HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 7 October 1987

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

PETITION: OYSTER LEASES

A petition signed by 550 residents of South Australia praying that the House urge the Government not to grant oyster leases in areas traditionally used for recreation was presented by Mr Blacker.

Petition received.

PAPER TABLED

The following paper was laid on the table:

By the Minister of Recreation and Sport (Hon. M.K. Mayes):

Betting Control Board—Report, 1986-87.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT: TAFE

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: The Government will be moving to revoke amendments to the regulations under the Technical and Further Education Act 1976, published in the South Australian *Government Gazette* on 6 August 1987. This follows an agreement which has been reached between the Government and the South Australian Institute of Teachers representing TAFE teaching staff. In reaching this agreement, the Government has reserved its right to resubmit amendments to the regulations if there is a breakdown in further negotiations. The transfer of principals and vice-principals to the Government Management and Employment Act remains unresolved and will be tested in the Supreme Court.

QUESTION TIME

ORGANISED CRIME

Mr OLSEN: Can the Minister of Emergency Services, following his revelation yesterday that he has been recently thoroughly briefed by a high ranking officer of the National Crime Authority on its investigation of drug related matters in South Australia, and without disclosing any specific information which must remain confidential for ongoing investigation purposes or future legal proceedings, say in general whether the authority's investigations in South Australia so far have provided further evidence of strong and direct links between organised crime and the growing, manufacture, importation, and trafficking in illegal drugs; illicit drug dealing is any more or less prevalent in South Australia than in other States; and whether activities in this State are part of a nation-wide network of families involved in drug trafficking which includes, particularly, the Griffith region of New South Wales; which drugs are most prevalent in illicit trading; and whether the South Australian police and other law enforcement agencies now have sufficient powers to deal with the situation?

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: In all honesty, I cannot respond in the detail suggested in the Leader's question, because the briefing I was given by officials of the National Crime Authority related to some specific matters that had been the subject of not only newspaper comments but also statements made by the member for Light and possibly by the Leader of the Opposition, although I am not sure about that. Questions relating to the connection between drug activity and organised crime around Australia were not canvassed in that briefing. I am not sure whether what follows is new information, but as a result of other briefings that Ministers have received it became clear that from time to time national drug syndicates conduct activities in this State which affect the State in one way or another.

As to the capacity of our police agencies to deal with this problem, I imagine that they are perfectly able to do so, but we do not yet have a complete outline of the matters being investigated. Once that outline is available to the Government we will obviously look at the resources now applying and determine whether any modifications are required. I can understand the Leader's interest in this matter, and I am perfectly happy to arrange for him and the member for Light to be briefed so that they will have perfect knowledge of what is going on, and to understand the circumstances in which that information is given. I suggest that the Leader considers this offer seriously as it is made in all seriousness. I can only answer some of the questions asked as a result of general knowledge rather than as a result of a specific briefing, because the matter has not yet reached that breadth.

DRIVERS LICENCES

Mr HAMILTON: Will the Minister of Education ask the Attorney-General, when redrafting laws relating to theft and in reviewing the penalties for those offences, to consider withdrawing drivers' licences where car thefts occur? Representations were made at my electorate office yesterday by a constituent claiming that his vehicle had been stolen and subsequently found smashed into a stobie pole on Grand Junction Road. I am informed that the damage amounted to $6 000 and that unfortunately there was no insurance policy on the vehicle. An article in the *Advertiser* yesterday stated that there is a drive in Tasmania to beat car thieves, and pointed out that the Tasmanian Government plans to deter car thieves convicted of stealing cars and damaging them by taking away their driver's licence until they have paid for the damage caused to the vehicle involved. This penalty would be in addition to any sentence imposed for car theft. The legislation will also provide that where a vehicle is used in the pursuit of a crime the licence of the person involved can be confiscated. The Tasmanian Attorney-General has said that the Government has yet to decide on the length of suspension of those drivers' licences.

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER: I thank the honourable member for his most interesting question. I will ensure that it is passed to the Attorney-General for his consideration. In recent times the Government has embraced wider sentencing options for our courts, and this is another example of a request coming not only from an honourable member but also from the community generally to increase sentencing options available to our courts.

INVESTIGATION OF POLICE OFFICER

The Hon. B.C. EASTICK: A report in the *Advertiser* on 21 September states that a high ranking South Australian police officer (other than the officer already charged and whose name is suppressed) is under investigation by the

National Crime Authority. Can the Minister of Emergency Services confirm that report and, if so, reveal when this officer first came under the notice of the NCA; when the Minister was informed about this particular investigation; what sort of criminal activity is involved; and whether the Government has given any consideration to having the officer stood aside or to taking some other action to ensure the officer's work does not involve areas which are the subject of the NCA's attention pending the completion of the Authority's investigation?

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: No, I am not prepared to either confirm or deny any of those matters. I stand by what I said a few minutes ago: I am quite happy for the honourable member to have a confidential briefing from the NCA so that he can satisfy himself that all things are being properly attended to in that investigation. All I am prepared to confirm—

The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy interjecting:

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: In response to the disorderly interjection of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I will say this: I am not prepared to say anything publicly which would in any way jeopardise the success of the investigatory operations of the NCA, and I would hope that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition shares that perception. What I am prepared to say is—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: What I am prepared to say is this: many people in the community are aware of the NCA's operations. Certain people, both inside and outside the Police Department, have taken the opportunity of appearing before NCA officers and giving evidence. Some of that evidence is scuttlebutt—the sort of thing somebody heard in the front bar of a pub somewhere that related to something they had heard their butcher or grandmother say—and some of it requires further investigation.

In the process, some names have been named. That is all I am prepared to say. It may relate to scuttlebutt or it may relate to something which requires further investigation. That is far short of the sort of allegations the member for Light is making. That is all I am prepared to say publicly until such time as the NCA has completed its investigations, and then, once the matter has been completed, we will know how to proceed and we can take the public into our confidence. In the meantime, I am prepared to take the member for Light into my confidence—but under rules that he well understands.

JAPANESE INVESTMENT

Ms LENEHAN: Will the Minister of State Development and Technology outline to the House the current situation regarding the proposal for the establishment of a multifunctionopolis in South Australia by a Japanese consortium? I refer to media reports, both in this morning's *Advertiser* and through news reports and discussions on a number of radio stations. Under the headline 'Racism may end $10 000 million plan for South Australia', the *Advertiser* article of this morning states:

> The city, which will be primarily financed by private Japanese investors, involves the construction of a high technology and biotechnology centre and a world-class sporting and tourist resort, including major sporting arenas.
>
> Project consultant Dr Allan Patience said yesterday the Japanese had expressed 'great alarm' at racist comments on South Australian talkback radio condemning the project.

Can the Minister give the House, the community and the Japanese consortium an assurance that these claims of racism are not representative of the South Australian community's view, and will in no way jeopardise the future introduction of such a project?

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: I thank the honourable member for her question. Certainly, it is something which has generated local responses. Unfortunately, some of the local responses have confused two separate projects: the multifunctionopolis proposal (or the technology proposal) and the Silver Columbus proposal, which was generated separately last year and which examined the possibility of large numbers of retired Japanese settling in this country. They are two distinct, separate proposals, and I think that the Silver Columbus proposal is not being proceeded with by its proponents, in any event.

The multifunctionopolis proposal is being further examined at the Australian as well as the Japanese end. It came from the Amaya mission to Australia earlier this year that visited most States of Australia. It was suggested then that there would be room for a high technology facility to be established in Australia for research, development, industry, recreation and leisure, education, and for convention purposes. Since that time there have been discussions in various States of Australia examining whether or not we believed such a proposal had relevance to our particular States. The outcome has been that in South Australia we have been examining the situation. Indeed, members of the Government, in association with people such as Dr Patience, from Flinders University, are providing some advice as to what we could possibly do in this area.

As is mentioned in the press clipping quoted by the honourable member, there are four elements that are likely to be involved. First, there is a high technology or biotechnology element examining research and development programs and some economic enterprises. Secondly, there is the area of leisure life-style, involving the possible inclusion of world-class resorts, sports and leisure facilities, including accommodation. There are, thirdly, international convention facilities and, fourthly, an educational element including university level educational programs as well as associated research programs.

I can say that the context in which we are looking at this proposal is that it would be an international facility if it was to be located in South Australia. Indeed, I can assure members that that is precisely the aim that the Japanese have in mind—that it would be an international facility trying to attract international support and interest in all key areas that I have mentioned. Indeed, even in the financing of this project, while it is being examined as something that many private Japanese investors would be associated with, consideration is also being given to Australian and other overseas investors.

It is still very early days. No firm proposal has yet been put to the South Australian Government, nor has any firm proposal been put by the Japanese to the Australian Government, but the examinations that we have been undertaking are worth while. In that context some mention has been made of the southern suburbs or the Fleurieu Peninsula being a location for such a centre. While I commend the interest of members in that region as expressed to me by the members for Mawson, Fisher and others in the area, I want to say that no decision has been made on the location of such a multifunctionopolis if it was constructed in South Australia, as indeed no decision could have been expected, because we have not reached the stage of any firm decisions as to where the South Australian Government stands with this proposal that was first raised by the Amaya trade mission.

ABORIGINAL DEATH

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Following the death of an Aboriginal man in a police cell at Port Lincoln yesterday, is the Minister of Emergency Services in a position to confirm a report that the deceased was refused readmission to hospital after his discharge on Monday, is he aware of conflicting reports about whether or not the man—who was detained by police for alleged drunkenness—had in fact been drinking alcohol and, if so, will the Government review procedures for taking Aborigines into custody?

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: I cannot confirm the circumstances of the alleged refusal for the man to go back into hospital. I guess that that is something that I will simply undertake to refer to my colleague the Minister of Health in another place. I understand that it is alleged that the man had been drinking and that, when the police were called, he was taken into protective custody. Arrangements were made for him to be examined at regular intervals and, in fact, he died in the process of one of those examinations, the ambulance having been called. It is a very tragic set of circumstances.

I understand that someone from the Coroner's Office, possibly the Coroner, has gone to Port Lincoln today and that mechanism will proceed. Of course, since there is a Commonwealth Royal Commission currently into these matters, there is little doubt that this will now be the subject of investigation by the Royal Commission. I am reasonably confident that the amount of investigation that will take place will be sufficient to ensure that all of the facts are known, that any shortcomings, if there are shortcomings, in the way that this person was cared for either by the health authorities or by the police will be identified, and that corrective action can take place.

So far as I can see at this stage the police did what they were asked to do by health authorities to take the man into protective custody, given the allegation that he had been drinking alcohol; and indeed a serious attempt was taken to keep an eye on his condition while he was in custody. Of course, it is not unknown for a degree of drunkenness to mask other conditions which are then often difficult to detect. This matter is being reviewed by the Royal Commission and it was discussed quite thoroughly by Commonwealth and State Ministers at a meeting that I attended in Melbourne a week or so ago.

So it would be premature for me to suggest at this stage that there should be any review of police procedures because, on the scanty evidence so far put to me, I am not aware that there was any malfunction in the way in which the police carried out their duties. As to the circumstances of the lack of readmission or refusal of readmission, I will take up that matter with my colleague in another place.

COMMUNITY SERVICE ORDERS

Mr FERGUSON: Will the Minister of Correctional Services inform the House whether he will request the administrators of the community service orders scheme to arrange for people working on community service orders to clean Adelaide beaches? I have recently had communication with the New Zealand Government on this subject and I understand that people working under community service orders in New Zealand are involved in cleaning popular New Zealand beachfronts. The recent unusual burst of hot weather in South Australia has left metropolitan beachfronts covered with unsightly rubbish. Not only are there cartons and other plastic material, but there is a lot of glass, including many broken bottles on the beaches. Unfortunately, there appears to be more broken glass than usual on Adelaide beachfronts at the commencement of the summer season, and it has been put to me that the proper use of community service orders would be a way to dispense with this particular hazard.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: I thank the honourable member for his question.

Mr Lewis: What about his comment?

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: I do not respond to comment; I stick strictly to Standing Orders. The difference between the member for Murray-Mallee and me is that I do not boast about it—he does, and he does not stick to Standing Orders. The short answer to the question is 'Yes', I will refer the honourable member's suggestion to the Community Service Orders Advisory Council, which consists of representatives from industry, commerce, the trade union movement, local government (I think, but I am not sure), and a number of other bodies. The council examines projects that are proposed for people who are serving community service orders. I will obtain a report from the council.

I point out that the council is careful not to allocate projects that could be done by paid labour. Enough projects in the community are proposed that do not involve doing someone out of a job. A great deal of work is done for elderly people, for the occasional church group and for school playgroups in establishing school playgrounds, and things of that nature. We are careful not to intrude into an area where work could be done by paid labour, and that ensures that the scheme has the full support of both industry and the trade union movement. Having said that, I will certainly refer the honourable member's suggestion to the Community Service Orders Advisory Council.

I point out that only this morning I had the pleasure of opening a seminar which was organised by the Department of Correctional Services and which involved all Community Service Orders Advisory Councils from throughout the State coming together, discussing the progress of the community service orders scheme, looking at some of the problems that have arisen and sharing the information on some of the successes of the scheme. The overwhelming feeling is that the scheme has been very successful indeed, and a couple of figures stick in my mind from the speech I read this morning. We have had 2 500 offenders placed on the scheme, and between them they have completed 170 000 hours of community service work, which I think—

Mr Gunn: Who introduced it?

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: I give credit where it is due, and no matter who introduced it I am saying how excellent it is. Those people have done 170 000 hours of community work. A whole range of organisations, as I have mentioned, have been assisted by the scheme. I would also point out, as it is fresh in my memory from this morning, that from 1 November this year the community service order scheme will be expanded to take in fine defaulters. The member for Henley Beach would recall that a few months ago legislation went through Parliament providing for fine defaulters to do community service order scheme work where it was judged that the people involved could not pay the fines that they were required to pay by the courts.

There are many reasons for that, but I point out that one of them is that every year 60 per cent of the people taken to our prisons in South Australia are defaulters: 60 per cent, over 2 000 of the 3 000 people we take in. We really have a very serious problem in South Australia of gaoling the poor, I think more than any other State. However, those people will now be able to do community service order

work instead. At this stage I cannot say whether it is appropriate that the expansion of the scheme take into account the proposal suggested by the member for Henley Beach. However, I will certainly forward the suggestion to the Community Service Orders Advisory Council and bring back a report for the honourable member.

BELAIR-BRIDGEWATER RAILWAY

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: My question is directed to the Premier. Will he ask his friend and colleague the Federal Minister for Land Transport (Peter Duncan) to initiate a full investigation into circumstances surrounding the preparation and release of the Bureau of Transport Economics report on the Bridgewater railway to ascertain why there was a major discrepancy between the draft report and the final report on the question of maintaining a rationalised service on this line which could still meet most of the South Australian Government's cost cutting objectives; whether there was any political interference to have the final report doctored to satisfy union demands to keep the line open; why the conclusions of the draft report were selectively leaked to the media the day before the service was closed; who was responsible for providing the draft report to the media and whether any Minister directed that it be leaked; and why the South Australian Minister was able to say yesterday that he had seen the draft report when the Director of the Bureau of Transport Economics (Dr Haddad), in a statement in the *Advertiser* on 26 September, denied the Minister had ever been given a draft report?

This investigation is requested in view of the conflict in answers given yesterday, in their respective Parliaments, by Mr Duncan and the South Australian Minister of Transport about whether or not they discussed the discrepancies between the draft and final reports and speculation that the South Australian Government had the draft report leaked because it wanted to justify the immediate closure of the line.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: The honourable member has asked a series of questions, beginning with an inquiry whether an investigation should be undertaken into that range of questions. I certainly agree that they are interesting questions and I guess that many of us would be interested in the answers to some of them. The facts are clear. First, there was a draft report, a copy of which the Minister received almost simultaneously with his receipt of an advance (but not an official) copy of the formal report that was finally given.

It is also a fact that there were discrepancies, albeit not major ones, between both those reports. Both reports endorsed the Government's decision on the closure of the line by pointing out the economic and social consequences of such a closure. Certainly, in the final and official report later presented formally to the Minister, changes were made to the text which in fact put a better gloss on the case that the unions and the residents had placed in support of keeping the line open. That was something that was not in the interests of the South Australian Government because the Minister had made clear that a detailed analysis had been made.

It was a difficult decision to make. In 1985 we made the same study and in those financial circumstances we said that we could keep that section of the line open. However, on re-examination in 1987 it was apparent that there was no economic justification for doing so. The Bureau of Transport Economics exercise was aimed at assessing objectively that evidence and providing an objective report to see whether or not that decision was confirmed. Both versions of the report confirmed what the Minister had been saying and justified the closing of the line.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Which Minister?

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: The South Australian Minister of Transport (Mr Gavin Keneally, the member for Stuart). I am simply talking about what the reports found: they confirmed what our Minister had been saying in support of his quite proper decision. Secondly, it is true that the second version (the final version of the report, if you like) qualified or modified the conclusions that were clearly drawn in the first report in relation to some aspects. It was not in the interests of the South Australian Government to have that finding if one was to support the Minister's views. Therefore, I can only suggest that the questions asked by the member for Heysen be referred to the appropriate source, namely, the Minister responsible for the Bureau of Transport Economics or to the bureau itself. That is the only individual or group that can answer that question. The Minister was simply the recipient of those reports, so that is where the questions should be directed.

I do not know why the report was changed, who changed it, or on what instructions it was changed. However, purely as a matter of speculation, I shall be interested in finding that out. At this stage, however, no answers are forthcoming, but I know that the Federal Minister has told the State Minister that he had nothing to do with those changes. That is what he said so, if changes and modifications have been made, they have obviously been made within the bureau, for whatever reasons I do not know. Finally, there was no discrepancy between the answers given by the Federal Minister in the Federal Parliament and the answers given by the State Minister in the State Parliament to identical questions asked yesterday, even though I guess that there was an attempt to trap the Ministers into some gross inconsistency.

It was fortunate that the member for Bragg asked a supplementary question, because an apparent contradiction between those answers was then very clearly resolved by the Minister of Transport in his further answer. There is no contradiction; both Ministers said that they had not consulted on the report and that they had spoken about it once. The burden of the State Minister of Transport's comment was whether the Federal Minister had been involved in any change of direction in relation to the report; the Federal Minister said that he had not, and that was the end of the matter. The final formal report was received subsequent to that phone call and there has been no further discussion or communication about the matter; that is where it rests. The reports have indicated the Government's answer. Both versions of the report rejected the nonsense put forward by the member for Heysen and others, but the question as to whether or not there is a discrepancy, or why there is a discrepancy, is no concern of this Government, but must be referred to the Federal Minister.

FIRE HYDRANTS

Mr GREGORY: Will the Minister of Water Resources take the necessary action to ensure that road closures do not result in fire hydrants or fire plugs being obscured? Road closures undertaken by the Unley Corporation in Parkside have covered a fire plug in Foster Street and residents of that street and Kennilworth Road are concerned that, in the event of a fire, firefighters will have difficulty locating that fire plug, resulting in a delay in supplying water to extinguish a fire. It has been put to me that other

road closures undertaken by corporations in Adelaide and possibly in other parts of South Australia may have resulted in fire plugs being either covered or rendered inaccessible or useless.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: I thank the honourable member for drawing this matter to my attention. There may be similar circumstances occurring in other parts of the metropolitan area, so I will have the whole matter reviewed thoroughly to ensure that the problem is rectified and does not happen elsewhere.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I have a supplementary question. Does the Premier believe the statement made by the Federal Minister for Land Transport that he had nothing to do with the discrepancies between the draft and final reports of the Bureau of Transport Economics in connection with the Bridgewater rail service?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Before calling on the Premier to answer, I make clear that there is no such thing as a supplementary question, although, the Whip having drawn the Speaker's attention to a request by the member for Heysen for a second call, the honourable member has, in effect, asked a supplementary question. The honourable Premier.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: I have no reason to question or doubt what the Federal Minister has said.

SENTENCE DISCOUNTING

Mr M.J. EVANS: My question is directed to the Minister of Education, representing the Attorney-General in another place.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Chair, and I am sure other members, would appreciate the cooperation of the Deputy Leader so that the member for Elizabeth can ask his question in an atmosphere of appropriate courtesy. The honourable member for Elizabeth.

Mr M.J. EVANS: Will the Attorney-General amend the Crimes Confiscation of Profits Act to ensure that courts do not discount sentences as a result of Crown initiatives to seize profits arising from the sale of drugs, or from other criminal activities? Recent newspaper reports suggest that some members of the judiciary believe that sentences should be discounted as a result of concurrent action in the courts by the Crown to seize property acquired by criminals with the profits of criminal activities. A newspaper report of Thursday last indicates that a District Court judge has postponed the sentencing of a person convicted of growing marijuana to a value in excess of $100 000 on the ground that the Crown has moved for the forfeiture of property owned by the convicted person and acquired by those profits.

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER: I thank the honourable member for his question. Whether, in fact, the law needs changing in this matter, I am not sure. I will certainly have this matter referred to the Attorney-General for his consideration. As yet, there has not been, I point out, a decision by a court in this State on the application of this law, and it may well be clarified by judgments to be brought down in the near future on this matter.

STA TICKETING SYSTEM

Mr INGERSON: Is the Minister of Transport aware of widespread free travel amongst public transport commuters since the introduction of the controversial ticketing system and, if so, has the Government ascertained the amount of revenue lost to the State Transport Authority since Monday of last week? The Opposition has been collecting evidence from regular users of the State's public transport system since the multi-million dollar ticketing system was inflicted upon us 10 days ago. Problems with the mechanics of the new system have apparently resulted in an extraordinary number of commuters enjoying free travel on buses, trams and trains.

Among examples given to the Opposition are a train commuter who rode free on nine occasions out of 16; a bus traveller who won four free rides in four days; and other commuters who estimate they are paying for only one in five journeys. This evidence of widespread revenue loss is confirmed by a bus driver who has contacted the Opposition, claiming that lost revenue must average at least one-fifth and possibly more. Based on last year's receipts from fares, this means that the State Transport Authority could be losing up to $200 000 a week through free rides. (This would put the authority, already with a $100 million plus operating loss, even further into the red, as the Government claimed the new system would cut out fare abuse amounting to $1 million a year—10 times less than the freeloading which may now be occurring).

The Minister has gone on record today claiming that only 25 ticketing machines have malfunctioned. However, information given to the Opposition reveals that 11 machines were not working on the Gawler line on one occasion, and that a train bound for Noarlunga—with 18 such machines on board—had a success rate of zero. On one particular trip, passengers in all six carriages—

Members interjecting:

Mr INGERSON: I have not got to mine yet. Passengers could not be charged because of machine problems, and an inspector expressed positive delight when a child boarded with a bicycle, enabling him to collect a 50c transportation fare—quite an amazing situation. A member of the bus drivers union has advised us that half hour delays are still being experienced on many routes as drivers attempt to explain the system to passengers and to correct blips in the machines.

Members interjecting:

Mr INGERSON: All you have to do is have a ride on one, and you will see. In fact, drivers and commuters alike are reporting high stress levels as a result of the grand prix-like driving efforts required to stick to timetables. The union is predicting higher levels of stress related absence amongst its members, and calls to the Opposition suggest that commuters now fall into two categories—those who are gleefully riding free, and those who are paying, somewhat reluctantly, to arrive late for school and work.

The Minister may also be aware that school children are bragging about their ability to 'cheat' the system. Of particular concern is a claim by one bus driver that the capacity for fraud is greater in this system than under the former system. He claims that, because there is no audit on tickets sold by drivers for cash, there is the potential for unscrupulous drivers to pocket the difference between the cash they have in hand and the amount registered on the validating machine.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the honourable member that he sought leave from the House and from the Chair to briefly explain his question, not to launch into a grievance debate. The honourable member for Bragg.

Mr INGERSON: I will briefly read the last sentence. In view of the previous examples of a large number of tickets not being validated, this is another area for the Minister to investigate.

The Hon. G.F. KENEALLY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. That very emotional and misleading question came from an honourable member who yesterday, when he talked about the Crouzet system, explained to the House how he had visited a school last week to talk about the Crouzet system. However, schools were on holiday last week, and when the students were at school the Crouzet system had not been introduced, so one can see how much notice one needs to take of the honourable member.

The honourable member explained that one bus driver or union official contacted him. He explained how another person contacted him. It seems funny that the people who contacted me—and I have ridden on the system—do not seem to have the same sorts of problems that the people who contact the honourable member appear to have. What has happened is that the honourable member has put together all of the faults about which he has heard over the 10 days or so of the operation of the Crouzet system to make it seem as if they all occurred on the one day.

However, on day eight of the operation of the new system there were no equipment defects and only .2 per cent of blockages and jammings were found. There are 3 215 pieces of ticketing equipment installed in buses, trams, trains and used by ticket sellers; there were 25 failures in validating equipment that were reported to the STA. Indeed, the Government and the STA understood that when we seek to introduce completely new technology and new fare increases during a holiday period there will be some difficulties. It is important for members and the community to understand that during peak hour travel difficulties are minor because peak hour travellers are used to using the STA system and are able to adjust to the new technology.

There have been some problems and there continue to be some problems with some commuters in the non-peak periods, but the STA has reported to me that the delays currently being experienced are fewer and shorter in duration than they were earlier, so the system is improving all the time. It was always expected that it would take more than a week, or a couple of weeks, for the system to become efficient. It is my strong expectation that within two or three months people will wonder what all the fuss was about, because the people of Adelaide will have adjusted to the system just as people in other parts of the world have adjusted.

In the meantime, an education program needs to be continued, our staff will improve their operation of the system and the commuters will improve their understanding of the system. Before I sit down, can I say that I reject totally any concept of unscrupulous drivers—as the member for Bragg said—in the STA who might defraud the system. I reject totally any allegation that that might take place. That is what the honourable member said in this House. I refute that completely and I pay tribute to the people in the STA who have had direct contact with the public over the last 10 days or so for the assistance that they have given to commuters, for their tolerance and for their continued commitment to the operations of the system.

As far as fraud is concerned, I point out that, even allowing for those people who had a free ride while the system was being introduced (and it was always understood, and the operators of our vehicles understood, that, if there was some difficulty and a commuter had a legitimate ticket, such a commuter could expect to have a ride and should not have that right denied them). I would warrant that the income and savings that the STA has accrued over the past 10 days is greater than the income accrued in the 10 days before the new system was introduced because of the way in which the old system was abused.

AMMUNITION

Ms GAYLER: Will the Minister of Emergency Services, in the process of upgrading firearms laws, also investigate the need for the secure storage of ammunition? I would like to briefly explain my question. Following a recent house fire in the northern suburbs—

An honourable member: What about seeking leave?

The SPEAKER: Order! I assume that the honourable member, in indicating that she would like to explain, is actually seeking the leave of the House.

Ms GAYLER: Indeed, Sir, with your leave. Following a recent house fire in the northern suburbs I was informed by a firefighter of the extra hazard that firefighters face when entering burning buildings. In that instance firefighters entering the building noticed three firearms displayed on the wall of the house. They had no idea whether ammunition was stored in the house, where it would be stored, what type of ammunition it would be or under what conditions it would be stored. I understand that there have been instances of ammunition exploding during fires, and that this poses an unpredictable hazard for firefighters. It has been suggested to me that the owners of firearms should be responsible for securely and safely storing both firearms and ammunition.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: I think the suggestion is eminently sensible and I will certainly have it completely checked out.

ISLAND SEAWAY

The Hon. TED CHAPMAN: My question is to the Minister of Transport and it is not about Hills railways or STA buses: it is about that Claytons ship—the ship that you have when you do not yet have a ship. Does the Minister now recognise that adoption of the Government's space rate policy for the new *Island Seaway* (if and when it goes into service to Kangaroo Island and Port Lincoln) will price the service out of the reach of users in those two regions? The new space rate applicable to Port Lincoln will be $12 per lineal foot—an immediate rise of 48 per cent on the current rate of $8.10 per lineal foot applying for the current *Troubridge* service. Already, the Mayor of Port Lincoln has made it known that most of the current users of the *Troubridge* will be unable to afford the new *Island Seaway* service if the Government proceeds with the policy with respect to these charges.

In the case of Kangaroo Island, the rate to Kingscote will rise immediately from $5.80 per lineal foot to $6.40 per lineal foot, representing forthwith a 10.5 per cent increase following the changeover of the vessels. In addition, we are told by the Minister and the Government that the space rates on the Kingscote leg of the journey will be adjusted by the CPI (and, incidentally, it is an adjustment that is accepted by the Kangaroo Island community) plus 5 per cent loading at six monthly intervals. This means that in 10 years it will cost $37.20 per lineal foot (for space occupied by trailers on the ship quite apart from the carriers carriage fees), representing more than $1 260 to take a standard 34 foot semitrailer to Kingscote on the *Island Seaway* compared with the current cost of just under $200 via the MV *Troubridge*.

An honourable member: One way?

The Hon. TED CHAPMAN: Yes, that is just one way. According to well researched sources, these increases can result only in a vessel which has cost the Government in round figures $20 million so far to build becoming a huge

white elephant, to the very serious disadvantage of both the Kangaroo Island and Eyre Peninsula regional economies.

The Hon. G.F. KENEALLY: The Government does not accept that the new price structure for the *Island Seaway* for Kangaroo Island and Port Lincoln will price out of the market the consumers or the users of the ferry in Kangaroo Island or Port Lincoln. As the honourable member did, I will deal with the Port Lincoln position first. The Government decided that the provision of a heavy subsidy to the people at Port Lincoln was not warranted while an alternative route was available to them.

They can transport their goods or passengers from Adelaide to Port Lincoln by road, and so there was no warrant for the heavy subsidy from taxpayers. On the other hand, Kangaroo Island involves a different situation, because in that case only one access is available to people. There might be two accesses available for passengers, that is, the *Philanderer* and now the *Island Seaway*, previously the *Troubridge*, but in terms of goods traffic there is no road available for transport.

What is the Government doing? It is accepting the capital cost of the *Island Seaway*, which is some $16 million, and the annual cost to taxpayers of the *Island Seaway* of $1.9 million. The Government is paying for that and is not passing on any of that cost to the citizens of Kangaroo Island. That is a considerable subsidy for the islanders. As a result of the Abraham report, produced I think in 1985, the Government has agreed that the operational costs of providing that service to the island should be recovered.

Because of representations made, by people like the member for Alexandra—and I think primarily the member for Alexandra—that policy was not introduced in 1985, but the islanders were told that it would be introduced upon the introduction of the new ferry, which is now due to go into operation. The Government is applying the CPI to the freight cost and, in addition to that, a 5 per cent increase every six months—effectively, a 10 per cent increase over and above the CPI—for a period of 10 years, so that operational costs can be recovered. In quoting his figures to the House, the member for Alexandra is referring to figures which include what he would assume to be the normal inflation rate of 8 per cent, constant for 10 years, but no-one can assume that that is the case.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. G.F. KENEALLY: Or it could be less. But one can be certain that the Government proposes to recover the operational costs over 10 years. I can assure the honourable member that that is the decision that the Government has made. If, in fact, situations develop on the island that warrant another look at the economic position that applies there, and if representations through the Department of Agriculture and the Department of State Development are made, providing a whole number of other inputs to a policy decision, then the Government may again look at the matter. The Government is flexible; it is also very considerate of the problems that people in country areas have from time to time.

However, people on the island (and they have expressed this to me and to the member for Alexandra) understand that they live in an isolated area, they understand that in choosing to live on Kangaroo Island some costs will be involved, as is the case with all isolated parts of South Australia. As the members for Eyre and Flinders would know, if one lives a long way from Adelaide or in an isolated area costs will be involved and, similarly, costs are involved in living on the island. The people there understand that. That is the situation. The Abraham report was accepted by the Government, and the people on the island were informed of this some three years ago. The Government is now implementing the Abraham report in line with its advice that it would do so when the new ferry was brought into operation. Nothing in this world is immutable: if in forthcoming years there are reasons to reconsider the freight rates, I am sure that the Minister and the Government at the time will do so.

TEACHER TRANSFERS

Mr DUIGAN: Will the Minister of Education advise the House when teachers who have applied for transfers for the 1988 teaching year will be advised of the outcome of their application? Planning for the 1988 school year will begin in earnest when the fourth term begins next Tuesday, and there is considerable interest on the part both of families and of principals of primary and secondary schools in the Adelaide electorate as to the availability of teachers for the 1988 school year. The reason for this interest is their desire to better plan the number and type of classes and the number and type of subjects that will be on offer during the next school year as parents inquire of the school as to the availability of both classes and subjects. Early notification will help in planning and provide for general all-round convenience and efficiency for the school, parents, students and the teachers who will know the outcome of their teaching appointment for next year.

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER: I thank the honourable member for his question, which raises a most important issue and affects the lives of many teachers in the State, especially in these times of steep enrolment decline. Indeed, 3 000 fewer students will attend our schools next year than attended this year. This has a substantial impact on the placement of teachers in our system. At the same time, however, we are opening new schools and experiencing increased enrolments at other schools which, together with declining enrolments at certain schools, require that teachers be transferred in the education system. The transfer exercise is normally completed by 30 November each year and we are planning for this to occur again this year so that teachers are advised of their placement prior to the schools breaking up in mid-December. Because of the decline in enrolments this year, it may not be possible to notify a small residual number of teachers of final placements until mid-January next year. However, the department will take every step possible to ensure that this process is carried out as expeditiously, speedily and sensitively as we possibly can.

WORKCOVER

Mr GUNN: Will the Minister of Labour investigate the additional costs that WorkCover will impose on businesses in remote areas? A situation has been brought to my attention this morning which deserves consideration. It involves a woman injured on Monday in her employment at a remote location, 150 kilometres from the nearest hospital. Under the previous workers compensation policy, the business could cover for the cost of driving the injured worker to hospital. However, on inquiry with WorkCover, the business has found that under the new scheme this will not be covered. It is possible to visualise circumstances in remote areas where hundreds of dollars could be spent on fuel and time in taking injured employees to the nearest hospital. Will the Minister consider the disadvantage to which businesses in remote areas are being exposed in these circumstances? It appears that many businesses in remote areas do not yet have WorkCover claim forms and this will make

it impossible for them to meet the requirement of submitting a claim within five days should their employees have accidents.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: I will deal with the last part of the question first. The claim forms have been available for many weeks and there is no excuse for people not having them. The availability of the forms has been widely advertised for the past couple of months and radio listeners, television viewers and newspaper readers have been unable to get away from WorkCover advertisements. The forms are available from post offices and the State Government Insurance Commission and, if the honourable member's constituent writes to or telephones WorkCover in Adelaide, the forms will be posted out.

Regarding transport to the nearest hospital, employers are now liable for that expense, as was clearly spelt out in the legislation. I cannot remember whether the honourable member spoke on the legislation and raised that point with me when it went through this House, nor can I remember whether the House of Review, in its minute examination, at great expense, of this legislation, raised that point with me. However, as the honourable member has raised the point in good faith I will take it up with the General Manager of WorkCover, get a report, and respond to the honourable member when I have the detailed information.

LONG SERVICE LEAVE (BUILDING INDUSTRY) BILL

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS (Minister of Labour) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to provide for the granting of long service leave to workers in the building industry; to repeal the Long Service Leave (Building Industry) Act 1975; and for other purposes. Read a first time.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

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

Leave granted.

Explanation of Bill

The Long Service Leave (Building Industry) Act 1975 which came into operation on 1 April 1977 provides long service leave for workers in the building industry who, because of the itinerant nature of the industry, are generally not able to accrue an entitlement to leave under the Long Service Leave Act. The Act has been amended several times in the light of administrative experience, and certain other matters deserving legislative attention have now become apparent. The principal purpose of this Bill is to introduce a desirable element of flexibility into the Act in order to enable the spirit of the Act to be put into practice and achieve clarity in all areas. To complete the comprehensibility of the review of the Long Service Leave (Building Industry) Act that has been undertaken, the Government has decided to prepare a redraft of the legislation in the form of a new Act.

In the first instance, the Bill seeks to introduce a new section to include the 'predominance rule', a rule that has been proposed to achieve clarity so that there is full coverage for workers for long service leave purposes either under the provisions of the Long Service Leave (Building Industry) Act, or the Long Service Leave Act.

The proposal is for two alternate tests, and if any of the two tests are satisfied the worker is to be covered by the Act.

The two alternate tests are:

1. where the worker is required by the employer to work on site for a majority of his or her time on site.

2. where the actual time spent by a building worker on site is in the case of an existing worker, an average over the preceding three months in excess of 50 per cent of the worker's time, or in the case of a new worker, in the first month of employment in excess of 50 per cent of the worker's time (this test is the basic predominance rule).

Furthermore, for the Act to apply the worker must be employed under one of a list of building industry awards in respect of on-site construction work for itinerant building industry workers.

There is also a proposal for the Act to cover labour only subcontractors on a purely optional basis on the application of the subcontractor.

In order to assist with the administration of the Act, expiation fees will be introduced under a scheme contained in the regulations in the following areas:

Clause 18 (1)—Worker engaging in other employment while on long service leave.

Clause 18 (2)—Employer knowingly employing a worker currently on long service leave.

Clause 26—Failure to lodge returns monthly for workers by employers.

In order to assist the prompt collection of monthly contributions from employers a late lodgment penalty will be introduced in the form of interest and a possible fine.

As a result of the length of time the Act has been in operation (in excess of 10 years) it is proposed to remove all retrospective service provisions prior to 1 April 1977 and allow a period of six months after the operating date of this Bill for workers to make a final claim for any unclaimed service prior to 1 April 1977.

There will also be provision to cover the reverse situation described in section 35 of the present Act, being where a non-building worker becomes a worker within the meaning of the Act in employment with the same employer. When that worker accrues a long service leave entitlement, the board will make a full payment to the worker and bill the employer for contributions for the period of time the worker was a non-building worker under the provisions of the Act.

In order to add further clarity and ease of administration to the Act it is now proposed to set a minimum number of days a worker must work before contributions are paid by an employer. The Bill proposes three days per month as the minimum.

The current penalties under the Act have remained unchanged for some time now and it is proposed to update them.

Other provisions are to be consolidated and simplified.

In accordance with the normal procedure, the Bill has been the subject of consultation with relevant bodies including the tripartite Long Service Leave (Building Industry) Board, the various building industry unions, employer organisations and the Industrial Relations Advisory Council. Useful discussions have been forthcoming and both organisations have indicated their support for the proposals contained in the Bill.

Clause 1 is formal.

Clause 2 provides for the commencement of the measure.

Clause 3 repeals the Long Service Leave (Building Industry) Act 1975.

Clause 4 sets out the various definitions required for the purposes of the Act. The definitions from the repealed Act have been revised and rationalised.

Clause 5 relates to the application of the Act. The Act will apply to a person's employment if he or she is employed in a specified occupation under a specified award or agreement, and the employment involves working at a building site where the work has made up the whole, or at least one-half, of the period of employment over the whole of the employment, the first month of employment or any three-month period of employment. The effect of this is that once a worker has 'qualified' under clause 5 (1) because a majority of his or her work involves working at a building site, or a majority of his or her work over a prescribed period involves working at a building site, the worker will continue to be covered by the Act so long as some of his or her work (to any degree) involves work at a building site and the worker remains in a specified occupational category. If the worker changes to a non-specified occupation, or does not in any event work at a building site for three months, the worker ceases to be a building worker for the purposes of the Act.

The Act will not apply in relation to employment by the Crown, an agency or instrumentality of the Crown, a council, or a prescribed employer.

Clause 6 provides for the continued existence of the Long Service Leave (Building Industry) Board.

Clause 7 sets out the membership of the board (which is to remain the same).

Clause 8 sets out the conditions of membership for the board.

Clause 9 provides for the payment of fees and allowances, which will be payable out of the fund.

Clause 10 sets out the procedures to be followed by the board at its meetings.

Clause 11 gives personal immunity to members of the board.

Clause 12 contains a delegation provision.

Clause 13 allows the board to make use of public facilities.

Clause 14 sets out the methods by which a worker's entitlement to long service leave, or to payments on account of long service leave, are to be determined.

An effective service entitlement is to accrue for each period of service as a building worker according to a prescribed formula. An effective service entitlement may be cancelled if the worker is dismissed from employment on the ground of serious and wilful misconduct, or if the worker has an effective service entitlement of less than 84 months and (subject to certain exceptions) has not worked in the building industry for at least 36 months.

Clause 15 provides for continuity of long service leave entitlements where a worker employed as a building worker commences work with the same employer in some other capacity, or where a non-building worker commences work with the same employer as a building worker. In both cases the worker's long service leave entitlements will be preserved. When long service leave is finally granted to the worker, or a payment is made, the board and the employer will be able to make and receive payments according to their respective liabilities under this Act and the new Long Service Leave Act 1987.

Clause 16 prescribes a worker's long service leave entitlements under the Act. As is the case with the repealed Act, a building worker who has an effective service entitlement of 120 months is entitled to 13 weeks long service leave. The leave is to be taken as soon as practicable after the worker becomes entitled to it.

The board will pay to the worker 13 times the ordinary weekly pay for work of the kind last performed by the worker as a building worker.

Clause 17 sets out the pro rata entitlements of a building worker who has an effective service entitlement of less than 120 months.

Clause 18 makes it an offence for a building worker to engage in employment as a building worker while on long service leave. An employer must not engage a building worker in contravention of this section.

Clause 19 continues the operation of the Long Service Leave (Building Industry) Fund. The fund is controlled and managed by the board and is exempt from State taxes and charges.

Clause 20 provides for the investment of the fund in such manner as the Treasurer may approve.

Clause 21 allows the board (with the approval of the Treasurer and the Minister) to lend money from the fund to an industrial organisation for training in the building industry.

Clause 22 allows the borrowing of money.

Clause 23 provides for a three-yearly investigation into the state and sufficiency of the fund by the Public Actuary. A report on the investigation is to be laid before each House of Parliament.

Clause 24 provides for the keeping of accounts and an annual audit.

Clause 25 requires employers to furnish certain information to the board.

Clause 26 requires employers to furnish monthly returns to the board. A return must include a statement of the total wages paid to each building worker during the previous month, other than a building worker who has worked for the employer for less than three days in the month. The levy payable as a prescribed percentage of wages must accompany the return. The board may vary the requirements of this section as they relate to a particular employer or employers of a particular class. An employer who fails to comply with the requirements imposed by or under the section is guilty of an offence.

Clause 27 allows the board to make its own assessment if the employer fails to comply with clause 26 or furnishes a return that the board has reasonable grounds to believe to be defective.

Clause 28 allows the board to impose penalty interest and a fine when an employer fails to make a contribution required by or under the Act.

Clause 29 sets out various powers of investigation that are to be conferred on the board for ascertaining whether a person is liable to make a payment to the board under the Act and, if so, the extent of that liability, and for ascertaining any other matter prescribed by the regulations.

Clause 30 provides that a contribution payable under the Act will be a debt due to the board.

Clause 31 requires the board to refund any amount overpaid.

Clause 32 provides for the Appeals Tribunal, which is constituted by an industrial magistrate.

Clause 33 confers a right of appeal to the tribunal on any person who is dissatisfied with a decision of the board under the Act.

Clause 34 sets out the powers of the tribunal to summons witnesses, require the production of documents and require the giving of answers.

Clause 35 empowers the Governor to make regulations relating to the practice and procedure of the tribunal.

Clause 36 provides that an obligation to pay a contribution or a right to recover a contribution is not suspended

by an appeal. A due adjustment will be made to any assessment if it is altered on an appeal.

Clause 37 empowers the board to extend the benefits of the Act to a self-employed person (on the application of the self-employed person).

Clause 38 empowers the Minister to make reciprocal arrangements with Ministers of other States or Territories relating to the transfer of the long service leave entitlements of building workers who move from State to State.

Clause 39 sets out the powers of an inspector under the Act.

Clause 40 will require an employer to keep in the State sufficient records to enable his or her liability for contributions under the Act to be assessed. Records will be required to be kept for five years.

Clause 41 provides for the service of documents.

Clause 42 requires the board to prepare an annual report on or before 30 September in each year. Audited statements of account for the preceding financial year must be incorporated in the report.

Clause 43 relates to offences under the Act.

Clause 44 is an evidentiary provision.

Clause 45 empowers the Governor to make regulations for the purposes of the Act. The regulations may include procedures for the expiation of prescribed offences.

The first schedule sets out the various occupational categories that are to be covered by the Act.

The second schedule sets out the various awards and agreements in relation to which the Act may apply.

The third schedule contains the various transitional provisions required for the implementation of the new legislation.

Mr OSWALD secured the adjournment of the debate.

RACING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. M.K. MAYES (Minister of Agriculture) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Racing Act 1976. Read a first time.

The Hon. M.K. MAYES: I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

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

Leave granted.

Explanation of Bill

This Bill seeks to make four amendments to the provisions of the Racing Act 1976: first, to amend section 68 *(c)* of the Racing Act 1976 to provide for statutory deductions on multiple bets to be increased to 20 per cent. Secondly, to amend section 69 (1) *(b)* of the Racing Act 1976 to increase the payments to the Racecourses Development Board from TAB betting on multiple bets. Thirdly, to amend section 70 (1) *(a)* of the Racing Act 1976 to adjust the current sliding scale of Government taxation applicable to oncourse totalisator turnover. And fourthly, to amend section 70 (1) *(b)* of the Racing Act 1976 to increase the payments to the Racecourses Development Board from oncourse totalisator betting on multiple bets.

Section 68 *(c)* currently provides for a statutory deduction of 18 per cent on multiple bets.

This Bill seeks to amend section 68 *(c)* of the Racing Act 1976 to increase statutory deductions on all totalisator bets by 2 per cent. The additional net revenue generated from this source is expected to be $1.882 million of which $1.540 million will come from TAB operations and $342 000 from oncourse operations. A summary of revenue proposals is listed below.

	Government $	Racing codes $	RDB $	Total $
From TAB commissions	616 000	616 000	308 000	1 540 000
From oncourse totalisator commissions	—	273 600	68 400	342 000
	616 000	889 600	376 400	1 882 000

As is the present situation, the Government and the racing codes will continue to share TAB profits.

The apportionment of the additional 2 per cent deduction on multiple bets held by TAB will be as follows:

0.8 per cent to Government
0.8 per cent to codes
0.4 per cent to Racecourses Development Board
2.0 per cent

With regard to oncourse totalisator betting the codes will retain 1.6 per cent and the Racecourses Development Board 0.4 per cent. This is the situation because of the operation of the sliding scale of taxation applicable to oncourse totalisator turnover.

Sections 69 (1) *(b)* and 70 (1) *(b)* of the Racing Act 1976 currently provides *inter alia* for a payment of 1 per cent to the Racecourses Development Board for multiple betting on the off-course and oncourse totalisator respectively.

This Bill seeks to amend sections 69 (1) *(b)* and 70 (1) *(b)* of the Racing Act 1976 to allow for payments to the Racecourses Development Board to be increased to 1.4 per cent on multiple bets on the off-course and oncourse totalisator respectively.

Section 70 (1) *(a)* of the Racing Act 1976 currently provides for the following tax scale applicable to oncourse totalisator turnover:

Turnover	Tax Scale
$0-10 000	1 per cent
$10 001-20 000	$100 + 2 per cent of excess over $10 000
$20 001-40 000	$300 + 3 per cent of excess over $20 000
$40 001 and over	$900 + 5.25 per cent of excess over $40 000

This Bill seeks to amend section 70 (1) *(a)* of the Racing Act 1976 to provide for the following tax scale:

Turnover	Tax Scale
$0-30 000	1 per cent
$30 001-60 000	$300 + 2 per cent of excess of $30 000
$60 001-120 000	$900 + 3 per cent of excess of $60 000
$120 001 and over	$2 700 + 5.25 per cent of excess of $120 000

The result of this proposal will mean a net gain to the racing codes of approximately $620 000 and a corresponding reduction in revenue to the Government. However, the Government will be fully compensated for its reduction in revenue from this source as a result of its increase in profits from multiple bets.

The additional revenue of $1.882 million generated from the proposed amendments accruing to the racing codes and the Racecourses Development Board will provide much needed assistance to stakemoney and capital works programs. The increased stakemoney and improvements to racecourse facilities should in turn encourage greater attendances and additional turnovers, as the better-performed horses and greyhounds are retained in, and attracted to, this State.

Clauses 1 and 2 are formal.

Clause 3 amends section 68 of the principal Act which deals with deductions by the TAB and authorised racing clubs from amounts on totalisator betting on race results. Paragraph *(c)* is amended to increase the percentage to be deducted from amounts on multiple bets from 18 to 20 per cent.

Clause 4 amends section 69 of the Act which deals with the way in which amounts deducted by the TAB under section 68 are to be applied. The amendment inserts a provision requiring an amount equal to 1.4 per cent of the amount of totalisator bets made with the TAB on multiples to be applied to the Racecourses Development Board.

Clause 5 amends section 70 of the principal Act which deals with the way in which amounts deducted by authorised racing clubs under section 68 are to be applied. The new paragraph *(a)* of subsection (1) provides that a club must pay to the Treasurer, for the general revenue of the State, where the sum of the amounts bet with it on each day on which it conducts totalisator betting—

(i) does not exceed $30 000—an amount equal to 1 per cent of that sum;

(ii) exceeds $30 000 but does not exceed $60 000—$300 plus 2 per cent of the amount in excess of $30 000;

(iii) exceeds $60 000 but does not exceed $120 000—$900 plus 3 per cent of the amount in excess of $60 000; or

(iv) exceeds $120 000—$2 700 plus 5.25 per cent of the amount in excess of $120 000.

Also a new paragraph *(b)* provides that a club must pay to the Racecourses Development Board:

(i) an amount equal to 1 per cent of the amount of totalisator bets made on doubles;

(ii) an amount equal to 1.4 per cent of the amount of those bets made on multiples.

Finally subsection (1) provides that the club may retain the balance for its purposes.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr OSWALD secured the adjournment of the debate.

JURISDICTION OF COURTS (CROSS-VESTING) BILL

Second reading.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

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

Leave granted.

Explanation of Bill

The purpose of the Jurisdiction of Courts (Cross-vesting) Bill is to establish a system of cross-vesting of jurisdiction between Federal, State and Territory courts.

The Jurisdiction of Courts (Cross-vesting) Bill is the result of extensive consultations between the Commonwealth and the States in the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General. The Bill will be complemented by reciprocal legislation in the Commonwealth, each State and the Northern Territory. The Commonwealth Act was assented to on 26 May 1987 and the Victorian Act on 12 May 1987.

The essence of the cross-vesting scheme is that State and Territory Supreme Courts will be vested with the civil jurisdiction (except certain industrial and trade practices jurisdiction) of the Federal courts (at present the Federal Court and the Family Court) and the Federal courts will be vested with the full jurisdiction of the State and Territory Supreme Courts.

The reasons for the proposed scheme are that litigants have occasionally experienced inconvenience and have been put to unnecessary expense as a result of—

(a) uncertainties as to the jurisdictional limits of Federal, State and Territory courts, particularly in the areas of trade practices and family law;

and

(b) the lack of power in these courts to ensure that proceedings which are instituted in different courts, but which ought to be tried together, are tried in the one court.

The primary objective of the cross-vesting scheme is to overcome these problems by vesting the Federal courts with State jurisdiction and by vesting State courts with Federal jurisdiction so that no action will fail in a court through lack of jurisdiction, and that as far as possible no court will have to determine the boundaries between Federal, State and Territory jurisdictions.

The Jurisdiction of Courts (Cross-vesting) Bill seeks to cross-vest jurisdiction in such a way that Federal and State courts will, by and large, keep within their 'proper' jurisdictional fields. To achieve this end, the Commonwealth Bill, this Bill and the proposed legislation of other States make detailed and comprehensive provision for transfers between courts which should ensure that proceedings begun in an inappropriate court, or related proceedings begun in separate courts, will be transferred to an appropriate court. The provisions relating to cross-vesting will need to be applied only in those exceptional cases where there are jurisdictional uncertainties and where there is a real need to have matters tried together in the one court. The successful operation of the cross-vesting scheme will depend very much on courts approaching the legislation in accordance with its general purpose and intention as indicated in the preamble to the Commonwealth and State legislation. Courts will need to be ruthless in the exercise of their transferral powers to ensure that litigants do not engage in 'forum-shopping' by commencing proceedings in inappropriate courts.

Under the cross-vesting scheme, no court will need to decide whether any particular matter is truly within Federal or State jurisdiction since in either event the court will have the same powers and duties. This is because, in any particular proceedings, in so far as the matters involved are within Federal or Territory jurisdiction, the powers and duties will be conferred and imposed by the Commonwealth Act, and in so far as the matters are not within Federal or Territory jurisdiction, the powers and duties will be conferred by complementary State legislation.

Provision is made in the Bill (clauses 3, 6 and 7) to recognise the special role of the Federal Court in matters in which it now has, apart from the jurisdiction of the High Court, exclusive original or appellate jurisdiction.

The legislation has no financial implications.

The preamble to the Bill refers to the inconvenience and expense which has occasionally been caused to litigants by jurisdictional limitations in Federal, State and Territory courts. The preamble then explains how the system of cross-vesting as provided for in the Bill is intended to overcome these jurisdictional limitations without detracting from the existing jurisdiction of any court.

Clauses 1 and 2 are formal.

Clause 3 is an interpretation provision.

Clause 3 (1) contains definitions. Significant words or phrases used in the legislation are detailed below:

'proceeding' is defined not to include a criminal proceeding.

'special federal matter' is defined to have the same meaning as in the Commonwealth Act, that is to say

(a) a matter arising under Part IV of the Commonwealth Trade Practices Act 1974 (other than section 45D or 45E);

(b) a matter involving the determination of questions of law on appeal from a decision of, or of questions of law referred or stated by, a tribunal or other body established by a Commonwealth Act, or a person holding office under a Commonwealth Act, not being a matter for determination in an appeal or a reference or case stated to the Supreme Court of a State or Territory under a law of the Commonwealth that specifically provides for such an appeal, reference or case stated to such a court;

(c) a matter arising under the Commonwealth Administrative Decisions (Judicial Review) Act 1977;

(d) a matter arising under section 32 of the Commonwealth National Crime Authority Act 1984;

or

(e) a matter that is within the original jurisdiction of the Federal Court by virtue of section 39B of the Commonwealth Judiciary Act 1903.

The abovementioned matters are not special Federal matters in those cases where the relevant Supreme Court would have had jurisdiction apart from the Commonwealth Act.

'State' is defined to include the Northern Territory.

'Territory' is defined not to include the Northern Territory.

Clause 3 (2) provides that a reference in the Act, other than a reference in section 4 (3), to the Supreme Court of a State includes, if there is a State Family Court of that State, a reference to that Family Court.

Clause 3 (3) provides that a reference to a Commonwealth Act is a reference to the Act as amended from time to time.

Clause 4 provides for the vesting of additional jurisdiction in certain courts.

The clause invests the Federal Court, the Family Court, the Supreme Courts of the other States and the Territories and the State Family Courts with original and appellate jurisdiction with respect to State matters.

Clause 4 (5) provides that the clause does not invest or confer jurisdiction on those courts with respect to criminal matters.

The Commonwealth Act invests State and Territory Supreme Courts with the civil jurisdiction of the Federal Court and Family Court that is not already invested in the Supreme Court and invests the Federal Court, the Family Court and the State Supreme Courts with the civil jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of each Territory.

The Commonwealth Act (section 4 (4)) excludes from the operation of the cross-vesting scheme matters arising under the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbritration Act 1904 and sections 45D and 45E of the Commonwealth Trade Practices Act 1974.

Clause 5 provides for the transfer of proceedings.

Under clause 5 (1), where a proceeding is pending in the Supreme Court of the State and the Federal Court or the Family Court ('the Federal court') has jurisdiction with respect to any of the matters in the proceeding, the Supreme Court is required to transfer the whole proceeding to the federal court if it appears to the State Supreme Court that—

(a) the proceeding arises out of, or is related to, another proceeding in the federal court and it is more appropriate that the proceeding be determined by that court;

or

(b) the Federal court is the more appropriate court, having regard to

(i) whether, in the opinion of the Supreme Court, the proceeding, apart from the cross-vesting legislation, would have been incapable of being wholly or substantially instituted in the Supreme Court and capable of being wholly or substantially instituted in the federal court;

(ii) the extent to which, in the opinion of the Supreme Court, the matters in the proceeding are matters arising under, or involving questions as to, the application, interpretation or validity, of a law of the Commonwealth and are not within the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court apart from the cross-vesting legislation (this provision is designed to enable the Supreme Court to transfer to the federal court all proceedings that, because of the nature and extent of their 'Commonwealth' content, ought to have been instituted in that court);

and

(iii) the interest of justice;

or

(c) it is otherwise in the interests of justice that the proceeding be determined by the federal court.

The necessary Federal jurisdiction is given by section 4 (3) of the Commonwealth Act where it would not otherwise exist.

Corresponding provisions, with appropriate omissions and modifications, are made by other provisions in clause 5 concerning the transfer of proceedings:

—from the State Supreme Court to the Supreme Court of another State or Territory (clause 5 (2));

—from the Supreme Court of another State or Territory to the State Supreme Court (clause 5 (3));

—from the Federal Court or the Family Court to the State Supreme Court (clause 5 (4));

and

—from the Federal Court to the Family Court or vice versa (clause 5 (5)).

Clause 5 (6) provides for the transfer of related proceedings so that all the related proceedings can be heard and determined in the one court. The provision is needed because proceedings related to proceedings transferred under clauses 5 (1) to 5 (5) inclusive might not themselves satisfy the criteria for transfer under those subclauses.

Clause 5 (7) provides that a proceeding may be transferred on the application of a party, of the court's own motion or on application by an Attorney-General.

Clause 5 (8) provides for barristers and solicitors involved in transferred proceedings to have the same entitlement to practise in relation to those proceedings and related proceedings as if they were proceedings in a federal court exercising federal jurisdiction (Cf. Commonwealth Judiciary Act 1903, s.55B.)

Clause 6 deals with special federal matters.

A 'special federal matter' is defined in clause 3 (1) and includes matters of special Commonwealth concern, being

matters that, apart from the cross-vesting scheme, are within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Federal Court.

Clause 6 provides for the compulsory transfer by the State Supreme Court to the Federal Court of any proceeding involving a special federal matter unless it appears to the Supreme Court that, by reason of the particular circumstances of the case, it is both inappropriate for the proceeding to be transferred and appropriate for the Supreme Court to determine the proceeding.

Where the State Supreme Court orders under clause 6 (1) that it should itself determine a proceeding involving a special federal matter, it is obliged by clause 6 (3) not to proceed further, except in urgent interlocutory matters (clause 6 (5)), until written notice has been given to the Commonwealth Attorney-General and a reasonable time has elapsed for the Attorney-General to consider whether a request should be made under clause 6 (6) for transfer to the Federal Court. If the Attorney-General makes such a request, the matter must be transferred to the Federal Court (clause 6 (6)). An adjournment may be ordered for these purposes (clause 6 (4)), and, under clause 6 (5) of the Commonwealth Bill, the Attorney-General of the Commonwealth may authorise payment by the Commonwealth of amounts in respect of costs arising out of such an adjournment. These provisions do not apply to appellate proceedings in the State Full Supreme Court if the court below has made an order under clause 6 (1) and the Attorney-General of the Commonwealth has not requested a transfer (clause 6 (8)). If the Supreme Court proceeds through inadvertence to determine a proceeding to which clause 6 (1) applies, its decision in the proceeding is not invalidated by the failure to comply with clause 6 (clause 6 (7)).

Clause 7 deals with the institution and hearing of appeals.

But for clause 7, the full cross-vesting of federal and State jurisdiction between the relevant courts at the appellate levels as well as at first instance could, for example, result in an appeal being taken from a single judge of the State Supreme Court to the Full Federal Court in matters that, apart from the cross-vesting legislation, would have been entirely outside the jurisdiction of the Federal Court. Similarly, the full cross-vesting could result in appeals being taken from a single judge of the Federal Court or Family Court to the Full Supreme Court of the State. Cross-vesting could also give rise to appeals from the Federal Court to the Full Family Court. Clause 7 is designed to prevent the cross-vesting from giving rise to any such appeals except where a matter in an appeal from a single judge of a State Supreme Court is a matter arising under a Commonwealth Act specified in the schedule to the Commonwealth Bill. In such a case, the whole appeal will lie only to the Full Federal Court. The scheduled Acts are Acts, such as the Bankruptcy Act 1966 and the Electoral Act 1919, under which the Full Federal Court now has exclusive appellate jurisdiction.

Clause 8 provides for the making of orders by the Supreme Court removing proceedings from an inferior court or a tribunal to the Supreme Court.

Where a proceeding is pending in a State court other than the State Supreme Court, or pending in a State tribunal, it may be appropriate to have it determined together with a proceeding that is pending in the Federal Court or the Family Court or the Supreme Court of another State or of a Territory or a State Family Court. Clause 8 enables the Supreme Court to remove the proceeding from the other court or tribunal into the Supreme Court so that it can then be transferred to the Federal Court or other relevant court, or so that it may be determined in the Supreme Court itself together with proceedings transferred to it from the Federal Court or other relevant court.

Clause 9 confirms the exercise of jurisdiction by the Supreme Court pursuant to cross-vesting laws.

The cross-vesting scheme is intended to operate as a complementary Commonwealth and State exercise and requires for its operation both Commonwealth and State legislation. Clause 9 of the Bill confirms that the Supreme Court may exercise cross-vested jurisdiction and hear and determine proceedings transferred under any law relating to cross-vesting of jurisdiction. The Commonwealth Act also provides that nothing in the Commonwealth Act is intended to override or limit the operation of State law relating to cross-vesting of jurisdiction.

Clause 10 provides for the transfer of matters arising under Divisions 1 and 1A of Part V of the Commonwealth Trade Practices Act.

Occasionally cases involving relatively small claims under Divisions 1 and 1A of Part V of the Commonwealth Trade Practices Act 1974 (consumer protection matters) have been brought in the Federal Court, but would more appropriately be determined by an inferior court of a State or Territory. With the enactment of the cross-vesting legislation such cases will also be able to be brought in State and Territory Supreme Courts. Furthermore, there are occasions when such claims would more appropriately be heard together with claims in some other court. Accordingly, clause 10 provides for the transfer of proceedings from a specified court to a court of the State other than the Supreme Court.

The Trade Practices Act is amended by the Commonwealth Jurisdiction of Courts (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 1987 to vest State and Territory courts with jurisdiction concurrent with that of the Federal Court in relation to civil proceedings under Divisions 1 and 1A of Part V of the Trade Practices Act (but not including civil proceedings initiated by the Commonwealth Minister or the Trade Practices Commission). This will enable such proceedings to be commenced in an appropriate State or Territory Court.

Clause 11 provides for the conduct of proceedings, including the substantive law and the rules of evidence and procedure, to be applied by a court in which proceedings are brought, or to which they are transferred, under the cross-vesting legislation. Different rules of evidence and procedure may apply for different matters in a proceeding.

Clause 12 provides for the making of orders as to costs in relation to transferred proceedings.

Clause 13 places limitations on appeals.

It provides that no appeal lies from a decision under the cross-vesting legislation as to whether a proceeding should be transferred to or removed from a court, or as to which rules of evidence or procedure are to be applied in transferred proceedings.

Clause 14 deals with the enforcement and effect of judgments.

It provides that a judgment of a federal court given in the exercise of any State jurisdiction may be enforced by the federal court in the State as if it were a judgment given entirely in federal jurisdiction and that any judgment of the Supreme Court given in the exercise of cross-vested State or Territory jurisdiction is enforceable in the State as if it were a judgment in the exercise of the Supreme Court's own non-cross-vested State jurisdiction.

Clause 14 also provides that a thing done by a State court in the exercise of cross-vested jurisdiction has the same effect for the purposes of any State laws (other than laws concerning the enforcement of judgments) as if done by the relevant State court in the exercise of its corresponding non-cross-vested jurisdiction.

Clause 15 provides for the suspension or cessation of operation of the Act.

The clause provides that the Governor, after at least six months notice to the Attorney-General of the Commonwealth and the Attorney-General of each other State, may by proclamation suspend the operation of the State Act from a day not earlier than three years after its commencement. Any such suspension may be revoked by further proclamation.

Clause 15 (3) provides for the Act to cease to be in force, on a day (at any time after the commencement of the Act) specified in a proclamation, if the Governor is satisfied that any of the cross-vesting legislation is ineffective to invest or confer jurisdiction on the relevant courts.

Clause 15 (4) provides for the Act to cease to be in force in relation to the Commonwealth, a Territory or a State, on a day specified in a proclamation, if the Governor is satisfied that the Commonwealth's or State's cross-vesting legislation has been repealed, rendered inoperative, suspended or altered in a substantial manner. The Governor may revoke the proclamation under subclause (4) if satisfied that a substantially corresponding Act of the Commonwealth or other State is again in force.

No proclamation can be made under the clause except on resolution of both Houses of Parliament.

Mr OSWALD secured the adjournment of the debate.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Adjourned debate on the question:

That the proposed expenditures referred to Estimates Committees A and B be agreed to.

(Continued from 6 October. Page 993.)

The Hon. H. ALLISON (Mount Gambier): I will refer today to the work of the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee over the past 12 months and will comment on the somewhat harsh judgments passed on the work of that committee in addresses yesterday by some of my parliamentary colleagues. I hope that all members of the House will read the Public Accounts Committee's annual report even if they do not take the trouble to read the 10 parliamentary reports issued by that committee during the past financial year—a very heavy log of work for any committee. The committee's annual report sets out briefly its endeavours over the preceding 12 months. I remind members that this is a bipartisan committee. If they are a little resentful that we have not been confrontationist during the past 12 months perhaps they will forgive us on the grounds that quiet achievers are recognised in Australia and congratulate the members and staff of the committee for their efforts during the preceding 12 months.

I am not defending the committee for the previous three years, because I have been a committee member for only a little more than 12 months. However, during that period the committee's work has been quite onerous—I do not recall during the 13 years I have been a member of this House that the Public Accounts Committee has presented as many as 10 reports in one year, which is what happened in the 1986-87 parliamentary year. The Public Accounts Committee, in relation to one of those projects, namely, the investigation into the purchase and subsequent resale of Government motor vehicles, would have saved more than its keep for several years, so it does not owe the Parliament or the State taxpayers very much money.

I will refer to some of the reports, giving a brief analysis of the import they have for South Australia and for wider fields. The reports during the past 12 months have attracted too little attention from the State media, yet the committee has been congratulated and its members have been in demand both nationally and internationally to address reputable conventions on Government asset replacement. That matter, of course, has been the subject of several major reports during that 12 months.

The committee's work has gone much farther afield than South Australia. Sooner or later all assets need to be replaced. If only because both principal and interest repayments should be made during the life of an asset to prevent its becoming an increasing millstone around the neck of future taxpayers of South Australia. This point should be made, and has been made, by the committee.

The index to papers for 1986-87 lists the Public Accounts Committee's reports, as follows:

Forty-fourth Report—Housing Asset Replacements.
Forty-fifth Report—Motor Vehicle Changeover Policy and Practices in State Government Agencies.
Forty-sixth Report—Electricity Supply Asset Replacement.
Forty-seventh Report—Hospital Asset Replacement.
Forty-eighth Report—Highways Asset Replacement.
Forty-ninth Report—Annual Report, 1986.
Fiftieth Report—Transport Asset Replacement.
Fifty-first Report—Water Supply and Sewerage Disposal Asset Replacement.
Fifty-second Report—Education Department Schools and Technical and Further Education Department Colleges Asset Replacement.
Fifty-third Report—Summary Report on Asset Replacement.

The last report was a summary report on asset replacement documents that were placed before the House.

Mr Duigan interjecting:

The Hon. H. ALLISON: As one honourable member interjects, members would agree that not only the volume of research but also the volume of reporting carried out in this 12 months was impressive by anyone's standards. It necessitated members of the committee meeting almost every week during the past 12 months without fail, and sometimes two or three times a week. The committee has not been idle and the officers behind it are to be congratulated on their efforts to keep it supplied with research and documentation, much of which was extremely complex and detailed analytical material.

One result of the asset replacement research conducted by the committee was that in future far more emphasis will be placed on the care and maintenance of existing assets than on the construction of new assets. I think that all Government departments have realised from Directors-General downwards that, until those reports were handed down by the committee, much administration work had been conducted by way of crisis management. There are departments that could take rightful exception to that statement, but in general management has been crisis management with attention being paid to major assets upon breakdown rather than prior to breakdown; Government expenditure would have been considerably less both in terms of time and inconvenience to taxpayers and the electors in South Australia had these problems been identified and funded earlier.

The committee inquired into the Engineering and Water Supply Department, which has many obvious assets such as sewage plants, reservoirs and water supply systems above ground, and a large number of hidden assets such as pipelines, sewerage lines, and water supply lines underground the condition of which is much more difficult to ascertain but which could be in an advanced stage of depreciation by decay from the outside of the pipe inwards through acidic attack or from the inside of the pipe outwards because of the contents of the pipeline.

The committee also investigated the Electricity Trust, looking at the possible deferral of construction of a very expensive new power station in the north of the State. While

some members of the trade union movement might have been attacking the Government for the delay in construction of a new power station, as recently as this morning, nevertheless the committee advised the Government and the Electricity Trust to reconsider the schedule of construction of new power lines and power stations in view of the interstate connection from Victoria and New South Wales through the South-East of South Australia. It is possible that, by deferral, both capital and principal and interest repayments may be deferred over a number of years, to the obvious advantage of the taxpayers of South Australia, provided that adequate electricity supply can be maintained as a result of such deferrals. That, of course, is the job of the Electricity Trust and Cabinet to investigate and to decide.

In relation to the Education Department, the Department of Housing and Construction and the Highways Department, we examined the life and replacement needs of all buildings and assets. Members will realise that immediately after the conclusion of the Second World War there was a great deal of reconstruction, new construction and development in South Australia, much of which is now approaching the 40 or 50-year-old mark, a period at which many major and minor assets begin to depreciate—and at an extremely rapid rate from now on.

Replacement in the Hospitals Department was another matter which we investigated, involving not only the maintenance of existing hospitals but the construction of new ones and, by and large, we highlighted for all Government departments—and, in particular, for Cabinet—the fact that over the next 50 years (so they were not just reports which were ephemeral, dealing with passing problems) Governments of South Australia will be confronted within different departments with peaks and troughs of need for replacement of major assets.

We created models for all of those departments, models which may be the subject of reconstruction and correction over the next few decades, and which departments could work on to determine what their individual departmental needs would be. Without them, as I said, departmental heads would simply be looking at asset replacement on a crisis management basis: if it breaks down, repair it or replace it. Now the Government of South Australia and governments interstate and internationally are taking an interest in those models, and I have no doubt they are preparing similar models for their own use so that they, too, can plan well ahead. It may mean that we will have fewer brand new edifices and monuments to Government Ministers and far more attention being paid to what has already been constructed, but to allow Government resources to break down and simply assume we can replace them with new facilities is wrong. The committee has brought that to the Government's attention.

I mentioned the savings that the committee had achieved for Government. In one piece of research alone—the inquiry into the purchase of Government motor vehicles and the practices not only of purchase but of disposal of the assets—we concluded that Government departments have not been adhering even to existing Government policy but, in many cases, had been hanging on to motor vehicles to the extent that they were so depreciated that their trade-in value was almost negligible. We stressed that a two-year or 40 000 kilometre policy should be maintained and adhered to, giving two distinct advantages: first, that maintenance is kept to the very minimum if a vehicle is sold when it is either two years or 40 000 kilometres down the road or, secondly, given that a vehicle has required very little maintenance, it is still in good condition, and therefore the resale price is very high.

I believe that, conservatively, the committee would have saved $500 000 and possibly $2 million for the Government in the past 18 months with, of course, ongoing savings, since this is an annual policy which will be adhered to by all Government departments. That action alone would have more than paid for the endeavour of the Public Accounts Committee for years to come. In addition to that, the committee has been examining the purchase and usage of computer hardware and software, pointing out errors that have been made in the past, and recommending that regular examinations be made of Government departments and the way they utilise computer equipment, which is, of course, increasingly expensive and which becomes obsolete with alarming rapidity. It is obsolete before it is even sold, in many cases, because new models are on the drawing board.

We pointed out the pitfalls in the purchase of very large and very new projects which are still to be brought into operation in the Justice Information System, the transport system and others. We also investigated the matter of the South Australian National Football League lease, which slipped by relatively unnoticed but which was a subject quite important from the point of view of South Australian sport and the South Australian taxpayer. I believe that that has been settled amicably as a result of the work of the committee, the Government having been made aware by a committee report of the implications behind that lease.

Another area in which I feel that the taxpayers of South Australia will benefit relates to the committee's recommendation to all Government departments that they enter into the field of accrual accounting. Accrual accounting presents an accurate picture of all assets and liabilities in Government departments, whereas many Government departments, large and small, have been in the habit of presenting cash accounts at the end of the year with many of the substantial liabilities remaining hidden and, therefore, the picture being by no means a true one when presented to the House.

Accrual accounting sees not only the cash assets but also the liabilities, presents them before Parliament and gives the Minister and his colleagues in the House a much more accurate picture of the State's current financial status. In case members think that this is a relatively small beer subject, I remind them that only as recently as the beginning of September the Victorian WorkCare system has been under analysis by the Victorian Cain Government. On the surface, in 1985-86 the Victorian WorkCare scheme held assets of about $365 million in cash. At the end of 1986-87 it held about $265 million in cash but, of course, cash accounting simply shows what we have when the books are balanced.

Accrual accounting shows that the Cain Government, in its WorkCare scheme, faces liabilities conservatively estimated at $1 billion if the courts award on the lowest claim and $1.7 billion if they award on the highest claim. Cash accounting does not reveal that: accrual accounting does. I simply hope that, for the State's sake, the Minister of Labour will take up this matter with his WorkCover board and with the auditors to ensure that accrual accounting is done not simply in the first year but from the first months of WorkCover in South Australia. I understand that it is possible a Government department is currently funding the initial operations of the Government scheme, but the amount of money obtained by the WorkCover scheme has to be offset immediately in the first month by claims which are laid against the scheme—and they will be laid.

There will be claims right from the very first day, and the Government should have a very clear picture both of the cash revenue at the end of the 12 months and the claims

accruing day by day, week by week, otherwise we could find ourselves finishing up, as the Cain Government has in Victoria, recognising, after some 18 months or two years of the scheme, that there are $1 billion worth of claims which have been made and paid out improperly. So, the Public Accounts Committee, if it only highlights the problems confronting an as yet new Government department, the liabilities of which could be absolutely massive in relation to the State's income, will have done its work truly and well.

There are many more aspects of the work of the Public Accounts Committee that one could enter into but, as I said, I believe that members of the House may have been a little harsh in their judgments of the committee in their addresses yesterday and I simply excuse them on the ground that they may not have read the 10 reports—a very substantial number—or, if they have read them, they may not have realised the State, national and internataional import of many of the reports that we have placed before Parliament.

I ask everyone here to have a good look and analyse them in respect of the operation of the State, because they are relevant not only to the present Government but to the financing of future Liberal Governments in South Australia. The next 50 years will doubtless see many changes of government. It will see massive depreciation of State Government assets, and those problems will have to be worked out not in arrears but in advance, and that is what the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee has asked Governments to do in its work.

Mr M.J. EVANS (Elizabeth): I would like to canvass a number of matters in this fairly wide-ranging debate this afternoon. The first of those most logically should relate to the work of the Estimates Committees themselves, since the House has just concluded two weeks of the traditional Estimates Committees. When they were established some years ago by the Tonkin Administration I must admit that I did not have a great deal of confidence in them, but I felt that their work might well be valuable. Perhaps in the initial period that was certainly the case. However, I think that their direct value to the Parliament is declining in the sense that the opportunities for examining Ministers about their accounts do not seem to have been as effective as one might have hoped initially.

Members interjecting:

Mr M.J. EVANS: The number I have attended over the years has declined directly with my view of their failing value to the system. However, I believe that in no way has their lack of contribution to the system been brought about in any sense by the chairmanship of them, in case the honourable member was concerned that I was being critical in that aspect. In fact, I believe that the simple principle involved has been the cause of my criticism—not any activities on the part of individual members or lack thereof. Unfortunately, like all things in this institution, the Committees themselves have become institutionalised. Initially, when there was some degree of newness and novelty about them, the process had a degree of interest about it and people were able to make use of them.

Unfortunately, since then Ministers have learnt the ropes, so to speak, and Government members, whatever side they might find themselves on, are also part of that process, and the value of the Committees has declined accordingly. Also, it is nonsensical to suggest that a Parliament can hope to examine in one day the whole of the annual operations of a ministerial department when many departments fall under the one category. Fundamentally, the concept is not really appropriate when dealing with a State of this size. It may well work if our budget was but 10 per cent of its current total, but the sheer size of the monetary figures and paperwork involved rules out any intelligent application of the process in a State the size of South Australia.

I do think that that leads us to the conclusion that we need to examine an ongoing process, rather than a fixed process once a year. Surely by now Parliament has recognised the inevitability of the fact that, while it technically and constitutionally controls the purse strings of the State in the sense that it can vote to block or approve a budget, that is a veto power only and no-one seriously suggests that the Parliament—or either House of it—is in any sense able to deal line by line and dollar by dollar with the State Government's Executive budget.

Some would suggest that to attempt to do so would not be a proper use of the authority of Parliament in any event. While I might question that view fundamentally, I believe the practical reality of it is that it is certainly not possible and, therefore, it is time we addressed ourselves to an ongoing process with committees dedicated to the work of particular areas of government, in much the same area that Cabinet has formulated subcommittees to deal with the particular areas of government, and for Parliament to examine Ministers on the ongoing implementation of their budgets throughout the year and their planning for next year's budget in the course of the year rather than to attempt in a single day to examine the whole process of both the administration of the previous year and the planned administration for the present year.

That is simply a practical impossibility. Even with the best will, the most competent chairmanship and the most dedicated members in the world, that is simply not possible. If that activity were spread out over the course of a year the same members, sitting in the same context, could certainly prove to be much more effective. Indeed, it would not be necessary for those committees to be vested with significant funds or research staff. It would be desirable, but clearly the Government would say that such funding is not available and such staff cannot be provided on a large scale and that therefore the committee idea is impractical.

However, I would respond by saying that the Estimates Committees themselves do not have research staff. They are expected to undertake the same task and I believe that it would be perfectly feasible for members, sitting with the traditional administrative support provided by the Clerks and their staff, to undertake the same sort of task on an ongoing basis. That would be much more effective and certainly would not cost any more and would avoid the unseemly scramble of public servants and ministerial advisers on the single day when they all appear with all the paperwork in an attempt to cope with every conceivable question. That process is simply impractical and, in my view, unworkable.

However, it is the present process and there are some shortcomings in it as it stands. One is that, for example, while the Minister of Health (Hon. J.R. Cornwall) from another place has been quick to provide substantial documentation, albeit sometimes on the day of the meeting or sometimes the day before in relation to the Health Commission's budget as a statutory authority, something that is not contained in great detail in the substantive documents about the budget, and other Ministers, such as the Minister of Education, have also provided detailed information for other organisations and statutory authorities such as the Housing Trust, ETSA and South Australian Gas Company (which I understand is soon to become a statutory authority, in effect, albeit by devious means) and the CFS, and so on,

to name but a few, very little adequate information is available, yet these are major utilities in the State having substantial impact.

It is most important that those organisations should also provide substantive budget information. There is plenty of information on what they did last year. The Auditor-General's Report is full of detailed information about what they have done, but there is little information about what some of those statutory authorities and related organisations plan to do. The Parliament is about accountability and control, but it is also about planning for the future, and I believe that it is critical that we know not only what they have done but what they are going to do with the money that we vote for them.

Also, I believe that there will be great merit in the context of those statutory authorities and, in particular, the public utilities—electricity, water, gas, and so on—providing even more detailed ongoing scrutiny because of their substantial impact on the public of South Australia. Indeed, I believe that a public utilities committee of the House would be a significant addition to our armoury of accountability, with the requirement on those utilities to report on an ongoing basis to the Parliament and the House rather than simply once a year in a very cursory way.

That kind of scrutiny, which would permit advance notification to Parliament of pricing structures and conditions of supply, would be useful. It would allow the public to give evidence before that parliamentary committee, to give their opinions on the various conditions and pricing structures. I believe that the plans of those authorities could be prepared much more intelligently with respect to the public of South Australia and the Parliament would be much better informed if we had a process of reviewing that on an ongoing basis.

With respect to other matters, I would like to address a number of isolated topics. One of some concern day to day is the victims of crime levy, so-called, which has recently been imposed by statute to attempt to provide additional funds for the compensation legislation. Certainly, that was long overdue. I do not think that there can be any argument as to its necessity, and I believe that almost every member of this House and in another place supported it in that context. However, I think there can be some dispute about the way in which those funds are obtained. It was of some interest to me to read in the Estimates Committees' reports that the Attorney-General estimates that some $467 000 will come from traffic infringement notices, that $1.1 million will come from courts of summary jurisdiction, but only $27 000 will come from the higher courts, with but $71 000 in recoveries, which are actions by the Attorney-General to recover payments made from the fund from those who have undertaken the criminal activity concerned.

I notice that there is nothing in the budget in relation to the Crimes (Confiscation of Profits) Act, which provides that all funds obtained following confiscation of profits arising from criminal activities must be paid into the fund, except those relating to drugs, because they go into drug rehabilitation. It is interesting that nothing is provided in the budget for this source. It could be simply that the legislation is new and no estimate has been made, but I would have thought that some amount could have been put aside on a notional basis.

There has been a substantial amount of controversy about the use of traffic infringement notices. I for one do not necessarily believe that it is inappropriate to levy a traffic infringement notice because the people concerned have certainly broken the law and, had the original process of taking them through the courts prevailed, they would have had to pay a victims of crime levy. So it is not inappropriate that they should make a contribution in that context. However, I believe that the contribution should be in the context of the relative seriousness of their criminal conduct.

Certainly, because traffic infringement notices are issued and the matter is dealt with by infringement notice, there is a clear implication that that conduct is viewed by Parliament and the Government as less seriously criminal than the conduct of those offenders who appear before courts of summary jurisdiction or the higher courts. An amount of $500 000 is generated from traffic infringement notices, but only $27 000 comes from the higher courts. The relativity is not right. I believe that the Government must address that question of relativity to ensure that those who commit the most serious offences pay far more towards the victims of crime levy than those who simply commit the offence of driving at, say, 70 km/h in a 60 km/h zone.

There is no doubt that the relativity at the moment—I believe it is $5 to $30 from the most trivial offence to the most serious offence—is simply not enough, and it will have to be reviewed. I also note with concern that no interest is payable on those funds. Although the funds are set aside in the Government's budget, interest is paid on that separate amount. I believe that the Government should make appropriate accounting arrangements to ensure that the funds, which presumably are deposited with SAFA, attract the standard rate of interest and that it is paid into the victims of crime fund.

I turn now to the Housing Trust, which is another matter of substantial concern to me. Members would be aware that Elizabeth has significant involvement with the Housing Trust and, by and large, I have an extremely good working relationship with the Minister and particularly with the regional staff of the trust who do quite a good job. However, I believe that some constructive criticism can be made of policies where appropriate, and I take this opportunity to do that. The trust, through its Minister prominently, has made an announcement about the proceeds of house sales but, of course, those sales have not been as substantial as the Minister would have wished. The one simple reason for that is clearly the cost of obtaining a house.

While the Minister of Housing and Construction clearly puts the point of view that the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement precludes the sale of houses at less than valuation (which is quite reasonable), the fact is that other costs are involved. One question that I was able to ask the Minister during his Estimates Committee related to a comparison of the value of a property as assessed by the Valuer-General and the actual sale price notified to tenants who express an interest in buying the property. That price is inflated—if we take the case of double Housing Trust units, which are quite common in Elizabeth and many other areas—by the addition of a Housing Trust administration fee; in some cases the cost of separating the ETSA supply and providing separate meters; by the cost of separating the water supply meters; by the cost of surveying the land and drafting the separate LTO certificates; and several other hidden costs. That has the effect of raising the price of the property quite substantially and taking it out of the realm of many people who currently live in double units.

I believe that is one area where a little innovative policy work could be most constructive. Certainly, double units in many cases have the highest maintenance costs and would most benefit the communities concerned if they could be sold to tenants at a reasonable price. The Valuer-General's valuation, which is the level at which the trust pays council rates, is relatively reasonable. Double units are valued at about $30 000 and very few are valued at much more than

$32 000 in my own area. Of course, there is no doubt that they would sell at those prices. However, the end result of all the fees that I mentioned is that the price is driven well out of range. I believe that innovative legal work in relation to land titles and the Real Property Act could enhance the attractiveness of those properties (even within the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement) and therefore make them more attractive to the tenant, thereby allowing the Minister to implement his innovative scheme much more effectively. I hope that the Minister addresses this matter when considering the questions I asked during the Estimates Committees.

I am also concerned about the Emergency Housing Office, which is an area that I am sure will promote much greater controversy in the community because of the emotive nature of its work. Unfortunately, as the Auditor-General points out, in this financial year some $2.1 million will be spent by that office in administration, constituting nearly 40 per cent of its expenditure. That represents something like 35 new houses for the Housing Trust each year. One wonders what would be the most effective contribution to the housing crisis in this State—35 new houses or expenditure of $2 million in administration by the EHO. Unfortunately, in many ways the EHO simply duplicates the work of the Housing Trust. I believe that the officers of the trust who are regionally based (and even subregionally based) are familiar with the housing market and have a vast stock of public houses on hand as well as a substantial waiting list of about 45 000 people and they would certainly be in as good a position, if not better, than the EHO to assess the emergency housing needs.

I commend to the Minister the view that he should reassess his position in relation to the work of the Housing Trust and give it credit for having the sensitivity to look at many priority cases each week in its own priority scheme and proceeding on that basis. Unfortunately, I think the Minister has a very jaundiced view of EHO clients and in that context I refer to page 518 of the Estimates Committee *Hansard* report, where the Minister spoke about people who seek assistance from the EHO in the following terms:

> These people in all probability will abuse the house, will not pay the rent and shoot through so the landlord will get the bond money back towards rental arrears.

That kind of view of EHO tenants is unfortunate, although I am not certain about its accuracy. One can look only at the figure which indicates that some $2 million in bond money is not repaid.

Ms Lenehan interjecting:

Mr M.J. EVANS: I am quoting page 518 of the Estimates Committees. The Minister was responding to a question about the EHO and used those words. I was concerned about that comment at the time, just as I am now as I see it in print.

Ms Lenehan interjecting:

Mr M.J. EVANS: The context must be judged by those who read the document. I do not think that my comment is unfair, because it relates entirely to the argument that I am now putting. I believe that we must ensure that we do not arrive at two classes of public housing tenants in this context. I think that the duplicative work of the EHO needs to be looked at on the grounds of efficiency and also social justice in relation to people who seek assistance from the EHO so that they are not reduced to the level of second-class citizens. If that is the attitude—the Minister will obviously wish to explain that himself if there is concern about it—then there is a problem that needs to be addressed. I would rather see public money given to public housing to provide for public housing priorities rather than public money to the extent of $2 million disappearing into the private housing bond market area without trace, and with no actual substance remaining.

The Housing Trust has 45 000 people on its waiting list and many of them are priority cases. Each week, as I understand the position, the trust has a meeting to assess the relative priority of emergency cases. I am sure that those same procedures could be applied in this case and perhaps some substantial cost transfer could occur from the EHO to the Housing Trust so that the trust can fulfil its proper role in the community of providing houses, with the priority going to those most in need. I doubt that the trust itself, if its officers were properly instructed and acquainted with their objectives, could not bring about a substantial benefit for those people.

Mr FERGUSON (Henley Beach): I want to make a few remarks about the Estimates Committees. I, of course, had the privilege of chairing Estimates Committee A, and I was in the Chair for every minute of every hour of the deliberations of that Committee. At the outset, one criticism about Estimates Committee A concerns the venue. In saying that, I am casting no aspersions on the people who set the place up and who assisted with the arrangements for the Committee but, in looking at this place and in considering the purpose of the Estimates Committees, I do not think that conducting the Committee in this venue is to the greatest advantage. For one thing, the acoustics are very bad in this place, and with the sort of set-up that we had with the microphones it was hard to properly hear all the deliberations that were going on.

Secondly, from a psychological point of view this Chamber is not the best of places to conduct such a hearing. Committee members are spaced a long way apart and the people who are to give evidence at the Minister's table are a long way from the proceedings. A lot of shuffling takes place when they have to give evidence, with a lot of moving in and out of chairs. Generally speaking, I would say that this Chamber is not the best place to conduct those proceedings. I would like to see the new Convention Centre used; that is not too far away, and although there might be some difficulties involved it is perfectly set up for conferences. I believe that some of the facilities at the Convention Centre would be of advantage to members in properly utilising the Estimates Committees.

I want to take up very early in my remarks a criticism made by the member for Davenport concerning the ability of Independent members to use the Committees. I point out that at the commencement of Committee proceedings each day the Chairperson usually says something like this:

> Subject to the convenience of the Committee, a member who is outside the Committee and who desires to ask a question will be permitted to do so once a line of questioning on the item being considered has been exhausted by the Committee. Indications of this in advance to the Chairperson would be appreciated and are necessary.

However, that is only what I might call a rule of debate and it is overridden by Standing Order 13, which provides:

> Members of the House not being members of the Committee may participate at the discretion of the Chairman in the proceedings of the Committee but shall not vote, move any motion or be counted for the purposes of a quorum.

The member for Flinders participated in the proceedings of Estimates Committee A. He is an Independent member and he had every opportunity to participate in the debate and, in fact, during the proceedings of one of the Committees he had as much opportunity to ask questions as had some members of the Opposition. It has always been my policy as Chairman to allow an Independent member every opportunity to participate in the Estimates Committees. Therefore, I feel that the criticism made by a member who was not involved in the Committees, and who in fact took the

opportunity to go interstate while they were in progress, ought to be discounted by this Parliament. I believe that Independent members have the opportunity to participate and that this opportunity will continue to be provided in subsequent years.

Mr M.J. Evans: Let's not tar everyone with the same brush.

Mr FERGUSON: I might say that I make no reflection on other Independent members.

Mr Peterson: Who are you talking about?

Mr FERGUSON: I am talking about the member for Davenport, who raised this matter in the House. If I have reflected on any other Independent member, I apologise, because I certainly did not mean to do that. Some of the criticisms that we have heard so far about the conduct of the Committees relates very much to the preparation that is undertaken, particularly by members of the Opposition, and to the sort of information that they wish to elicit.

Mr Becker interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr FERGUSON: Thank you for your protection, Mr Speaker. During the conduct of the Committees, covering the various portfolios, it was obvious that the amount of information elicited from a Minister depended on the amount of homework done by the members asking the questions. I particularly praise the member for Coles in this respect. In looking through the *Hansard* record it is apparent that a great amount of material was made available in the Committees covering lines on which the member for Coles was lead speaker for the Opposition. As a result of the amount of preparation done and the number of questions that were asked, as well as the type of team work that was exercised during those Committees, a vast amount of information was adduced.

Speaking for myself—and I emphasise that, as this matter has not been discussed in the Party room or anywhere else—I favour the introduction of the Legislative Council shadow Ministers into this Chamber. I believe that some of the Committees had some difficulties because the various spokespersons involved positioned themselves in the Speaker's gallery and were writing out questions as hard as they could go. I do not blame them for that, as they have every right to do so. The questions were handed to the Attendants and, in turn, they were handed to the Opposition members, who then read out the questions. From time to time it was fairly obvious that the member reading the questions did not understand their purport.

I do not blame members for that, as no member in this House can be an expert on everything and often they were dealing with subjects with which they were not familiar. They were merely handed questions from a shadow spokesperson from another place and they then asked those questions. I believe that more information could have been obtained from the Ministers and the public servants had the members who were delivering those questions actually understood the reasons for asking them and their purport. So, from my point of view I see no problem in allowing the shadow spokespersons themselves to be involved in the Estimates Committees.

I have been concerned about the remarks made by some Opposition members in this debate concerning the Public Accounts Committee, because attacks have been made on members of that committee, especially Messrs Whitten and Olson, with whom I have been associated for many years and whose worth I know not only as able representatives of their constituencies but also as members who, when given a job in this House, did it well. I resent former members of Parliament being attacked under parliamentary privilege. After all, they were members of a committee that is supposed to be independent, comprising as it does members from both sides. Further, the members who have been attacked are not here to defend themselves. This action was politics at is rawest and I hope that we do not see that sort of debate continue in this House. I say no more than that on this matter at this stage, because it may be taken up later.

I now refer to something that is occurring in my electorate. During the Estimates Committees I was very much impressed by the public servant who accompanied the Minister of Youth Affairs and answered questions asked by Committee members. As a result of those sessions, I took the opportunity to write to the Minister to see whether she could help solve some problems in my electorate—and I make no bones about saying that there are problems in my electorate in respect of the youth there. We have a conflicting situation where young people from seven years to 17 years have entered a completely new area in my electorate. At the lower end of the economic scale, they have come into an area where they are surrounded by reasonably affluent people. There is an area for conflict and that conflict has commenced. There are consequently problems of vandalism, loutish behaviour, and damage to property.

I believe that these young people are seeking assistance and I have approached the Department of Youth Affairs and the Minister for help in this situation. I do not ask for much money for my electorate: I ask for person power to help solve this problem which can be solved only with the right sort of leadership. I hope that such leadership will be provided by the Department of Youth Affairs. As I have given an undertaking not to take the full time available to me in this debate, I conclude my remarks on that note.

Mr KLUNDER (Todd): I rise rather reluctantly in this debate to respond to some attacks made last evening on the Public Accounts Committee. I acknowledge that the member for Hanson in his speech made no adverse comment about the committee and I congratulate him on his 10 years tenure on the committee. The member for Mount Gambier, too, made a fair and reasonable speech about the committee and it is largely as a result of those two speeches that I tone down the tenor of my contribution in this debate.

The substance of the allegations was that the committee under my chairmanship had become toothless. What does that mean? If the statement is true, there should be either a reduction in the number of reports of Public Accounts Committee investigations or a reduction in the quality of those reports. Rather than just swap abuse with Opposition members, let me set out the actual record of the committee. The history of the Public Accounts Committee can be divided arbitrarily into two periods: the first 10 years during which the committee had four separate Chairmen and the past (almost) five years when I have been Chairman.

During the 15 years of the committee's life, 28 reports were produced in the first 10 years and 25 in the past five years. Of those reports, the number of substance made as a result of investigations by the committee was 18 in the first 10 years and 17 in the past five years. There is a second division of reports in respect of which the committee follows up some of its earlier reports. These are referred to as Treasurer's minutes reports. In the first 10 years of the committee's life there were four such reports which referred to four previous reports and in the past five years there have been four such reports which have referred to 12 previous reports.

Had I been interested in just chasing numbers of reports, I could have produced those four reports as 12 separate

reports, making the number of reports issued by the committee in the past five years 33 instead of 25. In the first 10 years of the committee's life it issued six administrative reports and in the past five years it issued five administrative reports, four of them annual reports and one a report on a successful conference that was held in South Australia.

Further, the Public Accounts Committee now closes its files after it has checked all the information and has concluded that nothing further can be gained by keeping the file on that investigation open. During the first 10 years of the committee's life no files were closed in this way, whereas in the past five years 18 files have been closed. The fact that 12 previous reports were dealt with under the Treasurer's minutes reports and that 18 files have been closed over the past five years shows that the committee under my chairmanship has been more concerned with the follow-up of reports than was the case previously. Over the past five years the committee has deliberately followed this practice in order to avoid becoming a paper tiger in a different sense of the word.

The real danger of Public Accounts Committees is that they will produce a report, get their spot in the sunlight for a little while, and then the report is ignored and forgotten, with a consequence that not all the committee's work results in real action. Certainly, my work with the committee has been designed specifically to avoid that sort of problem.

Let us consider section 13 of the Public Accounts Committee Act. That section has four subsections which set out the duties of the committee. The first subsection deals with the committee's duty to examine the accounts of the receipts and expenditure of the State as produced by the Auditor-General. Indeed, this is what the committee did this morning: the committee met with the Auditor-General and some of his senior officers to examine his recent report.

The second subsection provides that the Public Accounts Committee shall report to the House of Assembly such comments as it thinks fit on matters associated with the Auditor-General's Report. That is largely done when we take a reference from the Auditor-General's Report and follow it through to make a final report to Parliament. The third subsection provides that the committee shall report to the House of Assembly any alteration which the committee thinks desirable in the form of public accounts or in the method of keeping them, or in the mode of receipts control, issue or payment of public moneys. To a large extent that has been the forgotten subsection as regards the duties of the Public Accounts Committee.

True, while the Tonkin Government introduced program performance budgeting, the then Public Accounts Committee loyally supported that concept as the committee has since supported it and the introduction of the Treasury accounting system. However, under my chairmanship the committee has been largely responsible for the push towards accrual accounting to the point where the Auditor-General has now indicated that the Audit Office will monitor the first step, which is the creation of asset registers in departments and authorities. The reason why asset registers have all of a sudden become important is that the Public Accounts Committee has produced a number of reports on asset replacement. Those reports stand on their own feet on merit and have been one of the major pushes towards forcing a significant change in the accounting systems of this State.

Oddly enough, that was not reported in the press. As the member for Mount Gambier has indicated, the press has not paid terribly much attention to reports from the Public Accounts Committee in the past few months or so, yet this profound and quite major change is taking place and getting no recognition—presumably it was too dull. It is, however, of very great importance to the future accounting policies and practices of this State.

Item *(d)* required the committee to inquire into and report to the House of Assembly on any questions in connection with the public accounts of the State on its own initiative, which is referred to by a resolution of the House of Assembly (which has never happened) or which is referred to it by the Governor or a Minister of the Crown (which has happened once).

The interesting thing about the Public Accounts Committee is the pressure actually exerted on it by the press, which is after interesting snippets that will fill television grabs, five paragraphs on page 14, or 30 seconds of radio news time. That is their business, and I do not criticise them for it, but it leads to interesting pressures, which I will illustrate.

When the Public Accounts Committee inquired into the Country Fire Services it was interesting to note what took the fancy of the press: it was not the fact that no standards of fire cover were laid down, which was of considerable importance to people living in danger areas; and it was not the fact that subsidies were distributed in such a way that the wealthier areas rather than the most endangered areas got the better equipment. What actually took their fancy was the fact that there were irregularities in the luncheon vouchers—that got headlines and television coverage despite the fact that it was a very minor part of the Public Accounts Committee's work and, from memory, took up about one page in the eventual report.

During my entire time on the Public Accounts Committee I have been aware of, and fought, the tendency to become populist, to play up to the press and present it with gaudy little bits for cheap headlines. The Public Accounts Committee is one which deals with serious business. It costs taxpayers in excess of $200 000 a year, so they are entitled to value for money well above that $200 000. I do not think that one gets that sort of value by checking on whether or not a public servant drops his kids off at school on the way to work in a Government car. That is not to say that we have not checked those bits of information when they have been brought to our notice, but it is not, and should not be, a major focus of attention for a major committee of this House such as the Public Accounts Committee.

In my opinion one could choose to investigate either whether public servants drop their kids off at school on the way to work while driving a Government car or whether $1 million a year could be saved by ensuring that car purchase and disposal policies and practices were improved. Under my chairmanship the committee has taken the second of those alternatives, and I make no apology for that. I am sure that taxpayers appreciate this, even if certain members of the Opposition and the press do not. While I am in the chair the Public Accounts Committee will operate to improve the Public Service in this State and will produce savings for taxpayers. One of the interesting things is that public servants keep telling me I am too tough, the press keep telling me I am too soft, and now some of the Opposition's puppy pack have started yelping along the same lines. The only conclusion to which I can come is that I cannot be doing too much wrong.

I turn now to some of the specific criticisms that were made last night. The member for Coles referred to the committee as having had its teeth drawn. Oddly enough, the only Minister who has asked the committee to conduct an investigation was the member for Coles when Minister of Health. She gave the Public Accounts Committee a reference to investigate the School Dental Service. I do not know whether she suspected that there was a problem within

the School Dental Service or whether she was trying to get off her back a problem with other dentists associations until after the 1982 election. However, as it was a ministerial reference and the Public Accounts Committee Act requires the committee to pick up such references, I continued the inquiry into the School Dental Service that had been commenced by the previous committee. That inquiry gave the School Dental Service a clean bill of health—the only report in the history of the Public Accounts Committee to do so.

If anybody was trying to draw the teeth of the Public Accounts Committee, the classic way to do that would be to give it references that took it away from its normal work and ask it to investigate organisations which already had a clean bill of health. Despite her criticism of me as Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, the member for Coles was the only Minister ever to do that.

The member for Morphett also said some unkind things about the Public Accounts Committee. While he was a member of that committee it was clear that he had strong ambitions towards becoming Minister of Health after the 1985 election. I am afraid that a lot of his efforts in the Public Accounts Committee were directed more towards that ambition than towards solving problems in the Public Service. I will not say any more than that, because I wish to maintain some degree of confidentiality in relation to the things that happen within the Public Accounts Committee.

The member for Eyre stated that I, with 1½ years experience in the Parliament, was put on the Public Accounts Committee to run it while at the same time allowing Charlie Wells to continue chairing it. That was a dreadful reflection on a deceased member of this Parliament and I am disgusted that the member for Eyre chose to say that. I totally refute what he said, as I refute any allegation that I have ever been instructed in any way with regard to the running of the Public Accounts Committee or that I would accept any such direction if it were given. The member for Eyre then decided to have a go at George Whitten, a retired member. I only hope that in future members will treat the member for Eyre in a much more friendly fashion after he retires than he has decided to treat other former members of this Parliament.

I can recall locking horns (as the member for Eyre expressed it) with him at a meeting of that committee. I also recall that he threatened all sorts of silly actions until he had to be told to keep quiet by his colleague on the committee. If the member for Eyre had a clear understanding of what the Public Accounts Committee is about he has kept that understanding well hidden during the time that he and I have been on that committee. If the work of the Parliament was not done by such organisations as the Public Accounts Committee in their worthwhile, worthy but perhaps dull way, then taxpayers would be paying far more, or getting far less, and the prima donnas of this House would have nothing to create a song and dance about.

I have no intention of being an apologist for the work of the Public Accounts Committee. The work it has done stands on its own merits, as any person who wishes to examine the substance rather than the shadow will find out. I apologise to the public of this State for the puerile idiocies spouted by those who have attacked the Public Accounts Committee in this debate for their own political purposes and who in so doing totally disregarded any harm that they might do to the effectiveness of that committee.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON (Premier and Treasurer): The debate we have heard in relation to this matter has, as usual, been a mixed one. I appreciate the contribution made by the member for Todd and some of his points are well taken and will be noted. Other members have made some constructive suggestions during the course of their remarks, but by and large we have heard from the Opposition side, yet again, one of the most extraordinarily negative debates that one could imagine. One wonders what has been happening during the two weeks of Estimates Committees that we get such sterile and inadequate contributions from members of the Opposition.

I have looked through some of the speeches made and nearly all of them in some way criticise the Estimates Committees and their conduct. I point out that the way that system works is in the hands of members of the Parliament, not the Government. It is interesting that the criticisms made are criticisms of the system introduced by Opposition members who at the time said that it was the answer to adequately assessing and questioning Government expenditure through the budget. I happen to agree that it is a better system than the one it replaced, but it is extraordinary that after four budgets incorporating this system all members opposite can do is spend the time of the House making tedious speeches and trying to explain, in a sense, their failure to make anything of the system.

Their speeches and their criticisms have in fact been an admission of failure, perhaps a recognition of the Government's success. Some of them are praising the previous system. I think the most notable contribution in that regard was that of the member for Davenport who confessed—after introducing this great tirade about how the Estimates were a waste of time and all the reasons why they were, and how good the previous system was because it allowed Ministers to be directly questioned by members of Parliament (I do not know what this system is if that is not what is involved)—that he actually had not even been there. He had gone away for the duration of the Estimates.

That, I think, typifies the attitude of many members of the Opposition to this system that they introduced, and they are, as I say, praising the previous system: they want to get back to it. First, let us remember that the previous system did not allow each and every area of Government expenditure to be questioned as this one does. I do not remember any occasion on which all the lines in the estimates were dealt with, debated and questioned. The process was invariably truncated with some ministerial areas totally unquestioned. This system allows us to do all of that—that is the first thing. So, those who are saying that we can have much more comprehensive questioning if we have this Committee of the Whole House exercise again forget that point.

The second point is that, with three Ministers in the Legislative Council, some of those areas and some of those Ministers were being questioned only by proxy, so this idea that we can eyeball Ministers directly in the Chamber—and I again ask, is that not what the Estimates Committees allow one to do?—in that Committee of the Whole House, saying that this is more comprehensive, ignores the fact that three Ministers in charge of major areas of expenditure get no direct questioning whatsoever. Surely, the Estimates Committee system is better in the respect that each and every Minister is held accountable and is required to answer questions.

Thirdly, the previous system involved a sitting by exhaustion. We would go on through afternoons, evenings, day and night, and the process deteriorated very sharply after midnight on every occasion and was really absolutely pointless—a futile exercise. Do we want to go back to those days? Of course we do not, and it is ridiculous to talk about it. But that is one of the things which some members opposite, trying to explain away their own failure, have come up with:

they say 'Let us go back to an old system.' The second criticism is that there are too many dorothy dixers, that Government members in the Committees sit there asking questions to try to protect Ministers.

It is true that Government members ask questions, and they have every right to ask questions. They have every right to ask questions on matters that interest them or to ask for information that they can use in some way in their electorate or elsewhere. Just in relation to the Committee on my own lines, I considered how true that was. Remember that one of the things the Opposition said it was really going to be intent on in this session was to question the financial performance of the Government and its handling of finances. One would have thought that the Treasury estimates discussion would have been one of the prime areas for this to take place.

My analysis reveals that, during the Treasury section of the Estimates, some 40 questions were asked by the Opposition, and nine were asked by members on the Government side. Is that filibuster? Is that dorothy-dixer protection? Of course it is not. There were nine questions as opposed to 40. So, they had 40 opportunities in that period. And I will come to another point about that in a minute. But regarding this exercise, during the Estimates Committee in relation to the Premier's lines, 40 questions were asked by the Opposition and 30 by members on the Government side. In the arts area, 33 questions were asked by the Opposition and 22 by Government members.

In all cases, the vast majority of questions—some one-third or more—were asked by the Opposition, and in that vital Treasury area members opposite had the floor to themselves. So, that argument is a lot of nonsense and I do not know what the analysis would be. There we are: there is that cover-up for failure. Let me now get on to the other cover-up for failure, which is the complaint that information is not provided—'We are not being told'. Again, that is nonsense.

I looked, for instance, at the debate on my Treasury section where some quite detailed questions were asked on a range of matters. Comprehensive answers were given; no information was denied. Regarding those 40 questions, in six cases where detailed financial information or figures were not available and I agreed to provide them, they have been provided, with one exception which, I hope, will be with the Opposition very shortly. So, that again, I suggest, gives the lie to the nonsense the Opposition is talking. I suggest that those bogus reasons for the failure of the Opposition in the Estimates Committees and its criticism of the system are quite different.

First, I would suggest that the real reason is the performance of the Government itself. There are not too many shock, horror, scandal or other matters that the Opposition can use. The media will tell them: there they sit with bated breath during the Estimates Committees, waiting to hear of these great scandals and things of that nature, and they are just not there. I am not suggesting that our record is perfect. Of course, it is not, and there are some areas where, obviously, we should be performing better—and we will do so—but, by and large, this Government's performance is recognised Australia-wide as being one of the best, one of the cleanest and one of the most efficient in this country.

That is one reason why members opposite cannot crank material out of the Estimates Committees. It is not the system that is at fault: it is the fact that the Government is performing well. Secondly, in those areas where we could be subjected to test and question, they fail there, too, through their sheer slackness of operation. For a start, they complain that they have not much time to analyse the material and they have not enough information. On 27 August comprehensive material—masses of material—was tabled in this House in conjunction with the budget, more than one will get in any other jurisdiction in terms of ability to analyse reports and so on.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: There are lots of fancy diagrams in New South Wales. I have seen the book called *Back to the Basics*—a tonne of graphs and so on. I suggest to members that every single bit of information there is contained somewhere in these documents—if they knew how to read them, if they were prepared to put in the time and effort to do so. So, from 27 August until, in the case of my Estimates Committee, 15 September members had all the time in the world to work this through, supplemented of course, by the Program Estimates book and the Auditor-General's Report. The information is there; the time to study it is there; and the failure of members opposite, to which they have admitted in their complaints, is due to their own inability to handle or deal with the material.

Incidentally, I suggest that that also reflects on their attitudes in some of the Committees. Again I can speak only for my Committee, but I am well aware that, for instance, for almost a whole session the Leader of the Opposition was absent; he did not even front. But he popped in and out at will during the day. The hapless member for Light was at one stage left by himself to hold the fort, I think for a couple of hours—and I congratulate members opposite for the number of questions they got in, because, if it had not been for the member for Light, they would have had none and our people would have had to sit here in silence, having asked their questions, and we would have had to cancel the whole thing. So, it is very interesting indeed—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: I am congratulating the honourable member, but he is hapless in the sense that his colleagues had deserted him, in particular the Leader of the Opposition, who is inveighing against the failure of the Government to answer his probing and consistent questions. What a farce! Indeed, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition thought that the Committee was so important that he could turn up 1½ hours or so late to take his place before that Committee. That is the sort of attitude and slackness that typifies it. The Committee started at 9.30: I understand that he appeared at 11 a.m.

The Hon. J.W. Slater: If they hadn't rung him up, he mightn't have come at all.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: The member for Gilles is quite right: he obviously had to be contacted. Okay, for whatever reasons, all those times were published. This is the area in which he was involved and, as I say, that does not excuse either the Leader of the Opposition simply waltzing in and out of the Committee as and when he wanted. He treated it with contempt and now he wants us to believe in his hypocritical response, as the estimates come before this House, that he was not able to probe and question sufficiently, that he was not provided with information, and so on.

Mr Oswald interjecting:

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: The honourable member can relax. At least he is in a very safe seat. Under the present boundaries he will be the member for Morphett here. He may be even down in the front after the next election over there, and good luck to him.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: There might not be too many left. It is all about failure—the failure to do so. What I searched for in vain was some kind of constructive advice.

All right, if this current system is so bad, if the opportunity to question Ministers and all their public servants, and so on, is such a bad thing, what alternatives are there? There was a complaint about the number of public servants present. I thought that the Opposition wanted access to those people. I must admit that I am concerned, too, about tying up such large numbers of people during the day when they could be doing much more productive work, when such a futile performance of questioning is going on from the Opposition. I would prefer to send them all back and suggest that they work productively in the office.

Mr Olsen interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: Yes, he wants the team there, but he does not really want to question them. Then at the end of the day he wants to criticise us for having them there and say that we are wasting their time. If that is what the Leader of the Opposition wants, we will not have any public servants at my Committees. I am happy about that, but I understood that that was what the Opposition wanted.

Members interjecting:

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

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: Where is the constructive advice or the concrete suggestions or some sort of alternative? If the Opposition has those, if it has other ideas, let us look at them. Instead of this carping and whining approach that we have had throughout this process, let us hear something constructive, and then we can feel more confidence in the process. I reject those criticisms, and next year we will continue to provide even more information as we refine this process, and we will continue to give the Opposition access to every Minister, and those who advise the Ministers, directly for a full day to question them as they like.

I hope that in future we do not get this miserable attempt to fob off their failure; the fact that the media are complaining that they seem to be doing nothing and getting nothing out of them, and all these other excuses that they are building up for that; I hope that we get no more of that in the future.

Motion carried.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON (Premier and Treasurer): I move:

That the remainder of the Bill be agreed to.

Motion carried.

Bill read a third time and passed.

BUSINESS FRANCHISE (PETROLEUM PRODUCTS) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 27 August. Page 683.)

Mr OLSEN (Leader of the Opposition): I open this debate for the Opposition by first commending the Government and giving the Premier and Treasurer—I wonder whether I should still do it after his last contribution, but I will—for exempting most of rural South Australia from the impact of the increase in taxation. This is long overdue recognition of the very heavy and disproportionate burden which falls on these areas through the cost of fuel. While the wide disparity between metropolitan and non-metropolitan fuel prices means that the benefit will be marginal, this recognition of the Government inherent in the decision is welcomed by the Opposition. It is only unfortunate that any benefit is going to be offset to some extent by the decision in the Federal budget to reduce fuel subsidies to isolated communities.

Before announcing the Opposition's full attitude to this Bill, I invite the House to consider some of the history of this particular tax. This will justify an important amendment that I will seek to move at a later stage. A State tax on petroleum products has applied in South Australia since October 1979. The enabling legislation was introduced by the Corcoran Government just before it lost office. Moving the second reading of the Business Franchise (Petroleum Products) Act on 31 July 1979, the then Transport Minister, Geoff Virgo, described it thus:

> A Bill to replace the loss of road revenue resulting from a decision earlier this year by all States, to abolish road maintenance charges.

He promised that the measure would do nothing more than offset the loss in revenue from road maintenance charges, so that Government road programs could continue. The Liberal Party at the time questioned this commitment to emphasise its view that once the legislation went onto the statute books, it must not be manipulated by a subsequent Government to become more a general revenue raiser rather than simply a source of funds exclusively for road building.

Mr Virgo had some strident things to say about that. For example, I quote his words from the second reading debate of 1 August 1979. This is what Geoff Virgo had to say about this legislation:

> A lot of foolish statements have been made. I am reminded of, I think, the member for Torrens, and certainly the Leader of the Opposition, talking about the Government's using this Bill as a means of supplementing the State's revenue. No-one who has read the Bill could make such a studid statement because, if members cared to read clause 30, they would see that it provides that the total fund, less the cost of collection, must go into the Highways Fund.

And Mr Virgo again stated:

> The money raised in this area will be used for road purposes, and clause 30 makes this abundantly clear. Anyone who cannot understand that does not deserve to be on the payroll as a Parliamentarian.

What has happened since these concrete commitments by Mr Virgo further proves two things: first, whenever Labor makes a tax promise, do not believe it; it will be broken; secondly, whenever Liberals warn about Labor's tax promises, the public should take heed. Invariably, Labor's promises are broken. Unfortunately for taxpayers, our warnings are usually vindicated.

In 1983, this Government did what Mr Virgo unequivocally promised Labor would not do. It began to use this tax as a generator of general revenue. In putting up the rate of the tax, this Government amended the Bill to siphon off some of the money to fund its public sector growth policies rather than to build more roads and improve existing ones. At the stroke of the Premier's pen, the principle of this tax was changed in 1983. The Bill before the House today destroys the principle for ever. The amendments in 1983 required the Government to at least maintain, in subsequent years, the amount in money terms paid into the Highways Department from the collection of this tax in 1982-83.

In that year the contribution to the Highways Fund from collection of this tax was $25.7 million, and in every year since the contribution has been maintained at this same amount, resulting in a very significant drop in real terms. Over the past four financial years, slightly under half of the proceeds of this tax have been diverted to general revenue rather than into the Highways Fund for road construction and maintenance purposes. However, this financial year, unless the Government changes its policy, the diversion of funds will become much greater.

In real terms, the benefit to general revenue will be very significant—$25.7 million in 1983 is worth only $18.8 million today. This means that the amount of petrol tax contributed to the fund this financial year will be $6.9 million less in real terms than it was in 1982-83. This comparison with 1982-83 shows that while the full proceeds of the tax in that year were used to build roads, this year the proportion will be only just over a third. The Premier is now completely overturning the principle upon which this tax was first levied. Mr Deputy Speaker, I seek leave to insert in *Hansard* a table which is purely statistical.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can the Leader assure me that it is purely statistical?

Mr OLSEN: Yes, Sir.

Leave granted.

Financial Year	Total Petrol Taxes ($M)	Transfer to Highways Fund ($M)	Transfer to General Revenue ($M)
1982-83	25.8	25.7[1]	—
1983-84	38.5	25.7	12.8
1984-85	48.5	25.7	22.8
1985-86	46.4	25.7	20.7
1986-87	47.3	25.7	21.6
1987-88	70.5[2]	25.7[3]	44.8[3]

1. Total collections less cost attributable to administration of the Act.
2. Budget Estimates—1987-88.
3. Assuming transfer to Highways Fund of an amount no less than that received in the 1982-83 financial year.

Mr OLSEN: The table demonstrates the increasing benefit to general revenue from this tax, at the expense of the Highways Fund and South Australia's road system. Had the Premier applied this tax as it was originally intended, it would have been sufficient to begin the north-south corridor and to maintain an adequate program of rural road construction and improvement. If this year's budget estimates are met, they will mean that since the Premier began misusing this tax almost $120 million in petrol taxes will have been diverted from the Highways Department to general revenue.

While increasingly the motoring public is having to contend with congested urban and poorly maintained rural roads, the Treasury is getting fatter. And this is not the only way in which motorists are being cheated. The cost of drivers' licences and motor vehicle registrations has also escalated under this Government. When this Government came to office, the cost per registered motor vehicle in South Australia of the petrol tax and driver's licence and motor vehicle registration fees was $103.80 per year. At the end of this financial year, this will have more than doubled to $212.55. When this Government came to office, this tax was adding 1.5c a litre to the price of petrol. This measure proposes to increase the cost to most motorists to 4.5c a litre. Motorists are being ripped off in a completely unprecedented and I suggest unprincipled way.

When Canberra's contribution is added—the Commonwealth's excises from petroleum products have increased by 260 per cent over the past four years, not to mention the $375 million Canberra expects to collect from the fringe benefits tax on motor vehicles this financial year—the reasons for the alarming slump in motor vehicles sales become obvious. There would have been less reason for complaint had a significant proportion of this extra Government revenue from motorists been channelled into building better roads. However, the higher the tax take from motorists has become, the less has been spent on roads.

Over the past four years, total Commonwealth allocations to the States for roads have fallen in real terms by more than 3 per cent, and this Government has failed to get a fair deal for South Australia. With 9 per cent of total motor vehicle registrations, South Australia's share of Commonwealth road funds during this period has been only just over 8 per cent. This Government's raid on the Highways Fund has meant a fall of more than 6 per cent in real terms in spending on road construction and maintenance. If this situation is allowed to continue, our road network will become a shambles and deteriorate, particularly our country roads, and that will add to what one can only describe as our already too high road toll.

This tax is inflationary. It costs jobs in the way in which it is applied. If all the money to be collected this financial year was put into the Highways Fund, it would support at least 1 500 jobs in road construction and maintenance. For all these reasons, my Party believes that this Government must be forced to adhere more closely to the principle upon which this tax was first introduced. Accordingly, in the Committee stage I will seek to require the Government, from the next financial year, to allocate half of the proceeds from this tax to the Highways Fund. This will have the effect of making available at least an extra $14 million in 1988-89 for road building as a first step towards confronting the massive backlog in road building programs throughout the State. As well, it will guarantee motorists a fairer and better deal.

Mr INGERSON (Bragg): I support the Leader of the Opposition's comments, particularly in relation to the lack of money going into the Highways Fund. I point out that in 1979-80 the entire $14.2 million in fuel tax collections went into the Highways Fund, and that continued until 1982-83 when $25.79 million (or 100 per cent of the moneys collected) went into the Highways Fund. Since then that figure has reduced from 100 per cent down to the 34 per cent which will be paid into the fund this year. I also note that, in putting all that extra money into general revenue, in 1983-84 only $5.5 million of the $38 million collected went into the Highways Fund; in 1984-85, $200 000 went into the fund out of a collection of $48.48 million; and in 1985-86, $12.26 million of the $46 million collected went into the fund.

I also note that last year the Government promised that $12 million out of general revenue would go into the Highways Fund but, because of the sale of property, that never occurred. So we had a situation where Commonwealth funded money which had gone to purchase houses was used to replace the $12 million from State revenue. It is a pity that that has occurred. There is no question that the Highways Fund is being rapidly depleted because the State Government is using it for general use.

I will now take the opportunity to read into *Hansard* letters that I have received from the RAA, the MTA and a small country carrier. The letter from the RAA states:

> The association is most concerned that the Government is further extending its use of funds derived from the State fuel tax for general revenue purposes.
>
> As you are aware, the tax was introduced to replace the loss of revenue resulting from abolition of the road maintenance tax which was a reflection of the additional damage caused to the road system by heavy vehicles. The net proceeds from the road maintenance tax was dedicated to the Highways Fund and in the period 1979-80 to 1982-83, the net collections from the State fuel tax were also earmarked for road funding purposes. The original purpose of revenue from State fuel tax is further demonstrated by the fact that car registration fees were initially reduced by 30 per cent to offset fuel tax payments by private motorists to provide some degree of equity between private motorists and heavy vehicle operators.

In 1983-84 the Government started to divert some of the revenue collected for general revenue raising purposes. This move breached the principle upon which the fuel tax introduction was based.

The provisions of the Bill will return approximately $75 million in a full year of which only $25.726 million will be credited to the Highways Fund. This creates a situation where the proportion of net proceeds allocated to the Highways Fund will have reduced from 100 per cent in 1982-83 to approximately 34 per cent. This situation is totally unacceptable to the association.

Of further concern is the fact that the 'contributions' made to the Highways Fund from general revenue in recent years are in fact loans to the Highways Department on which interest payments from the Highways Fund must be made. We view this as a case of 'double dipping'. Not only is the Government withholding funds from road improvements but it has also made loans to the Highways Department from funds which should rightfully be credited to the fund under the principle upon which the State fuel tax was originally established.

It is clear that the Government is looking to the motorists more and more for collection of tax revenue without providing corresponding increases in road funding.

At the very least the association believes the Bill should be amended to provide for a significant increase in the appropriation to the Highways Fund from the revenue raised.

In other words, the RAA clearly supports the argument put forward by the Leader of the Opposition. I now refer to comments that were made by the Motor Trade Association of South Australia Incorporated. Its concerns relate mainly to the policing area. In correspondence forwarded to me the association states:

MTA understands that revenue collection through taxation (under any guise) on petrol and motor fuels is a simple and reasonably fair way to generate a huge income.

Mr OSWALD: Mr Acting Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House, there being virtually no members at all left on the Government benches.

A quorum having been formed:

Mr INGERSON: The letter further states:

While oil companies will inevitably be the tax collector, it is the service station operator, not the motorist, who will pay the tax initially, given the ongoing retail discounting.

Due to the foregoing, a differential rate of 2c and 1c in the zones represents, in many instances, an amount of money per tanker load that equates with the gross profit margin realised by the service station operator.

In these circumstances, and due to the untraceable nature of the product, MTA believes that the temptation for operators to perpetrate a taxation fraud is high. Such action, while illegal, will be taken by people desperate to keep their businesses viable in the prevailing pricing conditions. As well as breaking the law, those operators who choose to run the gauntlet will also be the subject of TWU industrial action.

MTA and TWU have enjoyed a harmonious relationship in order to protect the fuel supplies in the State. We fear that this will be in jeopardy.

The TWU and the Australian petroleum Agents and Distributors Association (APADA) share our concerns equally and we believe that the Australian Institute of Petroleum (AIP) is also concerned.

At close to $800 per 40 000 litre tankwagon, the risk is financially worth taking.

We understand the Premier's commitment to introduce the new tax on 1 November and recognise the need to abide by such a commitment to bring a measure of petrol price relief to rural buyers (this measure will not actually achieve such a goal). However, we urge the Parliament to withdraw the concept of zoning and introduce an alternative measure which will achieve the same objective.

The precedent set in New South Wales clearly shows the concept of zoning with different tax rates to be practically unworkable and requiring further draconian patch-up legislation.

A further letter that I received from a country carrier makes the following comment:

Our business premises is situated at Williamstown within zone 1 (50 km radius of Adelaide GPO), and therefore subject to 2c per litre increase in fuel costs. We already pay higher registration fees than a lot of our nearby opposition that is, in the Barossa Valley, Mount Pleasant areas, and the extra burden of higher fuel rates will certainly place us in a disadvantageous position when quoting for jobs. Our business operations cover a large area of the State, particularly the Mid North, Riverland and Upper South-East, where fuel prices would be 2c per litre less than our costs. I believe that this proposed increase is total discrimination towards the Adelaide and surrounding areas transport operators, and creates unfair competition within the transport industry.

The average fuel consumption of our vehicles is 1.77 km, per litre, and the average distance travelled per year is 100 000 km. Therefore, the increase in fuel costs to us would be approximately $1 130 per year per vehicle, a certain and unfair disadvantage.

I believe that it is high time the Government looked at assisting the road transport industry, rather than continually increasing taxes and fees. Registration fees which are continually increasing, sales tax on vehicles and parts etc., and approximately 60 per cent, of the cost of fuel going in Government excise and levies are all contributors to the crippling of the transport industries. We provide an important service to the rural community of our State, and increases in cost of this service certainly add to their economic plight.

This afternoon another local transport company operator telephoned me. He made a similar sort of comment. He travels between Adelaide and Sydney. He uses about 1 500 litres of petrol to fill his vehicle here in Adelaide, and under the new system it will cost him an extra $30 per trip per truck. On average, he sends 10 trucks per week and so under the new measure it will cost him an extra $30 a week to fill his vehicles with petrol. He pointed out that if he were to fill them at Renmark he would be able to reduce the cost of trips by about $300 a week. He has suggested that he will put enough fuel in the trucks to take him to Renmark and then fill them up there and then go through to Sydney.

The fuel will be cheaper because he bills the companies direct; he does not have to worry about whether petrol in the metropolitan area is at a higher or lower price, as he gets it at a company contract price. However, because he will be charged for the cost of petrol in the metropolitan area at 2c a litre more, the cost of his operating 10 trucks on the Adelaide to Sydney run will be in the order of $300 a week. Like many other people who have telephoned me, he is concerned about the very dramatic increase in transport costs that will occur and, of course, such transport costs are passed on to the consumer by way of price increases, because, as everyone in the transport industry knows, these costs can no longer be absorbed.

Mr OSWALD (Morphett): As a matter of policy I cannot possibly support this legislation. It deals directly with something that I do not believe in, namely, the use of funds derived from taxes on motorists for purposes other than road construction. For the second time to my knowledge, we in the south-western suburbs have seen a Government utilising its powers to shift revenue into general revenue and away from a use that is beneficial to motorists. The first instance that I recall was when the Government proceeded to sell off the north-south corridor between Darlington and Anzac Highway. The valuations that were put in the register when those properties were purchased were taken into account when the properties were sold recently. All that the Highways Department Fund saw was an amount commensurate with the valuation of the properties at the time of purchase. However, those properties were sold, some 10, 15 or 20 years after the time of purchase, and the value had escalated due to inflation; that inflated sum less the original book value went into general revenue. A quite considerable amount of that money used for the purchase of properties was Commonwealth money, which had been sent here to South Australia and dedicated for use on roads. By selling off property acquired for the north-south corridor the State Government was in fact able to shift that Commonwealth dedicated road money across into general revenue to prop up its general revenue account.

Now we have another situation where the Government has, by policy, decided to tax the motorist once again, and in this case to shift about $44 million across into general revenue. During the Estimates Committees I asked the Minister of Transport why the Government could not proceed with a third arterial road—bearing in mind that a third arterial road would cost some $50 million, spread over five years. The answer I received was that it would not proceed because of insufficient funds. I put to the Treasurer with the generation of some $44 million extra a year from the measure before us this road project over five years could be paid for out of just one year's extra revenue collected from the motorists. In fairness to the south-western suburbs and to the developing southern suburbs, the Government really must give this consideration. We know that the Government probably has no intention of doing that, as it just sees motorists as being another source of revenue and the gas pump operators as being tax collecting agents for it. However, it is imperative that the Government has regard for the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition to ensure that a part of the money that is now being gathered as general tax revenue will get back to the motorist.

The south-western suburbs are in diabolical trouble in the matter of long-term strategic planning. I have talked at great length in this House about the lack of foresight on the part of the Government to plan for the southern suburbs and about how traffic from the southern suburbs can proceed up to the Darlington interchange and then out onto the various five roads that proceed from the area.

Without encroaching on another area of the debate, I merely tell the Treasurer that the revenue that is being taken from the motorist could be used on behalf of the motorist and solve once and for all our southern transport problems. I ask him to consider that aspect. I oppose the measure and support the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow Minister of Transport, but I shall not go through the points that they have raised except to say that their arguments are well founded.

Mr LEWIS (Murray-Mallee): When, I wonder, is it legitimate to ask how one can tell whether or not a Labor member of Parliament is telling fibs? Is it when he or she is pulling his or her ear lobe or rubbing the chin or top of the lip when speaking, or is it when he or she is rubbing his or her hands in front of the body when speaking? No, it is none of these things: it is when the Labor member opens the mouth and speaks. That is the case in this instance. A clear cut promise was given and funds were obtained.

The Hon. J.C. Bannon: Your statement does you no credit at all.

Mr LEWIS: It would do the Premier some credit only if he honoured the commitments he has given the people of South Australia. That is where it comes unstuck and that is what makes my constituents angry.

Mr Olsen: Broken promises.

Mr LEWIS: Yes, involving the Premier's very own constituents. The Premier should consider seriously the implications of his behaviour and of his Ministers in that respect. If this measure was not intended, as has been pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition, for the purpose of providing funds for making roads and providing an adequate infrastructure of the means by which the public can commute with safety and in convenience and comfort from place to place, why on earth was it introduced?

Can we believe former Minister of Transport, Virgo? No, we cannot. It would not be the first time that he said something on which the Labor Party reneged or on which he changed his mind later. However, in this instance the tragic thing is that, whereas the Premier has argued in explaining the Bill and has apparently exempted people outside Adelaide from the effects of the tax, that is a Clayton's exemption. Did you realise that, Mr Speaker?

There are two funny (as in 'peculiar', not 'humorous') aspects of the provisions in the Bill. The first is the provision in clause 6, which amends section 18 of the principal Act by striking out subsection (1) *(a)* and substituting the following paragraph:

(a) for a class A licence—$50 plus—

(i) 10 per cent of the value of motor spirit and 12.2 per cent of the value of diesel fuel sold by the applicant during the relevant period and destined for consumption in zone 1;

(ii) 7.7 per cent of the value of motor spirit and 10 per cent of the value of diesel fuel sold by the applicant during the relevant period and destined for consumption in zone 2;

and

(iii) 5.5 per cent of the value of motor spirit and 7.7 per cent of the value of diesel fuel sold by the applicant during the relevant period and destined for consumption in zone 3;.

Zone 3 is to be farther than 100 kilometres from the General Post Office, Adelaide. So, if the fuel is bought in zone 3, it must be destined for consumption in zone 3. The name of the Bill gives us some idea of the relevance of the point that I am about to make which involves the Business Franchise (Petroleum Products) Act Amendment Bill.

Last session we passed the Business Franchise (Tobacco Products) Act and we all know the effect of the similar provisions of that legislation since it was enforced. Does the Premier now contemplate having inspectors standing outside transport depots and the homes of people in the metropolitan area when they have just returned to Adelaide with a full tank of fuel having filled their tanks at a place just over 100 kilometres from Adelaide in zone 3 with the clear intention of using most of that fuel for their commuting in zone 1? Will he do the same as he has done in respect of people selling tobacco brought from another State? Does the Premier intend to enforce this idiot legislation in that way?

Then there is the Clayton's aspect of the legislation: the regrettable and unfortunate consequence will be to not provide exemptions for the people whom I represent in most cases, because the tax will be charged on the distributors who deliver this fuel to the end user in country areas. Where the distributor's depot is registered under the terms of the relevant legislation relating to the registration of fuel dumps and depots will determine the tax paid on the fuel that is distributed from it. Even though, in the case of someone at Murray Bridge, Bow Hill or Tailem Bend, the depot is just inside the 100 kilometre radius, in zone 2, many of the customers would be outside that area. The poor sods getting their fuel from the chaps who have their depots inside the 100-kilometre radius will pay the tax; therefore it is a Clayton's exemption and is not fair.

Of course, the way around that is to stupidly waste what we consider to be finite and precious resources and carry the fuel farther afield to a depot outside the limit and distribute it from there, because there is no provision in the legislation—nor, as far as I am aware, is it to be included in any regulation—to enable a rebate to be made to those customers who buy the fuel and use it outside the zone in which the distributor's premises are located. They will end up paying the tax even though one would take the Government at its word in this instance and sincerely believe that it did not intend that to be the case. The idiocy with which the legislation has been drawn up would clearly mean that that is the case.

The only other thing which needs to be highlighted about this legislation, because it causes me concern and hurt, relates to the nefarious way in which the Government has otherwise deceitfully used money raised for the purpose of providing the network of roads used by South Australians and those who come from other States to get around safely and comfortably. It seems to me anyway that, even if the sum that goes into the dedicated fund continues to be $25.7 million (and one hopes that the Premier will at least listen to reason and put a reasonable sum into that fund so collected from this tax and make it at least half by agreeing to the amendment of the Leader), it will be possible for the Highways Department to defeat the intention of that by simply buying one or two blocks of land, paying a ridiculous figure for it, selling it again, and putting the proceeds into general revenue where those proceeds are greater than the price paid for the land. For instance, any Government department could buy land from the Highways Department for $1 having used money from this fund to purchase it initially. It could then sell it the next day for say $2 million putting the $1 999 999 straight into general revenue (and I would not put that past it).

The Hon. H. ALLISON (Mount Gambier): This Bill increases the cost of fuel in the metropolitan area while exempting most of rural South Australia from that increase. I join the Leader in expressing appreciation on behalf of country people for that action. While I appreciate the Government's consideration of the costs involved in freight and transport for rural areas, because in many cases there is little or no public transport, and a heavy dependency on road transport to get people to Adelaide or other capitals for both the supply and the marketing of their produce, I point out that this legislation does not remove the considerable difference that has long existed between city and rural petrol prices and other fuel prices. In Mount Gambier, for example, the price of petrol is 61c a litre at all outlets while in Adelaide it is frequently as low as 39c to 41c a litre.

Mr Ingerson: It is 38.9c today.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: Yes, I saw petrol at 38.9c a litre at the dealership I frequent on Greenhill Road, Glenside. The cost of filling the 80 litre tank in my car is $48.80 in Mount Gambier, and at 39c a litre $31.20 in Adelaide, a difference of $17.60. At 49c a litre (and I have rarely paid more than that per litre in Adelaide over the past few years) it costs $39.20 to fill my 80 litre fuel tank, a difference of $9.60. However, margins are far wider than the 2.5c a litre freight differential that one has to pay for transporting fuel from Adelaide to Mount Gambier. As a matter of fact, fuel for Mount Gambier comes a shorter distance, generally from Portland only some 70 miles down the road.

I ask the Government to pay attention to that substantial difference between Adelaide prices and country prices which will still exist after this legislation is enacted and which adds a considerable additional cost to living in rural South Australia. These cost differences are not occasional ones. Every week I travel to and from Mount Gambier by road and almost without fail I can purchase cheap fuel either at one of the three service stations at Eagle on the Hill or at the toll gate fuel outlet. I am sure that members realise that they are not necessarily the cheapest outlets in Adelaide.

I support the Leader's request for fuel levies to go towards road construction and not into general revenue. The Government would be well aware of the deterioration of the new freeway between Adelaide and Murray Bridge, particularly near Murray Bridge where the inside lanes are badly chopped up and have been under repair for several months. There is also deterioration of the Coorong/Princes Highway road and many other older rural roads which are heavily used by transports and private vehicles, essential transport which enables country towns to survive. I ask the Premier to use this money wisely for the betterment of roads in rural South Australia.

Mr M.J. EVANS (Elizabeth): I will use this opportunity to remind the House of discussions that took place when it agreed to a private member's resolution introduced by me relating to replacement of many present charges on motor vehicles users (such as drivers licence fees, third party insurance, and registration fees) with a supplementary petroleum products franchise fee.

The House accepted that resolution and referred it to the Minister of Transport for further investigation. I am sure that that investigation is under way and that in due course we will hear the Government's attitude to this matter. This Bill goes part of the way towards introducing some of the measures that would be required under such a regime and highlights the relative efficiency with which this taxation can be raised. There is no doubt that some members have spoken against the tax and the way in which it might be applied. I am sure that their arguments were well put and will be well answered, but that is irrelevant to the point that I am making in relation to the efficiency with which this particular aspect of taxation is being dealt with in respect of taxpayers.

As taxpayers we should all be concerned with efficiency and as policy makers members of this House in particular should be concerned with efficiency to ensure that as much of the tax as possible is directed to useful community works and as little as possible is directed to enforcing, collecting and administering the tax. Certainly, in this case the number of taxpayers is small, because the tax is paid very much at the wholesale level where the petrol is brought into South Australia or produced at Port Stanvac. It is collected very efficiently and there is no difficulty with its administration. The Motor Registration Division, on the other hand, is somewhat chaotic these days, as one sees at regional offices. The Elizabeth office is next door to my electorate office and one sees many people inside and many people required to assist in administering the system. A great deal of money changes hands every day.

Of course, that introduces inherent inefficiencies into the system, increasing the cost to taxpayers of collecting that diverse range of individual taxes. It opens up an opportunity for fraud and misdirection of revenue and allows people to defeat the revenue expectations of the Government, either deliberately or, in some cases, accidentally because of confusion with the system, failure to receive notices, and the like, and general administrative problems. If the Government was to direct its mind to the merits of replacing those diverse taxes in total there could be no element of trading one off against the other without complete replacement of the diverse range of small charges now levied against motorists; unless they are replaced in total and the other items incur no charges at all, the system obviously will not work.

At the moment we have a system which allows a differentiation between city and country. There are zones specified in the legislation which will permit concessions to be extended to country areas. That is obviously something that the House would commend the Government for. It also ensures that there is much greater equity between taxpayers in relation to the whole system. I hope that members will not react to this legislation on the basis of an increase in taxation but will look at the opportunity it provides, without increasing the overall burden on taxpayers, to improve the efficiency of taxation collection. While we may all be opposed to taxation in general, the fact is that it is essential and it

is important, in my view, that it be collected in the most cost effective way possible and with the greatest equity for taxpayers.

I will comment briefly on the nature of this legislation and the constitutional basis for it, linked as it is in that sense with the tobacco franchise legislation. Unfortunately, State taxes on petroleum and tobacco have a chequered constitutional history. I do not want to go into that too deeply, because some of those issues are presently being considered again and, of course, there have been wins and losses for the States in that respect. I hope that the Government of this State, and the Commonwealth Government, is looking towards the long-term stability of this legislation, because as the State becomes more and more dependent on it it would be quite catastrophic if any legal technicality were to strike it down.

I do not believe that that will occur. I believe that it is an important part of the State's taxing armoury and should be well and truly legislated into existence by the Commonwealth in a way which will not be amenable to attack, because, whilst it can constantly be discussed in the community as being in some way deficient, I believe that it exposes a very important part of the State's economy to uncertainty, and that must be undesirable. The fact is that this legislation has been tested over time but is still not in an utterly unambiguous position with respect to the Constitution and, given the review of the Constitution federally in the next 12 to 18 months, I hope that the opportunity will not be lost to place the State's position beyond dispute in this regard.

It is an unfortunately capricious High Court, sometimes, which examines these matters. Victoria, of course, lost the case with respect to its pipelines taxation not that long ago. Although these two are not that similar, one cannot lose sight of that problem. I would certainly not expect the Premier to respond in any way (as I know he would not) which would indicate what the State was negotiating with the Commonwealth along those lines. I simply wanted to draw attention to that, because, clearly, those things should be beyond doubt, and uncertainty is far more of a concern than a certain position, even if it is unfavourable to us.

I hope that, in the next 12 to 18 months, when the Commonwealth Constitution is reviewed, this matter can be looked at again and, hopefully, put irrevocably beyond doubt for the future so that the States may base their fiscal policy-making decisions on a much greater degree of certainty than they have enjoyed in the past.

Mr BLACKER (Flinders): I will be extremely brief with this matter. This Bill is a result of the Government's budget announcement that it intended to introduce an additional petroleum tax on a zoned basis. I wish to have recognised the fact that the country areas, particularly those farther out, outside the 100-kilometre radius, have been exempted from an increase in tax. It was a very clever move by the Government to effectively increase its taxation base, at the same time as making a minimal impact in electorate terms, and from that point of view I think it needs to be recognised that the Government has in this instance recognised those country areas. Just to say that country areas will not face an increase in taxation is really not enough in today's economic climate.

The community is looking for a reduction in costs and, of course, the cost of petroleum products is one of the greater costs associated with country areas. This goes across all portfolios, from tourism to agriculture, to production, to fishing through the whole gamut. Petroleum products play a large part. I am interested in the concept behind the foreshadowed amendment—that more of the money should be tied to expenditure on roads.

I know that there are some constitutional dilemmas about that proposal but, to my mind, it is not unreasonable that moneys which have been collected as a result of a fuel tax (in other words, taxation on roads) should be spent on roads. I think that one could take this back to the ABRD program, where the former coalition Government had tied down a program so that the money collected under the ABRD fuel funding had to be spent on roads. There was a sunset clause which would run out in 1988. The present Federal Government has changed that, and it is that very principle of ostensibly collecting moneys from fuel, in the eyes of the public, for use in the area of roads when, in fact, half of it goes back to general revenue, to which I refer. Much the same principle applies to this, and I think that this point needs to be recognised.

The point raised by the member for Elizabeth involving doing away with registrations and fuel tax and bringing in a completely new registration type of scheme is one with which I cannot come to terms, mainly because those farthest out will be the most severely affected. Of course, those farthest out are those in the agricultural pursuit areas. Anything which will increase the costs to those people is something I will strongly oppose.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON (Premier and Treasurer): First, I would like to thank the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Mount Gambier, who specifically referred favourably to the zoning arrangements, and I express my appreciation of their comments. As the member for Flinders has just said, in drawing up this measure we have had regard to the situation that exists in the marketplace, and attempted to ensure that there is minimal or nil impact on those who, at the moment anyway, do not seem to have access to discounting or a cheaper price structure for petrol. The consequence will be that, while the much-needed revenue for the State can be collected, it can be done in a way that will not put members of the community or motorists at a major disadvantage. As I have said before, in terms of the overall level of tax in this area we are certainly not out of kilter with what is happening around the country.

The only other aspect to which I wish to refer is the question of the Highways Fund and the amounts of money to be placed in it. What has been overlooked—and I do not intend to get into the detail of the figures and contributions, and so on—is that a minimum guarantee is provided to the Highways Fund. Other funds are applied to it and, if necessary, as we indicated last year, applications of general revenue—a recycling, if you like, of money collected through the motorist—will take place. The reductions and difficulties that have occurred in highways funding—and, really, there has been major activity and major increases until quite recently—are largely due to the reduction in Federal funding in this area.

The State's own contribution to highways and highways construction has increased in real terms. While we certainly have not been able to make up the total shortfall, I believe that, in terms of the overall priorities of the Government program, roads and highways have been looked after very well indeed. That is surely the bottom line. If the State has (as, indeed, it does have) responsibilities in education, health and various other areas, it is a little difficult to earmark one section and say that, because something comes from a particular area of activity, the whole of it must go into that area, even though that might mean that we can have gilt-edged roads yet no hospitals or schools of any quality.

Increasingly, if one looks at the pattern of raisings in the various States, we are being confronted with the very nar-

rowness of our taxation base at the State level, and recourse to some elements of these raisings to be put into the general revenue can, I think, be justified. That is not unreasonable, provided we are maintaining our priorities and our commitments to that sector to the greatest extent possible in overall terms. I believe that we are.

The member for Elizabeth mentioned his proposal, which is under investigation by the Minister of Transport. Again, I would say that the simplification of our tax system is a very sensible thing but, of course, if that was done I think the argument for it being treated as a general revenue source, of which a large proportion could be applied to the highways and roads program, would be even stronger. In other words, it is seen as a source of general revenue collection. However, we have not reached that stage and it does have constitutional, legal and other implications which need to be looked at. In the meantime, this measure is reasonable, and I commend it to the House.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clause 1 passed.

Clause 2—'Commencement.'

Mr OLSEN: I move:

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Line 13—Leave out 'This' and insert 'Subject to subsection (2), this'.

After line 13—Insert subclause as follows:

(2) Section 7 will come into operation on 1 July 1988.

In moving the amendment, I will use this clause as a test. If it is successful, I will look at a further amendment. If it is unsuccessful, I will not proceed here, but we will seek so to do in another place. In response to the Premier's remarks at the close of the second reading, I reiterate that while the $25.7 million is a basic guaranteed amount, according to the Premier, to the Highways Fund, the fact is that in real terms it has been a significantly reduced amount by about $6.9 million since 1982-83, when the Premier changed the method of disbursement of funds collected under petrol and franchise fees.

When this legislation was introduced, it had specific objectives. Those objectives have now been broken and the motorists who are paying that penalty, that price, are not getting return service on the penalty applied to them. Following the remarks of the Premier that our road system has been well maintained in South Australia, I hasten to add that, apart from one or two major projects that have received significant Government funds, maintenance on the majority of rural arterial roads and some of the major urban roads has been declining. The lack of maintenance has meant a major decline in the standards of those road surfaces.

In fact, in a large number of country regions in South Australia those road surfaces are degenerating into a dangerous state. That simply cannot be denied. For example, debit order work by the Highways Department has been virtually eliminated; funding through local government authorities for the maintenance of rural arterial roads is nigh on non-existent, to the extent that many local government authorities throughout South Australia have had to retrench staff who have been part of their work and road maintenance gangs for many years. All this is the result of the change in policy, the siphoning off, the redirection of funds away from the Highways Fund, a specific purpose fund, into general revenue.

My amendment simply seeks not to interfere with a money Bill in this financial year but to give notice to the Government that this House and this Parliament believe that there ought to be a guaranteed minimum of 50 per cent of those petrol tax fees allocated for the purpose of road maintenance within South Australia. Not only would it have the capacity to generate jobs in that industry but also there is a component of road safety. How does one put a price on road safety in South Australia?

We are saying that there needs to be an allocation of resources above that which will apply under existing and current legislation to ensure that funds are allocated for road maintenance and programs that will increase safety aspects of those road surfaces in South Australia. We seek not to amend the money Bill this year, but merely to give notice to the Government that in its financial planning from 1 July 1988 it will have to take into account that 50 per cent of funds collected must be designated and dedicated to the Highways Fund for the purposes of road maintenance and the like.

That is quite a reasonable approach. We are breaking away from the principle that was established when the legislation was introduced into Parliament, but even so what we are wanting to do is to get a reasonable and fair approach with this Bill now before the Committee to require the Government to allocate resources for the purposes of road maintenance and support services within South Australia. I commend the amendment to the Committee.

Mr INGERSON: I strongly support the Leader of the Opposition and point out to the Premier two facts that the Leader did not take up. One was the Auditor-General's comment this year that clearly points out that this State is obligated to fund one-for-one any Commonwealth funds that come through from the ABRD or the ALTP program, and he made it clear that there was a shortfall in this funding program that should be made up by the Government as soon as possible. In the Estimates Committee the Minister of Transport recognised that fact and noted that this would be done as soon as possible. It is my understanding that that figure is about $12 million. Many country, major arterial, and suburban roads could be maintained with that sum.

The second point I make in supporting the Leader of the Opposition's amendment is that from 1982 to 1986-87 the sum of $129 million has been taken out of the dedicated fund and placed into general revenue, and only $18 million of that $129 million has found its way back into the Highways Fund. In supporting the comments of the Leader of the Opposition, I believe that it is clear that, if we could put the extra $14 million into the Highways Fund, a significant amount of road maintenance would be possible. If we look at the Highways report this year, one sees clearly that the maintenance area will require more and more funds. That $14 million will make a signficant difference to the maintaining of our roads in this State.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: Naturally, as I foreshadowed in the second reading, I oppose this amendment. To lock any Government—not just this Government but any future Government—into a specific percentage of allocation to another specific area of Government—

Mr Olsen interjecting:

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: Sure, in the 1970s, when it was introduced; I have not argued with what was put before us. That was certainly the case, but we are now in the late 1980s, going into the 1990s, and I hope that people understand that we have major financial problems. If we are to deal with our priorities overall, we have to have some flexibility. I much prefer not to have to move in this area at all.

The fact is that there will be real increases to the Highways Fund. We will maintain a roads program, but I would like to make the other point about this Bill: it increases the tax paid, first, to the metropolitan area and, secondly, to an outer ring. It provides no increase for those beyond that.

The roads that were talked about needing special attention and special money are country regional arterial roads located mostly in those areas where no extra tax will be maintained. In other words, if one accepts the logic of this, aside from the broader principle on which the Opposition is trying to argue, in terms of this specific increase we are asking the metropolitan motorist to pay for the rural road sector.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: There seems to be just a small lack of logic in that. They will not be required to pay more, but it is suggested that all the revenue raised goes out there.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: The reaction from members opposite indicates that I have hit a nerve, so I suppose I do not need to continue. I oppose the amendments.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: Surely the Premier is not serious in the comments that he has just made. The average country motorist—whether an ordinary motorist or a farmer—pays at least 10c a litre more for fuel than motorists in the metropolitan area. It is all well and good for the Premier to claim that a Government can change its mind and take away a dedicated fund as provided under the original legislation, but I point out that there is an increasing death toll on our roads. Just as many city people use and die on country roads. There are too many narrow bitumen roads and too many unsealed country roads and each year we have a massive increase in the death toll. That is absolutely appalling.

The Hon. J.C. Bannon: So far this year it has gone down.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: We still have a few months to go and, in fact, the past week has been disastrous. Unfortunately, anything could happen before the Christmas period is over. Although the Premier is happy to say that the death toll on our roads is down by 20 compared with this time last year, that is still an appalling figure. To have any deaths on the roads—

The Hon. J.C. Bannon interjecting:

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: Of course it is increasing every year, and this year is not yet over. For the Premier to take funds away from an area where we have a massive death toll in my view is absolutely disgraceful.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: The emotional response from the honourable member is somewhat surprising. I was certainly not questioning that we have a massive problem associated with death and injury on our roads. I simply take issue with him when he says it is ever increasing. In terms of miles travelled, the figures have continued to go down even while the actual numbers have risen. This year—and I certainly concede that it is not yet over—there seems to have been some arrest. Of course, that could change but I am surprised that the honourable member is becoming so emotional and agitated. I repeat: we are making major allocations to an ongoing roads and highways program and we will continue to do that. They are the facts.

Mr MEIER: I take issue with the Premier's insinuation that metropolitan motorists subsidise funding for country roads.

The Hon. J.C. Bannon: No.

Mr MEIER: The Premier should check what he said.

The Hon. J.C. Bannon: I said with this increase. I was not talking in general.

Mr MEIER: The Premier said that the money from the metropolitan motorist would be used to help build country roads.

The Hon. J.C. Bannon: The Leader suggested that that happened.

Mr MEIER: I am sure that I did not mishear the Premier. Metropolitan motorists use country roads more than anyone when they travel into the country for long weekends, ordinary weekends and during holidays, and most country people would agree with that. Country roads will continue to go downhill until city motorists accept that their money will have to contribute to their maintenance.

It was disturbing to hear earlier comments which indicated that our country roads are in good shape. Anyone who says that should travel along the roads that lead into my electorate. I know how my back feels whenever I must travel along some of those roads. I am disappointed that the Minister of Transport does not seem to have any feeling for this matter and, in fact, I received correspondence from him the other day about the concept of passing lanes. The Minister said that there is no need for them in this State because our roads are satisfactory. It is an absolute disgrace. Passing lanes would be a sure method of limiting the number of accidents that occur on our roads. We should ensure that our priorities are right. I am disappointed that the Government is not prepared even to consider the Leader of the Opposition's amendments nor the concept that more of the revenue raised from petroleum should go towards the repair and building of roads. It is only commonsense and the sooner the Government sees that the better.

Mr INGERSON: I will make one further comment about the Premier's statement. As I said, the Auditor-General has pointed out that the State has not met its obligations under the Commonwealth funding arrangement for the past two years. I pointed out that in any agreement we need to at least honour our arrangements and commitments with the people we deal with. It seems to me that any agreement entered into by this Government—whether at election time or with another Government—is not honoured. The Auditor-General has clearly pointed out that about $12 million needs to be made up very quickly.

Finally, I point out that over the past five years this money has been shifted from the Highways Fund into general revenue but this is the first year it has dropped below 50 per cent, and in fact the level dropped from 54 per cent last year (or $25 million out of $47 million) to 34 per cent (or $25 million out of $75 million) this year. Our request is simply that the 50 per cent level maintained over the past four years be maintained not this year but in the future.

The Committee divided on the amendments:

Ayes (13)—Messrs Allison, P.B. Arnold, D.S. Baker, Becker, and Blacker, Ms Cashmore, Messrs Eastick, Goldsworthy, Ingerson, Lewis, Meier, Olsen (teller), and Oswald.

Noes (23)—Mr Abbott, Mrs Appleby, Messrs L.M.F. Arnold, Bannon (teller), Crafter, Duigan, and M.J. Evans, Ms Gayler, Messrs Gregory, Groom, Hamilton, Hemmings, Hopgood, Keneally, and Klunder, Ms Lenehan, Messrs McRae, Mayes, Payne, Peterson, Robertson, Slater, and Trainer.

Pairs—Ayes—Messrs S.J. Baker, Chapman, Wotton, and Gunn. Noes—Messrs De Laine, Plunkett, Rann, and Tyler.

Majority of 10 for the Noes.

Amendments thus negatived; clause passed.

Clause 3—'Division of the State into zones.'

Mr INGERSON: Considerable concern has been expressed by the MTA about the policing of the zones. Can the Premier give us some assurances as to how that will occur?

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: We have certainly addressed that problem. The Commissioner of Taxes, of course, has surveillance and other checking procedures at his disposal. We have also had (this has been the case in the past and we expect it to continue in future) good support from oil companies and others. We do not anticipate any major

problems. I have had that communication from the MTA and we have looked at the matter closely. I believe that its concerns are unfounded, unless a deliberate attempt is made to abuse the system. In that instance we believe that there are ways that we can detect such abuse. If it is apparent that the system is not working I give notice that we have recourse to legislation similar to that which applies in New South Wales. Because New South Wales has been handling its system for some time we know that there are some measures that we could introduce if necessary. They will not be introduced at this stage because they involve what I regard as fairly onerous record keeping, noting, and so on, which I do not think need be necessary. But, as I say, we do stand ready to do that if there is abuse.

Mr INGERSON: The concern expressed by the MTA, as referred to in that letter that I read out previously, is that the system in New South Wales is not working. Therefore, I come back to my original question: how does the Government intend to police this program?

Mr LEWIS: I seek from the Premier an explanation of what is to happen in circumstances where a customer is, say, well outside zone 2 but purchases petrol—motor spirit or distillate—from within zone 2. How do people become eligible for a rebate when the tax is calculated in relation to the location of the depot from which fuel is received? Is there some provision in the regulations and the way that the Act will be administered, or is that an anomaly that we will just ignore?

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: I am advised that we do not have a system for rebate to end-user. The depot purchasing question is being addressed in the practical operation of this, and I think it can be overcome. I refer back to the question that the member for Bragg asked about the situation in New South Wales: the legislation under which they are operating is fairly new and, obviously, its overall effectiveness has not yet been properly tested. However, our advice is that it is working. Obviously, we will monitor what sort of bugs or problems they have there. However, I again point out that I am confident that people in South Australia will observe the law and do the right thing. The past record certainly indicates that. We have had zoning in this State in the past as well, in the 1970s, and there were no major problems then. We will monitor the situation. We do have inspection and other powers that can be exercised and we do have legislation that we will introduce if necessary. However, as I have said, we wish to avoid that. As the industry realises that that sort of legislation would impose burdens on it and would involve the consuming of time and, ultimately, money, there is probably no point in trying to buck the system.

Mr LEWIS: I do not want to delay the Committee, but I simply place on record the fact that I think the Premier has got my question back to front. It is not that I believe that my constituents will not play the game—and it is about their case that I am addressing this question to the Premier now—but whether the Government will play the game. As an example of the anomoly, people who live well outside zone 2, say, way out in the Mallee, obtain their fuel from distributors based in Mannum, Murray Bridge, or even Tailem Bend (which distributors are inside zone 2) and are taxed unfairly. It was never the intention of the legislation that people living up to 200 kilometres from the Adelaide GPO should pay that higher rate of tax.

Thus, I am not worried about whether or not the public is going to play the game but about whether the Government will play the game and be fair and somehow or other provide the means by which people in the circumstances that I have described can get a rebate at least—not six months later but within a reasonable time, say, 30 days after having been billed for the fuel. The situation is just not fair and I hope that the matter will be addressed.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: The short answer is, yes, that is being addressed, and we believe that it can be overcome, by looking at where the fuel is actually delivered. The matter is being discussed at the moment. I was just saying that in practical terms a rebate system, which we certainly considered, is not feasible. I now move:

That the sittings of the House be extended beyond 6 p.m.

Motion carried.

Mr INGERSON: In asking those questions previously, what I really wanted to know was how the Government will police the provisions. The Premier has said that it will be done and that everything will be rosy, and all that, but how will that 50 kilometre and 100 kilometre limit be policed in a physical and practical way? I think that is what everyone wants to know. How will it be done? It is easy to say that it will be done, but how will it be done?

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: We are certainly not going to search and destroy throughout the area: the cost and facility of that would be useless. We will do it on a spot check basis. There are penalties provided for those people who break the law. Perhaps some people in business will be prepared to run the risk of breaking the law, but I hope that they will not. I suggest that it would not be very useful for the House to have a list of who is going to do what and when. All I can say is that we will provide the sort of resources needed to ensure that there is some inspection system. If we detect (and it is not impossible to do so) major discrepancies, we can act to overcome the problem.

Clause passed.

Remaining clauses (4 to 6) and title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. J.C. BANNON (Premier and Treasurer): I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr HAMILTON (Albert Park): Last night I listened with disgust to the abuse levelled at the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee. I think that modesty prevented him talking today about the contribution that he has made to the Public Accounts Committee or about the amount of money that he has saved taxpayers of this State. In any event, he did not reply to the ungracious remarks levelled at him. On most occasions the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, or of any other committee, would not dignify such remarks with a response. However, having come from a rough and tumble area, I feel free to come back at the member for Morphett, who seems at a loss to understand why he is in Opposition. One of the reasons for that is that he is so ungracious, a trait which I think may be permeating through the Opposition and which is reflected in the vote cast by the people of South Australia.

One of the things that I have come to understand clearly is that the people of South Australia, particularly in my area, are not fools and will not be conned by the stupid remarks levelled by the member for Morphett in this place last night. If he had any dignity at all or respect for this place, he would have had the guts to come over and apologise. I recall quite vividly that last year he was conned or suckered into asking a question about the Premier's home and who had repaired it. Having asked the question he felt embarrassed and came over to apologise to the Premier.

Those are the sorts of gutter and sleazebag tactics that the Opposition uses (those are not my words but the words of the media—and I will come back to this subject tomorrow during another debate).

Randall Ashbourne has written an interesting article, which I have here and to which I would refer if I had time. It is time that people opposite realised that they are in Opposition and that the people of South Australia are sick and tired of their tactic of denigration. If they made positive contributions in this place, were prepared to offer constructive criticism and now and again were graceful enough to say that they agreed with what the Government was doing, maybe they would get some support from the South Australian community.

My colleague, the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, should have put this fact on record: in June this year, while in Sydney at the national public accounts conference, which was also attended by the member for Hanson and me, I found it frustrating when attempting to speak to my colleague the member for Todd, because on every occasion that there was a break he was surrounded by people from Public Accounts Committees, both national and interstate, commenting on the contribution he made at that conference with his paper on asset replacement in South Australia. He has been recognised and quoted in various States of this country for his tremendous contribution as Chairman of a Public Accounts Committee and as a delegate at the national conference.

I have noted over the years that the member for Todd is not a person who seeks publicity, unlike some of us who like a bit of glory in the media. I do not deny any MP the right to seek publicity. I can understand the member for Hanson wanting publicity because he is in a marginal seat, and I have been in that situation and can understand the need to advertise that one is a good local member who needs the support of his local constituency. I commend the Public Accounts Committee for its bipartisan approach. I must say, although ungraciously, that I am glad that the member for Morphett is not on the committee, because it has worked damned well since he left it.

I turn now to another matter that I promised myself I would address, namely, car theft. Over the years many people have come into my electorate office and complained bitterly about car theft. Today I repeated a question that I had asked in the Parliament previously about the need to address the question of beating car thieves. However, it is not an easy matter to address. I believe that the motor car industry (and I have said this before) has a lot to answer for in this country in relation to the type of vehicles it manufactures.

I talk specifically about the sorts of locks provided on motor vehicles. I believe manufacturers could do a damn lot more than they have done. With normal locks on cars, people could put a piece of wire through the flip window and open the car easily. Secondly, it was very easy, once they had done away with the flip windows, to slide a piece of material—and I will not give all the specific details—through part of the door so that it could latch around and pull up this lock. Then they decided to put the locks on the side of the door.

Until such time as all those models have been put on the scrap heap or done away with, we will still have the problem of cars being stolen. Nothing is more galling than to come out and find that one's car or the car of a member of one's family has been stolen. This was the case with a lad who came into my office yesterday. I have not seen him: I received a note from my secretary who said that this lad, unfortunately, had no insurance on his car. Quite frankly, I think he is somewhat remiss in that, because the car was worth some $6 000 and has now been written off. I understand that the car was found wrapped around a stobie pole on Grand Junction Road. I come back to the question of increased penalties. I make no apologies for that: if people use a particular tool or a car, or someone else's car, to try to steal someone else's vehicle, then I believe their licences should be taken away from them. That is the reason why I raise this question in this House today. I believe that, on top of the sentences imposed for car theft, licences should be taken away by the court.

Mr Lewis: What if they haven't got a licence?

Mr HAMILTON: I think that that is a reasonably intelligent interjection from the member for Murray-Mallee, for a change. Perhaps an extension of community service orders is one area which should be looked at. Not getting on the band wagon, I wrote to the Attorney-General some time ago and posed the proposition that community service orders should be extended for those persons who steal motor vehicles and smash them up. I can recall a constituent of mine who lived in Alfred Avenue, a street away from me, who came to me last year very angry indeed—understandably so—because his vehicle, an older model car, had been lovingly restored only to be subsequently stolen from his property, taken around the Osborne area and stripped—and not only was it stripped of parts but the windows were smashed and rocks and so forth were thrown at it, damaging the bodywork. I believe that the penalties can be increased to make it increasingly hard on those persons who seemingly delight in stealing other people's property, in particular, motor vehicles. If that be the case, let them understand the repercussions of what they are doing. I hope that the Attorney-General agrees with the propositions I put forward in this House today.

Mr BLACKER (Flinders): I am pleased that the Minister of Transport and the Premier are present on this occasion, because I wish to bring before the House an issue referred to me by a local solicitor, that is, as he sees it, an anomaly in the Motor Vehicles Act. Perhaps I can best explain the problem by citing the letter which was forwarded to me and then perhaps adding some comment to it. The letter states:

Dear Peter,

re; Motor Vehicles Act—Our client [and quotes the client's name]

We are writing this letter to you, to bring to your attention that there is a loophole in the Motor Vehicles Act relating to farmers driving farming equipment on public roads and injuries caused to third parties as a result of a collision in such circumstances. The Motor Vehicles Act provides that farmers are not obliged to insure farm vehicles whilst driving them from one part of their farm to another, provided the distance does not exceed 40 kilometres. In this particular situation, our client was driving her motor vehicle home when she collided with a tractor and combine driven by a neighbour. She suffered quite extensive injuries.

The matter has proceeded to the court and the District Court judge found that there was no claim against the nominal defendant, being the person who normally pays out moneys to injured parties as a result of accidents, where vehicles are not registered or insured. In this situation, he found there was no obligation to register and insure and, therefore, the nominal defendant was not involved. The end result of this situation is that [the solicitor's client] succeeded against her neighbour, who now has to pay her damages. [The neighbour] has no protection in this situation and in the event that [the neighbour] is unable to pay, then of course, [the client] will not not succeed in her claim.

We are of the opinion that this anomaly in the Motor Vehicles Act should be cured by amending legislation. Please find enclosed a copy of the judgment made by His Honour. We confirm that a notice of appeal has been lodged by [the neighbour's] solicitors and we are not sure as to the grounds of that appeal at this stage. We are certainly of the opinion that the matter bears investigation by Parliament and, after you have read the judgment, we shall be happy to discuss same with you with a view to seeing the matter rectified.

The solicitor then goes on to mention a few of the problems that could occur with any change of legislation. This farmer was driving his tractor and combine between one section of his property and another on a public road, which was a perfectly legal and legitimate course of action to take. The client in this instance was travelling in the opposite direction and approached the vehicle on a slight bend. At the time of noticing the tractor and combine across the road—we are not sure of the circumstances—there might have been a bit of panic, and in any case there was a minimum area in which the car could pass the vehicle.

The car hit the wheel of the combine and bounced off into the scrub, and there was subsequent injury to the driver. This problem has arisen and been identified by a judge. Every primary producer with a tractor and a combine who is obliged to travel on the road, either travelling between various parts of his property or between two properties owned by the same person, providing that they are within 40 km of one another, or if he is taking the vehicle into the local town for service and/or repairs, is acting perfectly legitimately.

However, in this case an injury has occurred. What happens? Thankfully, there was not a fatal injury because, if there had been a fatality and if there was a compensation payout or some more horrific injury involving compensation of $200 000, $300 000 or $400 000, obviously the farmer would become bankrupt. As it turned out, damages amounted to about $19 000, which is a large sum for the people involved. However, it could have been 10 or 20 times that figure.

The problem has been identified, and I now draw it to the attention of the Government and Parliament. The matter needs to be addressed, because there are 10 000 or 15 000 primary producers in South Australia who take their tractors and implements on to the road in good faith. They believe that they are covered, yet we now find that there is a loophole. I will not say that it has been exploited, but it has been identified and it could put every one of those primary producers at some risk, not so much to themselves personally but financially if another person collided with their implement while it was on the road and a serious accident occurred.

I indicate to the Minister that I am happy to provide information about the court case, a copy of the transcript of proceedings and the accompanying letter and even to arrange for the solicitor to give his view to the Minister's officers, because the matter must be addressed. The point I wish to make, and I recognise that there is a political element to it, is that one answer to this problem might well be that every implement has to be registered. I would then have every farmer on my neck for suggesting otherwise. We need to ensure that these matters are covered and that, if a person collides with a wide implement, there is protection.

I must say that in this instance it was a relatively wide combine and there is no doubt that the right hand wheel of the combine was well over the centre of the dirt road. It was agreed by both sides that it was well across the centre of the road. It is arguable whether there was room for the car to get through but, in any event, the car bumped the combine wheel and was pushed into the scrub where the driver suffered some injury.

I put this matter before the Minister in good faith because I would hate to see other members of the community severely disadvantaged as a result of an accident that occurred when everyone believed in good faith that they were within the law under the Act and were properly covered as such.

I raise one other issue. Members might have noted that I had a friend at Parliament today who was totally blind, Mr Bill Jagger. I met him many years ago when he was actively involved in the Rural Youth Movement. By some chance I met with Bill a few weeks ago. I invited him into the House, and he knows two or three other members of Parliament who also had a similar association with the Rural Youth Movement. Bill raised a query which I found quite surprising and which relates to the eligibility of blind people to use the Access Cabs.

I could not believe him when he told me that, as a totally blind person and never having had sight, he is not allowed to use the Access Cabs and, therefore, the subsidised taxi service. He said that people in his position were allowed subsidised travel on normal bus and tram services. Whilst that concession is recognised and applauded, when those people get off a bus, hopefully at the right stop, they are in some difficulty as to where to go from there. If it were a simple matter of walking across the footpath to their destination, that could well be accommodated but, if they are then required to walk 50 or 100 metres down the road to their appropriate destination, certain difficulties could arise.

I do not believe it is unreasonable that blind people should have access to the Access Cab subsidy scheme. I believe that they require, and have a very urgent need for, that assistance so that they may be picked up and set down with the least danger to themselves, and perhaps the least inconvenience to other members of the community, but more particularly I am concerned with the welfare of the blind person. I think it is fair that they should be picked up and set down at the actual place of their destination rather than 100 yards down the street where they may be obliged to walk some distance and encounter possible hazards. I trust that the Government will look at this matter.

Ms GAYLER (Newland): I will highlight the plight in particular of mature aged women who recently have been advised that they will lose their supporting parent benefit or widow's pension when their youngest child turns 16. Several weeks ago I convened a seminar jointly arranged with the Modbury Social Security office and the Employment and Training Equity Unit of the Office of Employment and Training. The seminar was conducted to bring together some 50 women in the Tea Tree Gully area who are directly affected by recent Commonwealth changes to the supporting parent benefit and widow's pension. It was a useful opportunity to provide information to those women and to strengthen their arm in the kind of opportunities, skill development, training, and so on, that they will need.

Before I embark on outlining the kinds of programs that I hope will be established in the Tea Tree Gully area, I will paint a picture of what has happened to women in this sort of category over the past 100 years. The past 100 years has been a period of major social change affecting women. Just over 100 years ago raising a family was a lifelong task for women. Girls left school and began having children before they were 20 years of age and, in most cases, continued to have children until they were 50; that is, they had 30 years of raising babies. As a result there was very little time for career, further education, hobbies, and so on.

By contrast, in the 1980s women who have children begin to do so before about 22 years of age and they complete their child bearing by the age of 30, rather than 50. Thus, on average, women who have children spend eight years of their lives doing so rather than 30. Therefore, it is not surprising that more women need to develop employment skills, to move in and out of education, training and careers throughout their lives, and to update and develop new skills.

Increasingly, we realise that our own capacity to be secure depends on developing financial, social and emotional secu-

rity for ourselves. Few people—men or women—now have a single career for life. Both men and women increasingly have a range of occupations. So at any time a significant proportion of the population is now changing jobs and undertaking further education and retraining. The recent changes to supporting parents benefits and widows' pensions will especially affect women because more than 87 per cent of sole parents in Australia are women.

The Commonwealth Government's aim in the recent change is twofold: first, to redirect social security payments to those with totally dependent children (and we saw signs of this redirection in the recent budget announcement in relation to an increased family allowance supplement); and, secondly, to encourage financial independence and involvement in the labour market, particularly amongst those women whose children are turning 16 years or are older. I recognise that this will be difficult for many women, but measures to offset and ease the problems were announced in the recent budget when two concessions for women immediately affected were announced. The first provides a transition period to ease the financial burden faced by these women and, in particular, an extension of the pensioner health benefit card and other concessions held by these women to date so that they retain those concessions until the end of 1988. These concessions are estimated to be worth at least $20 a week.

The second concession announced by the Federal Minister is that full-time students as at 1 September 1987 will be able to retain their supporting parent benefit or their widow's pension until they complete their course of study, so long as their child remains at school and they meet all other eligibility criteria. Those two concessions are at least something, although it is true that many women affected would have preferred to have a phase-in period, to have something like a year's notice, for example, to allow them time to obtain work skills or update their previous skills.

Other women fear that their children will have to leave school prematurely because their own incomes will be reduced. Twenty per cent of women in the recent phone-in said that they feared that they may have to move house because their mortgage commitments are too high or because, more often, the private rental that they pay in the private market will be beyond their means. In the face of these changes and the fears expressed by Tea Tree Gully women in this situation a number of local agencies have agreed to band together to marshal the necessary resources to provide women with additional training opportunities. In the last Federal budget $2 million was allocated to target training opportunities to these women who we know will be affected. We want to ensure that local Tea Tree Gully organisations also play their part for local women.

I pay a special tribute to the work of Charlie Wickins, of the Department of Social Security (Modbury office), for his effort in identifying the women affected, in talking to them, writing to them, and inviting them to our recent forum, and in his preparedness to marshal local resources so that these women receive a fair go as female sole parents. I was also pleased with the cooperation of the Modbury Commonwealth Employment Service, the North-East Volunteers, the Tea Tree Gully TAFE College, the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training, and the Office of Employment and Training for outlining the wide range of schemes that we should be able to provide locally to women who need them.

I would like to pay a tribute also to Tea Tree Gully council staff, and in particular Liz Sheerin, for the work that is being done in organising follow-up arrangements for this group of women so that they will be able to look forward to a brighter future in spite of the change that they have suddenly met.

In conclusion, the employers in our community need to recognise that mature aged women who have brought up families and managed households have a wide range of skills. Often the women themselves do not realise the breadth and range of skills that they have. The local community needs to provide specifically targeted training opportunities so that these women can develop confidence and the skills to go out into the labour market in areas where they will be able to build a more secure future for themselves and their families, and provide the kinds of further education, secondary schooling and higher education for their children that they have planned over the years so that we do not force these women on to unemployment benefits.

Motion carried.

At 6.32 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday 8 October at 11 a.m.