Mover	Unlimited
Leader of Opposition, or one Member deputed by him	Unlimited
Mover in Reply	1 hour
Any Other Member	20 minutes
(ii) Introduced by a private Member—	
Mover	Unlimited
Premier, or one Minister deputed by him	Unlimited
Leader of Opposition, or one Member deputed by him	Unlimited
Mover in reply	1 hour
Any other Member	20 minutes

Column 1 Circumstances in which Member speaks	Column 2 Maximum Time Prescribed for Speaking
(c) That the (Select Committee) report be noted—	
Each Member	20 minutes
Mover in reply	20 minutes
(d) Third Reading of a Bill—	
Each Member	20 minutes
Mover in reply	20 minutes
(e) Motion of want of confidence—	
Mover	Unlimited
Premier, or Minister deputed by him	Unlimited
Mover in Reply	1 hour
Any other Member	20 minutes
(f) Substantive Motion—	
Mover	Unlimited
Principal Speaker in Opposition	Unlimited
Mover in reply	1 hour
Any other Member	20 minutes
(g) Grievance debate under Standing Order No. 288—	
One Minister and Leader of Opposition or Member deputed by him	30 minutes
Any other Member	10 minutes;

Again, for procedural reasons, I now find myself in the position of proposing to leave out part of the motion, and I move:

Leave out proposed paragraph *(a)*.

Proposed paragraph *(a)* is another one of these measures that is consequential upon an amendment which comes later. As the amendment contained in proposed paragraph *(a)* no longer has any place in the scheme of things, I urge members to support the proposition that we vote against it.

Amendment carried.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I oppose Standing Order 144(b). This is a classic case of overkill. I will not go to any great lengths to explain what that paragraph provides. Last evening I recounted that that provision would mean that members of this Parliament would have the least opportunity of any member in the nation to make significant contributions. I pointed out that the South Australian Parliament is the second smallest State Parliament, but I will not repeat the figures. Members have the shortest speaking times on average at present, and it is intended that those time be even shorter. I will cite examples: in Victoria there are 88 members, and they are allowed the same time as we are allowed; New South Wales has the same time; members in Queensland have 40 minutes each; and in Western Australia, where there are 10 more members, 45 minutes is allowed in general debates. This is a classic case of overkill, with the Government seeking further to restrict the opportunity for members to make a decent speech in a debate, by chopping back the time allowed to 20 minutes and interfering with the time allotted for the Address in Reply debate, and so it goes on. I oppose Standing Order 144 (b).

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: I have frequently observed in this place that one of the problems is that some members in speaking frequently in debate take up the maximum time available to them and, of course, I make the point that in this schedule we are not interfering with the unlimited time available to the mover of a motion or the lead speaker in opposition to a motion. The Government is intent on achieving proper management of its Notice Paper even though, as members well know, I will not proceed with certain aspects of the scheme that I previously put before the House. However, I believe that the modest reduction in speaking time envisaged here will ensure that a large number of members will be able to participate in debate.

I remind the Deputy Leader that we must be concerned not only for people who are members of the two major political Parties but also for those who have no Party allegiance. Unless special arrangements are made for such members in organising debates, giving them a fairly high position on the list of speakers, there is a continuing possibility that they will be denied the right to speak in debates until those debates have continued for an inordinately long time. One way of controlling that is to have a modest reduction in the time available for general debates. I believe that in relation to the general principles of a Bill, that is, the second reading stage and even more so the third reading stage, when members can speak to the Bill only as it comes out of Committee, 20 minutes should be quite adequate for a member to get his or her point across remembering, of course, in relation to Party contributions that the unlimited time available for the lead speaker from the Opposition or the Government, as the case may be, is still preserved.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the Deputy Leader intend to persist with his amendment?

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment cannot be moved, because paragraph *(a)* has been deleted.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: It is not for me to give advice: the Deputy Leader can proceed as he wishes in the debate. He has just indicated his opposition to the form of the clause that I am urging on the Committee. Why should he not regard a simple straight out vote on that as a test of the mood of the Committee without complicating the matter with an amendment?

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: All right.

Mr M.J. EVANS: I fully support that proposal. It is a very sensible measure. I seek an assurance that, with respect to the unlimited time which the Deputy Premier mentioned and which has been retained in this format for both the mover and the responder, he will review the implications of that for the allocation of the total time available, where that is to be managed in accordance with the agreed scheme to ensure that in the longer term that does not seem to have a disproportionate effect on the debating time available.

Obviously, 'unlimited' implies a total unpredictability in relation to the length of a speech, and that might or might not assume a very high proportion of the total time that is to be agreed for that procedure. We need to be mindful of the unpredictable length of the unlimited time and the effect it could have on the total time available to other members.

While I do not intend to oppose it in this context—and I believe it is fair for the Government and Opposition to have those kinds of facilities available to them—I think that we will have to monitor it in the longer term to ensure that, although the total debating time now is unlimited, and therefore one component of it being unlimited does not matter, if we are to move to a regime of limited times the fact that some members have unlimited time will become a problem if that time is not properly managed. I seek an assurance from the Deputy Premier that that matter will be looked at in the longer term context of this debate.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: I am happy to give that assurance. I see precisely the implications of what the honourable member fears here. If we find the clash between the unlimited time, on the one hand, and the proposed management of the House, on the other, causing a problem, obviously we will have to look at it. In the meantime, we will certainly ensure that those members who do not answer to a Party Whip will not be frozen out by that sort of practice.

Motion as amended carried.

Proposed new Standing Order 144b.

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

After Standing Order 144 insert new Standing Order as follows:

144b.

(a) Before the House meets for the despatch of business in any week, the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition shall meet with a view to reaching an agreement on the manner in which the House is to deal with the business of that week.

(b) An agreement under paragraph *(a)* may be amended from time to time.

(c) Any agreement under paragraph *(a)* and any amendments to such an agreement shall—

(i) be in writing;

and

(ii) be lodged with the Speaker.

(d) If the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition fail to reach an agreement under paragraph *(a)*, any motion of a Minister undere Standing Order 144a during that week shall take precedence over any other business of the House.

(e) An agreement under paragraph*(a)* may be put into effect by a Minister moving a motion under Standing Order 144a.

(f) A reference in this Standing Order to—

(i) the Premier extends to a Member to whom the Premier has delegated his powers under this Standing Order;

and

(ii) the Leader of the Opposition extends to a Member to whom the Leader of the Opposition has delegated his powers under this Standing Order.

Again, for procedural reasons, I need to amend my motion, and I now move:

(a) Leave out 'shall' in paragraph *(a)* and insert 'may'.

This amendment is really consequential on what the Committee may do presently.

The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy interjecting:

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: One never likes to presume. However, since the Deputy Leader and I are at one in relation to what is about to happen, I think there is a fair degree of predictability. Perhaps it would be in order to indicate that the Government sees no point in proceeding with paragraphs *(b), (c), (d)* and *(e)* of proposed new Standing Order 144b in view of the fact that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has made it clear to me that he would not be prepared to sign and register such agreements under the conditions that are laid down by those subclauses.

I believe that in those circumstances the Opposition is likely to be the loser rather than the winner by the loss of that piece of machinery. Be that on its own head. If it has made a rational decision in relation to this matter, that is for it to say. All we would be doing, if we accepted those subclauses, would be writing in Standing Orders a whole lot of words that could never be activated. I say no more than that, because we are not quite on to that measure.

I have discussed this with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and we agree that in the light of the excision of those words there will be those weeks where the agreement between us will be a purely formal thing because it may relate to the first week of sitting, when Address in Reply is the only thing before us, and when there is little point in having to meet to decide that the House will sit until 10.30 p.m. on Tuesday and Wednesday and until 5.30 p.m. on Thursday. Therefore, 'may' would seem to be a more appropriate form of verbiage than 'shall' which otherwise enjoins upon us something that may be unnecessary.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I am not enthused about changing 'shall' to 'may' because the situation could slip back into the rut where the idea was mooted some years ago that these meetings would occur and, in the event, they did not occur because the Government did not turn up. I am happy with 'shall'. Even if we had nothing much to talk about, at least there would be a meeting. I hope that by putting 'may' in there the Minister will not take it into his head to say, 'We will not worry about meeting this week.' Then we get into a position where we subvert the whole idea of meeting and trying to reach some agreement, which was part of the deal that was hammered out originally but never executed. I am only agreeing with this because the Minister wants it.

Mr S.J. Baker interjecting:

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The other bit is fine. We want to cut out all that nonsense about registering things with the Speaker and signing things that one knows one cannot keep. We are getting to the next part where the Government has agreed to the point of view that I put. The Minister is saying that it may make some of these meetings redundant. I hope that we do not get into the bad habits that have occurred where the meetings do not take place. I hope that the Minister will understand that it will be necessary to have a meeting at a fixed time on, I suggest, the Monday if there is work to do that week.

By inserting 'may', one is letting someone off the hook. It is not the Opposition, because I am, and always have been, perfectly happy to meet the Deputy Premier and discuss the week's program. However, the Deputy Premier has never turned up. I am merely saying that that was supposed to have occurred in the past and did not through no fault of mine. If the Deputy Premier wants to turn 'shall' into 'may' because occassionally there may be weeks when it is not necessary to meet, I might argue with him.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: The Deputy Leader is asking from me an assurance, which I am only too happy to give. I make it clear that I think there has probably been some element of misunderstanding between us in relation to meetings. My instruction from the Hon. Jack Wright, when I replaced him as Leader of the House, really amounted to this: that in relation to meetings one supplied to the Opposition a proposition for the week's business and silence implied consent—that if the Opposition was concerned about the amount of work that was being requested of it and all members, then clearly it would take the initiative to contact me or request a meeting, where the whole thing could be properly worked out.

There have been occasions when the honourable member has got back to me and requested some amendments to the week's work. I do not recall ever a request specifically from me. That is an understanding. I readily admit that there have been misunderstandings on both sides. Maybe we have both been waiting for the other to convene a meeting, and there has been an element of cross purpose. We can overcome that by my giving the assurance that I am now giving, namely, that we will void the meeting only when we have a purely formal week's work and there is little point in such a meeting taking place. That apart, I am only too happy to give that commitment to the honourable member.

Mr S.G. EVANS: I support the amendment as now proposed. As Whip, I did my best to let the National Party member know of some things that were taking place, but I did not always let him know. There is a concern where you get the two major Parties meeting together to decide how the business will be handled for the week and there might be more than just the four people of minority groups who are here now. One day we might have 10 or 15 in the House, and they are not even consulted. I do not believe that it is possible to put in the Standing Order that they shall be consulted, but there is a need to consider those who are elected without Party support. They have run their own campaign, put in perhaps more effort than is done in a Party machine, and have been elected. They represent people in their electorate, and I plead for some consideration of their thoughts before the two major groups come together and say, 'We can knock this off in one hour or two', when one of the individuals might want to use 10 minutes or 15 minutes, or may have a reason for wanting to know of a proposition coming before the House, just as much as the majority Party in Opposition. I support the amendment, but I take the opportunity of recording in *Hansard* that there are more than just the two groups elected to Parliament.

Mr LEWIS: I think that proposition 144b is quite stupid. That is the way things are meant to be at the present time. That does not change a darn thing. Standing Order 144b (a), as amended with the substitution of the word 'may' where 'shall' appears in the second line, does not compel the Deputy Premier to do anything. It does not compel the Premier to do anything with the Leader of the Opposition

or whoever they may otherwise nominate to meet with one another. That is the way the business has been conducted in the past and if the Government was in any way sincere and believed that this sort of proposition ought to work, it would have honoured that during this jam packed session of four weeks that we have had so far. Why has not the Premier or his representative—in this instance the Deputy Premier, as Leader of the House for the Government—honoured the letter of that proposition in the fashion in which this proposition suggests it should be honoured in future? Why has that not been so? What will change? Anything? This certainly will not.

Mr Chairman, the effect of this amendment is to simply clutter our Standing Orders. You and I, and every other member awake at this ridiculous time now know, if we did not know before, that the Government does what it wants to do with its numbers. It will suspend Standing Orders to completely negate the effect of this addition and any other part of Standing Orders that may be there to suit itself.

Why on earth the Deputy Premier persists with the proposition is quite beyond my comprehension. It does not improve anything. It merely means that the Government can argue, on some occasion when other members of the House have chosen to speak on the matter outside the countenance of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who has acted traditionally as the negotiator for the Opposition, that it simply negates the arrangement—unless, of course, we prevent the ordinary backbenchers, who may not be members of either the Government or Opposition Parties, from speaking. If they do speak, the arrangmements are shot to bits. The Government can use the provisions of the guillotine to suit itself, saying that the Opposition should have taken that into consideration when it negotiated through its Deputy Leader with the Deputy Premier as the Premier's nominee. I think it is a waste of time. I do not support it.

Amendment carried.

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

To amend proposed new Standing Order 144b by leaving out paragraphs *(b), (c), (d)* and *(e)*.

The Opposition has indicated that it believes that the Government was really on about validating the use of the guillotine by these provisions. It has indicated that it is not prepared to enter into the sorts of agreements which were envisaged by some of these clauses. I want to make clear that what we are really doing this evening is to resolve that issue here and now rather than it being resolved, as it were, week by week. The Government reserves the right to be able to manage the affairs of this House by the appropriate use of that Standing Order.

At the same time, it gives an undertaking, through this Committee to the House, that in fact in organising weekly work it will endeavour to ensure that a realistic week's work is put before the House, that this matter is discussed with the Opposition before we proceed with putting things on the green papers which appear before us each day, and that the other assurance I have given about the proper intervention in debates by the members who are not from the two major political Parties will also be taken into account. We also have some of the advantages of the new Standing Orders which this Committee is urging on the House but, if necessary, the Government will reserve the right to manage the affairs of the House by the use of the Standing Order which is all in our minds, and we will not hesitate to do so if in fact we believe those conditions arise.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Deputy Premier's argument is slightly obscure as far as I am concerned. He says that instead of settling an argument now, we will have it every week.

The Hon. D.J. Hopgood: No, the other way around.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Well, whatever way he means it, I do not understand it. The reason that I enthusiastically support this amendment—in fact it is one I had given notice of—is because what the Government was proposing just would not work. In my judgment, the meeting needs to take place on Monday when we have a global view of the week's work. The Government knows, because it has been through the Caucus, what the attitude to the Bills will be. They can control their members because the constraints are there to get it thorugh, but from the point of view of the Opposition, the legislation has not even been discussed.

To suggest that the Leader of the House for the Opposition will sign a contract and register it with the Speaker and hope to keep to that contract for every Bill is a ridiculous request. I am saying that by removing these clauses from this Standing Order, at least some flexibility is put back into this scheme whereby there can be some overs and unders in debate, and we can probably work out a reasonable week's program. But no way in the world could one put one's signature to a program which had not even been discussed with one's Party, so I support the amendment, but for different reasons to those of the Deputy Premier.

Amendment carried; motion as amended carried.

Proposed new Standing Order 237.

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

Leave out Standing Order 237 and substitute new Standing Order as follows:

Unless otherwise ordered, if all motions shall not have been disposed of one hour after the time fixed for the meeting of the House on any day on which private members' business takes precedence, the debate thereon shall be interrupted, and the orders of the day taken in rotation; but if there be order of the day, the discussion on motions may be continued. The debate on motions may be resumed after the orders of the day are disposed of, a motion to that effect being put and passed.

This proposed New Standing Order is drafted in such a way as to take account of the fact that we will now have two hours on Thursday morning for private members time, so the reference to one hour for the introduction of notices of motion and the normal rotation of business is preserved. It enables the automatic inclusion on the Notice Paper for the next day of private members business for those matters not dealt with.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Opposition agrees. This change is to accommodate the Thursday morning arrangements, as does the next amendment.

Motion carried.

Standing Order 245a.

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

To amend Standing Order 245a by leaving out 'at the six o'clock or prior adjournment' and inserting 'at 1 p.m.'.

This amendment is consequential on the Thursday morning arrangements to which we have agreed.

Motion carried.

Standing Order 463.

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

To amend Standing Order 463 by inserting after 'ten minutes' the words '(including a right of reply)'.

This introduces a new principle that relates to motions for suspension of Standing Orders. It preserves the right of reply. I do not believe that that right need be exercised on all occasions where someone seeks a suspension of Standing Orders, but this is one way of ensuring that, if it is to be exercised, it can be, and I commend it to the Committee.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I support the amendment, but I want to make a position clear for the record. The amendment provides more flexibility to Standing Orders but the overall time for the debate is not expanded. The mover of the motion has 10 minutes all up. If he uses five minutes, he has five minutes left to reply; if he uses three

minutes he has seven minutes to reply and if he uses one minute, he has nine minutes. Is that correct? He does not get another lot of 10 minutes?

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: That is precisely the case.

Motion carried.

The Speaker having resumed the Chair:

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD (Deputy Premier): I move:

That the resolution reported from the Committee be adopted.

I thank all members for the consideration they have given to these matters. It is my earnest hope that the spirit in which this debate has been conducted will be carried over into the general debates of the House so that we will see improved debates as a result of the amendments to Standing Orders that we have adopted.

In conclusion (and I am indebted to one of my colleagues for this), I remind honourable members that the late sittings that we are in part trying to avoid (along with other things) are something that has a long tradition. Combe, in his *Responsible Government in South Australia* points out for example that on 23 July 1834 in the House of Commons at 2 o'clock in the morning, in a 'thin' House, Mr Whitmore, a private member, moved the second reading of the South Australian Colonization Bill. I will not go into further detail, except to say that the Bill was read a second time without division and a weary House adjourned at 3 o'clock in the morning.

Even those who, in the Mother of Parliaments, were in effect responsible for the first statutory framework of South Australia, from time to time found the need to sit way into the long watches of the night. Let us hope that we have discovered a formula by which that unfortunate practice can be put to an end.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I do not want the Deputy Premier to misunderstand the tenor of the debate and draw the conclusion from it that the Opposition is happy. The Opposition is far from happy. The debate was conducted in a civilised manner but the overall result is that the rights of back-benchers have been circumscribed in a number of ways that we believe are undesirable.

Nonetheless, we support the motion, as we have managed to salvage some significant reforms: we managed to reform the reforms. We support the motion and hope that we can make the best of these new arrangements. However, we would be kidding ourselves if we believed we would be going home before midnight on every sitting night. Even if we dispatched our business at midnight, we would still be waiting around for the Legislative Council.

If the Government hopes to amend Standing Orders in like manner in another place, I will be surprised if it is successful. The numbers game up there is different from this House. We should not believe that we will never be in this place after midnight. We will be, because we are not masters of our own destiny when we work in a bicameral system and we rely on the dispatch of business in another place to control to a large extent what happens here.

Mr S.G. EVANS (Davenport): I support the motion only because the changes have been decided. My opposition to the motion would not make any difference. We have not gained much at all unless, as the Deputy Premier said, the spirit is carried on. We will see on Thursday mornings whether automatically there are just as many Government backbenchers moving private members business as Opposition members which is the practice that occurred with Question Time, contrary to what was originally intended.

That is one reason why I am reluctant and unhappy about what happened. I refer also to the shortening of speaking times. We have not gained anything there. Individual members have lost, and every time we change Standing Orders it means more power to the Executive and less to individual members; less opportunity to individual members.

Sir, I direct my comment to the role that you will need to play. One concern I have is how we end up interpreting 'member' in relation to a Minister. I hope that what has been discussed tonight has sorted that out once and for all. I support the motion reluctantly as I can do virtually nothing else to achieve anything. Tonight we have knocked another nail in the coffin of the individual member.

Motion carried.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD (Deputy Premier): I move:

That the alterations to the Standing Orders as adopted by this House be laid before the Governor by the Speaker for approval pursuant to section 55 of the Constitution Act 1934.

Motion carried.

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

That the volume of Standing Orders be reprinted and that the Clerk be empowered to renumber them consecutively and make any necessary clerical corrections.

The Hon. B.C. EASTICK (Light): On the information given by the Deputy Premier, I would certainly oppose the motion. The Deputy Premier has given no indication of what he means by 'printing' He speaks of the volume. If we assume that is it going to be a green book similar to that which is currently before us, I point out to the Deputy Premier that the alterations that were effected in 1974 have been effectively used by members of the House since that time, they being the stick-on inserts. Whilst I fully agree that there should be a re-presentation of the Standing Orders, a clear indication exists and an undertaking has been given by the Deputy Premier that he anticipates other variations being effected in the not too distant future.

I suggest to the Deputy Premier that there is currently available a list of perhaps 150 to 200 variations which ought to be given to the House for consideration. In a number of cases they are single words, that are more commonly used in legal or parliamentary practice today than was the case when the drafting was first undertaken. There is no final conclusion on a number of those variations, but they are listed. I would certainly hope, as a member of the Standing Orders Committee that the work which was originally undertaken between 1979 and 1982, and which in part was followed through between 1982 and 1985, will be taken up so that very necessary alterations (not alterations of thrust or substance, although there will be some of those) can be inserted into a new publication of the Standing Orders.

If the Government does not expect that to happen inside three to four years, that would be unfortunate and I would have to reconsider my position relative to a production at this time. On the other hand, it may be that the Deputy Premier will tell the House that what he had in mind was not the publication which we have at present and which I suggest would probably cost something like $30 to $35 per volume to have printed. Rather, it could be set in a ring-back folder or something of that nature, where alterations in the future could be more readily placed without having to go to the extensive production costs associated with a book such as that which is before us presently. It is for the Government to decide whether it has money to spend on activities of this nature, but I personally would have to question the wisdom of spending considerable sums of money, when that volume and publication is likely to be surplus to need within the foreseeable future.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD (Deputy Premier): The honourable member is obviously on to something. If it is

intended that a considerable number of additional amendments should be taken up through the Standing Orders Committee, it would be quite a waste to print a new book which may become out of date very quickly. On the other hand, I cannot speak for the Standing Orders Committee, nor would it be proper for me or the Government to do so. It is surely for the Standing Orders Committee to get on with the job and determine what additional amendments should be recommended to the House.

The motion does not indicate that this reprinting must occur immediately, and I suggest that here we are getting the Clerk started on the reprinting and, if the Standing Orders Committee can proceed fairly rapidly with the job that the honourable member envisages that it has before it, surely those additional matters could be incorporated before the reprinting took place. I will be prepared to reconsider this matter if, after discussions, it is demonstrated that perhaps it is a timetable that could not be adhered to and we may get ourselves into the sort of problems to which the honourable member has referred. At this stage the passage of this motion provides a little incentive for the Standing Orders Committee to proceed in that way and allows our staff to proceed with the necessary work that will have to take place before we get on to the physical printing stage.

Motion carried.

WORKERS REHABILITATION AND COMPENSATION BILL COSTINGS REPORT

The Legislative Council transmitted the following resolution in which it requested the concurrence of the House of Assembly:

1. That this House requests the Auditor-General to commission an actuarial report by two actuaries as nominted below of the costings of the proposed Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act, to extend the work already reported by the Auditor-General in his report on 4 March 1986 to the Minister of Labour.
2. The House requests the Auditor-General to invite the United Trades and Labour Council on the one hand and the South Australian Employers Federation and the Chamber of commerce and Industry on the other to each nominate an actuary.
3. The House requests the Auditor-General to invite the United Trades and Labour Council on the one hand and the South Australian Employers Federation and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry to each propose questions and issues that they desire addressed.
4. The House requests the Auditor-General to invite representatives from the Department of Labour, insurance industry, the Law Society and any other appropriate area to act as consultants as required.
5. The House requests the Auditor-General to arrange for the completion of the joint actuarial report as early as possible but without curtailing any line of inquiry he deems important to the examination.
6. In the event that the Auditor-General does not accede to this request, this House requests the Government to commission the actuarial report as outlined in the motion.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS (Minister of Labour): I move:

That Standing Orders be so far suspended as to enable the message to be taken into consideration forthwith.

Without in any way suggesting support for the resolution, I indicate that the Government is happy to facilitate debate on the private members motion.

Motion carried.

Mr S.J. BAKER (Mitcham): I move:

That the Legislative Council's resolution be agreed to.

I do not wish to take an inordinate amount of time in debating this motion. The Government has got itself into a very difficult situation, and by this resolution we are indicating dissatisfaction with previous costing efforts and saying that there must be a way of resolving the dilemma and the impasse that has been created. Until such time as that happens, it is inappropriate for the Government to act. I am amazed: the Minister has never really been quite so active as in the past two days. He has been wearing a tread between this House and the Upper House. In fact, his activity could almost be classed as frenetic.

There has been a suggestion that the Leader of the Government in the Upper House is quite unhappy with his colleague, and he has good reason to be, because he, too, must realise that the approach used by the Government in respect of this Bill did nothing to secure its passage. It did not allow debate in the terms that we see in the House on most occasions. The Minister failed to provide the House with sufficient information when he was asked to do so.

We on this side have been accused of opposing for the sake of opposing, and it has been suggested that the Government has a mandate to bring in workers compensation reform. The detail of this Bill is not reform: it is disaster. It should be remembered that when the Auditor-General in the very short space of time he had available came down with his report, he said, 'I have not had sufficient time and I really cannot give a view.' Costings become very important.

As the Minister has acknowledged in this House, if South Australia becomes uncompetitive with its interstate counterparts, if we are unable to provide the same standards as are provided interstate, South Australia's position will be diminished further than is already the case. Indeed, the Leader of the Opposition spent some time outlining the continual population outflow from South Australia, and there has been a continual outflow of head offices—so there is something wrong in South Australia. Any increased cost burden on South Australian business will not benefit South Australians or the ultimate future of this State.

I would like to reiterate briefly a few points and then address the motion specifically. It would be useful to refer back to the Mules and Fedorovich report, because that is where it all began. That is the report which identified that there were to be massive savings in the system, but since then it has been put under a cloud, and I will reiterate the reasons why. We know that the costings were based on claims disbursal and not on premiums. The Minister did not realise that: in fact, when we questioned him in Committee he failed to appreciate that there was a difference. He said that a number of insurance companies had been approached to provide data, and had done so. That, too, was untrue.

The Minister also said that the whole thing had been considered very carefully. We know that only one private insurer was actually approached to provide the appropriate information, and that insurer is the largest private insurer in South Australia and is thus atypical of the market. So, any conclusions that could be formed from that company would be very limited. While that company had 30 per cent of the market, the other 70 per cent became very important. The total sample was 30 per cent but comprised only one private insurer in SGIC, so the Minister could hardly base a report on that sample because 70 per cent of the market was missing.

Despite the Minister's recent press release, Dr Mules did not participate in the recosting study. I know that for a fact, and I will not resile from saying that outside this place. The report that was provided to the Auditor-General was based on work that was internal to the Department of Labour. It did not have the blessing of an independent economist. Therefore, not only were there problems with the data and a non-representative sample but also there was the fact that the original team was not in place when the information became available.

It was interesting to note when the Auditor-General's report came out that there was an October 1985 version. To that stage we had been unaware that the Government had undertaken recostings and produced a report in October 1985. It simply was not made available, and the Minister did not report it in the Parliament. However, he did say in regard to that document that there was a dual effort by Mules and Fedorovich, and we know that that is not true. The most important aspect of all this is that the Auditor-General relied on the assumptions contained in that document. That is made very clear in his report.

Mr Ferguson: What about the Bill itself?

Mr S.J. BAKER: I will refer to the Bill, because it is the most important thing.

Mr Ferguson: Do you agree with the reforms or don't you?

Mr S.J. BAKER: They are not reforms.

Mr Ferguson: You don't agree with them?

Mr S.J. BAKER: They are not reforms.

Mr Ferguson: Do you agree with them—yes or no?

Mr S.J. BAKER: I do not agree with the conditions laid down in the report. I make that quite clear. I do not know why the member for Henley Beach suddenly raises his head at this time of night. We have made clear in the debate that we do not support the provisions. I did not stand on my feet and speak for 3½ hours at the beginning of the debate saying that we agree with the report. When the Auditor-General considered the reports and the various information, he relied on the basic assumptions in the Mules and Fedorovich report. If they are flawed in any way, when we consider the integrity of the data on which he commented, we see that he could comment only assuming that the comments were right. He found that the 33 per cent savings depreciated to 22 per cent because there was a misstatement of fact. However, he did not say that there was a 22 per cent saving available in the system, because he knew that that was not correct. That was the intregrity of the data on which he was commenting, not the validity of the costings. In fact, if we consider the Auditor-General's report it becomes quite clear that on balance he believed that there were no savings and that there could be a probable increase of 5 per cent (and I make this point very clearly) based on the assumptions contained in the Mules and Fedorovich report. I will refer to that later.

I do not really need to talk about the difficulties that the Minister has in understanding the profit situation in relation to what is earned from the reserves and what is premium income or the gross understatement of administrative costs contained in the Mules and Fedorovich report, because they did not have that data. What is important is the impact of this information, or misinformation, on the Bill. The Minister prescribed and indeed said that there would be a 33 per cent saving, so the scheme could be more easily afforded. It is important to remember that link. His friends from the UTLC said, 'We want to up the ante.'

The Minister said that they could afford it because there were large savings in the system. The events unfolded, and the Minister changed the rules, much to the disgust of the people who had taken him at his word. That is what caused the problem. Because the Minister had relied on a set of data that was flawed, he also believed that he could give away benefits. The reason I spoke for 3½ hours is that I am diametrically opposed to anything that will place South Australia at a disadvantage.

Mr Ferguson: Any change at all?

Mr S.J. BAKER: The honourable member should listen very carefully to what I say and check the record. I am opposed to any measure that will decrease the ability of young people to get jobs, of firms to compete within Australia and on the international market. This is such a measure, just like taxes and charges, imposts and regulations. Workers compensation is but another.

There are many aspects to this matter, and one is that I do not believe that public monopolies are to the benefit of South Australia. We are really addressing the costings here and my greatest concern is that incentives will be given to people to become part of the disabled—the people who are recipients of workers compensation. This has not been looked at and was never looked into within the assumptions contained by the study by Mules and Fedorovich. They said that if the same number of people remained in the system there would be a 33 per cent increase in the relevant common law area. That was an important finding in its own right. At least the Government said that there would be an increase in costs through pensions, but no-one said what would happen if more people participated because of the benefits.

I have a pile of paper well over a foot high, and some of it addresses this question. It is a recipe for disaster. While it is important to recognise that Governments have mandates, they are elected on the basis that they will bring about change. The changes that were brought in here were beyond the previous agreement. I understand that the Minister will be opposing this motion. The motion indicates, because of the difficulty with the original data and because the Auditor-General could not be expected to come up with a definite answer in the space of two short weeks, that more information is required. The Minister and the Opposition have said that they want cheaper premiums, and I think the Democrats have said that they want cheaper premiums. The Opposition wants employment in this State to be sustained rather than to diminish.

We want to know the bottom line. One thing left out of the motion was the retirement pension scheme at the age of 65 years. Most western European countries have a maximum of 85 per cent of weekly earnings as their pensionable benefits. We are loading the system before we start. What the Democrats and, at the end of the day, the Liberals said was that until we know the real costs we cannot proceed to pass a Bill that prescribes benefits. I understand that a deal has been struck, and the Minister can correct me if I am wrong.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Sit down and I will tell you all about it.

Mr S.J. BAKER: The Minister, who has tremendous difficulties with some of his colleagues in this matter in relation to his handling, his misstatements and inability to provide answers, suddenly has to get out from under—and getting out from under involves giving the Democrats a blank cheque to be able to run their own study into the costings. I do not think that I have ever previously said in this Parliament during my three and a bit years that the process of Government is now no longer with the Government: it is in the hands of two people in the Upper House.

Mr Peterson interjecting:

Mr S.J. BAKER: There must be some potential over here. We have two very good men and true. The member for Semaphore and the member for Elizabeth, I have no doubt, have more potential than the people up there to conduct a study. Somehow the chosen two have been given the opportunity to engage their own consultants for a study of the scheme. The Minister says that he wants reform but he has handled it so badly. He has abdicated every shred of responsibility and said that there are only two people that count—the Democrats. I find that fascinating.

The Hon. Frank Blevins interjecting:

Mr S.J. BAKER: I admit that I am not excited: I am appalled. That is a far better description. I am even somewhat amazed that the Minister has sold his soul. All he had to do was say, 'I may have made a mistake. I am going to

withdraw this Bill and be realistic about the way I am going to approach the situation.' If he had done that, he may well have had a debate where there was some commonality of interest and points. However, because he so heavily loaded the Bill and thus the debate, we have found ourselves in a total impasse that can only be broken, according to the Minister, by some extraordinary means of giving the Democrats a blank cheque. It is of concern to me that the Minister has not come a little along the track to understand that he has made a lot of mistakes. We all make mistakes.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: My biggest mistake was believing you when you said you would be five minutes.

Mr S.J. BAKER: I did not say five minutes. I said that I would take a little time. I am just about to wind up. I hope that everyone in this House has a real concern about employment, workers, rehabilitation and where we are headed in this very competitive world. We support the motion because at least it may lead to a clarification of some of the fundamental issues. It may also help the Minister understand how far off the beam he has been in this total process.

Mr LEWIS (Murray Mallee): I want to know what the proposition means in Part IV where it uses the word 'area'. I would therefore invite his attention to that when he makes his response to us. In supporting the motion, I would have to say that there are some obvious omissions, in that the extent to which it contemplates obtaining information goes less than the distance it might otherwise have gone had consideration of it been given more time at the time it was drafted. Nowhere is there a provision in the motion to seek information from various experts outside those listed. That information would be important.

Mr S.J. Baker: Particularly overseas information.

Mr LEWIS: Not only overseas information, but certainly, particularly overseas information and here, locally, as well. If we are to get costings, and accurate costings, then the actuary or actuaries who are doing that work will have to research the factors which affect the cost. If you are making custard, you do not simply look at what it costs to run a custard factory. You have to look at the price of eggs, the price of milk, the price of sugar and the price of energy which goes into the preparation of the ingredients, and finally the coagulation of them in the final precipitation of the colloid, because that is what custard is.

In this instance, we are looking at, if you like, a substance not unlike custard. You never know how it is going to turn out if you make it from its natural ingredients when you begin, because it is not only a matter of quantity of those ingredients but also the quality of them. So, the factors behind each of the items being considered in that cost equation need to be researched by that actuary. We do not provide in the proposition for the Auditor-General or, in the event that he chooses to leave the matter aside, the Government, to consult with, for instance, the AMA. I would have thought that those medical practitioners and surgeons engaged in the business of healing wounds and rehabilitating the injured ought to have been required or at least invited to provide information as under paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of the resolution. The AMA is not there. It would be particularly relevant in the context of paragraph 3 which reads as follows:

> The House requests the Auditor-General to invite the United Trades and Labor Council on the one hand and the South Australian Employers Federation and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry to each propose questions and issues that they desire addressed.

That is all very well for them to get into bed together and sort out what suits them, but we, as a Parliament, need to know what the background cost factors are likely to be in the initial treatment of the trauma where injury is involved. The only way that can be done is to consult the opinion of the experts who are providing that treatment. I would suggest that they should be found in the AMA. In addition to that, it would have been appropriate to include in those paragraphs consideration and inclusion of bodies like the UF&S, which could give expert opinion, collected as data from their members, on one particular aspect of workers compensation that is of genuine concern to me and most of the people I represent, that is the injuries sustained on farms and particularly shearing—and I regret that the Minister does not really much care for what I am saying. It is a pity that his traditional arrogance, as we have come to recognise it, is as much a part of his behaviour tonight as it has been ever since he came into this place.

The other organisation that I believe could have and should have been included within the categories suggested is the Australian Small Business Association. I have already made the point that it is all very well for the big corporate representatives of both corporate labour and corporate capital to hop into bed together and decide what they want sorted out in their interests, but for goodness sake, what about the consequences for the largest employing element in our economy, the small business fraternity? They are not included. There is no mention of, nor do I believe there is any capacity to even consult, those organisations, the UF&S and the Australian Small Business Association. That is a bit of a pity.

Notwithstanding that, what we have arises out of the debate which was begun quite sincerely by the Opposition after the Government rushed this measure in here at the commencement of this session. With typical arrogance, the Minister proceeded to bucket the Opposition and say it was deliberately filibustering in drawing attention to the inadequacies of the measure, the most glaring example being in the arena of costing. Had it not been for the Opposition's strong stand on the legislation, particularly as it relates to this aspect, then it would never have come to the attention of the Democrats that anything was amiss. The Government, quite happy with the deal it had done with the United Trades and Labor Council on South Terrace, would have been delighted to have seen the legislation through this place in the form in which it was introduced.

That would have been a disaster. Everybody acknowledges that now; even the Minister admits in his franker moments—if you will forgive the pun—that there was a great deal about the legislation about which he knew nothing. Even the Minister admits, in his franker moments too, that there was a great deal about the legislation at the time he brought it in here about which he had inaccurate or false information. The journalists now acknowledge that and have reported it to the public, and I guess it has been the public's response which has directly emanated from the concern expressed by the Opposition which has not only aroused the interest of the Democrats but required the Government to re-examine its position. So, if deals are done in this way, we could expect that the custard will probably turn out runny, unpalatable, and incapable of any shelf life whatever. In other words, what we have will go putrid pretty quickly.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS (Minister of Labour): I oppose the resolution from the other place. I do not wish to canvass the whole debate again. I do not think that is necessary. The infantile ramblings of the infantile member for Mitcham, and the behaviour—I cannot describe it as anything other than behaviour—of the member for Murray Mallee I think are totally unnecessary. We are debating whether we should ask the Auditor-General to do what he has clearly stated he does not want to do. Clearly, we should

not ask him to do that. He has made it perfectly plain in two or three letters to Parliament—

Mr Lewis: What three letters?

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: The three—

Mr M.J. Evans interjecting:

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: That is not true. It was in a letter to the President of the Legislative Council today; in a letter to me on the fourth, I think; and in another letter to the Hon. Ian Gilfillan. He clearly stated that he does see himself having any further role in this matter. He told me privately that he feels that there is at least a conflict of interest in dealing with it and that he would take legal advice if the Parliament attempted to compel him to do something that he believes he is not obliged to do.

Even if the motion is passed, the probability is that the Auditor-General will not do it. The Liberal Party in another place recognised that in moving amendments to remove all reference to the Auditor-General, but was not successful. The two members who spoke here were a little behind the times. Obviously, they did not liaise with their colleagues in another place, and knowing quite well their colleagues in another place I am not surprised that their colleagues did not bother to liaise with some members down here.

The Government opposes the motion. We oppose the Auditor-General or anyone else doing further costings, because it is unnecessary. We believe that industry in this State is suffering because of the present workers compensation system, and we are attempting to remedy that position as speedily as possible. Every day that this Bill is delayed the benefits of that reform are lost to our industry. I have circulated to members a telex that I received today from a well known and prominent South Australian company which said the Bill ought to be passed immediately, that they are suffering—

Mr S.J. Baker interjecting:

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: That is what they said. Apart from the honourable member's many other failings, he cannot read. The telex said the Bill ought to be passed immediately. The Victorian competitors of this company operate under reforms similar to this with premiums 50 per cent less.

Mr S.J. Baker interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mitcham was allowed to make his contribution unimpeded, and the Chair believes the same courtesy should be extended to the Minister.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: The interjection asked why we did not take the Victorian scheme. We believed the Victorian scheme in some areas was too expensive and we have pitched our scheme marginally less than the Victorian scheme. I have made it clear and it has been reported in the media that the Government is fairly helpless in this debate. The Democrats, in collusion with the Liberal Party, will decide what happens to workers compensation in this State. That is the reality and, having looked at them for over six years in the Legislative Council, it even sinks into my head that they control the Government on this issue.

Certainly, the Government will not be organising any further costings. They have all been done and they have all confirmed exactly the same thing. We see no conflict in the costings, because they show substantial savings or, at the very least, the stabilisation of premiums and certainly not the increases that the insurance companies will hit firms with in this State between now and when the Bill passes.

If the Democrats wish more costings to be done I will listen to any proposition that they put. If I want the Bill to go through then, within reason, I will have to do anything they say. That is the reality. I do not know why the Opposition sees anything strange about that. Some members who are a little older and certainly a lot wiser than the member for Mitcham will recall not so long ago when there were 16 members of the Liberal Party who were even more reactionary than the crew we have there now. They sat opposite four Labor members, even when Labor was in government.

There is nothing strange in the lords of the realm, the belted earls or knights, or whatever they are, these characters, the friends and forebears of the member for Mitcham. They controlled the State even when we were in government. It is nothing new or surprising, but something they have enjoyed for about 140 years. They have always had the numbers to frustrate any progressive Government. That is reality. I deal with reality and with the world the way it is and not the way I wish it to be. For those reasons, I oppose the motion.

Mr S.J. BAKER (Mitcham): We had a brief resume from the Minister, and I will respond in kind. He has not explained to the House the difficulty in which he has placed himself because of the way he operated when he came in as Minister. He failed to appreciate the implications of what he was doing. He placed the whole debate in an untenable situation. He has to wear the responsibility for misleading and miscontruing many of the important facets of the workers compensation legislation. I do not wish to start another slanging match. We both appreciate our positions on this matter and I commend the motion to the House.

The House divided on the motion:

Ayes (15)—Messrs D.S. Baker, S.J. Baker (teller), Becker, Blacker, Chapman, Eastick, S.G. Evans, Goldsworthy, Gunn, Ingerson, Lewis, Meier, Olsen, Oswald, and Wotton.

Noes (24)—Mr Abbott, Mrs Appleby, Messrs Blevins (teller), De Laine, Duigan, M.J. Evans, and Ferguson, Ms Gayler, Messrs Gregory, Groom, Hamilton, Hemmings, Hopgood, Keneally, and Klunder, Ms Lenehan, Messrs McRae, Mayes, Payne, Peterson, Rann, Robertson, Slater, and Tyler.

Pair—Aye—Mrs Adamson. No—Mr Bannon.

Majority of 9 for the Noes.

Motion thus negatived.

SITTINGS AND BUSINESS

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD (Deputy Premier): I move:

That Standing Orders be so far suspended as to enable the Clerk to deliver messages to the Legislative Council while the House is not sitting.

Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD (Deputy Premier): I move:

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday 25 March at 2 p.m.

I wish all honourable members a happy and satisfying Festival season and good viewing of the comet.

Mr LEWIS (Murray Mallee): The motion does not meet with my approval for the simple reason that the Address in Reply has not been concluded.

Motion carried.

At 1.5 a.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday 25 March at 2 p.m.