

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 7 September 1988

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

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The **SPEAKER**: I have to inform the House that His Excellency the Governor will be prepared to receive the House for the purpose of presenting the Address in Reply at 2.10 p.m. this day. I ask the mover and seconder of the Address and such other members as care to accompany me to proceed to Government House for the purpose of presenting the Address.

[Sitting suspended from 2.1 to 2.17 p.m.]

The **SPEAKER**: I have to inform the House that, accompanied by the mover, seconder, and other honourable members, I proceeded to Government House and there presented to His Excellency the Address in Reply to His Excellency's opening speech adopted by this House, to which His Excellency was pleased to make the following reply:

Thank you for the Address in Reply to the speech with which I opened the Fourth Session of the Forty-Sixth Parliament. I am confident that you will give your best consideration to all matters placed before you. I pray for God's blessing upon your deliberations.

PETITION: HON. J.R. CORNWALL

A petition signed by 122 residents of South Australia praying that the House will take the necessary action to reverse the decision made by the Government to pay costs for the Hon. J.R. Cornwall and consider legislation that would permit citizens of this State to appeal against such administrative decisions was presented by Mr D.S. Baker.

Petition received.

PETITION: ARID LANDS BOTANIC GARDEN

A petition signed by 135 residents of South Australia praying that the House urge the Government to establish an Australian arid lands botanic garden at Port Augusta was presented by Mr S.G. Evans.

Petition received.

PAPER TABLED

The following paper was laid on the table:

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

South Australian Totalizator Agency Board—Report, 1987-88.

QUESTION TIME

STATE TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

Mr **OLSEN**: Will the Minister of Transport admit the Government's complete failure to turn around declining patronage on STA services? An analysis of the Auditor-

General's Report reveals a further serious decline in patronage of the STA's bus, train and tram services in 1987-88. Last financial year, the total number of passenger journeys was down to 58.2 million—2.7 million fewer than the previous 12 months. Patronage of Adelaide's metropolitan public transport system is now at its lowest level since 1973.

The Auditor-General's Report further reveals that, last financial year, taxpayers had to pay out \$2.33 every time a passenger stepped onto an STA bus, train or tram, just to cover the authority's losses. This was an increase of 26 per cent on the previous year. These results have been achieved despite a statement to the House by the Minister in September last year—exactly 12 months ago—when he said in relation to declining STA patronage that he would turn it around.

The **Hon. G.F. KENEALLY**: I thank the honourable member for his question although, as usual, he attempted to misrepresent the information that is available to him. If he took the trouble to read the Auditor-General's Report on the operations of the State Transport Authority, he would see that, in the 1987-88 financial year, the STA turned around what had been inherited from the honourable member's Government: a rapidly increasing deficit position. Last year—

Members interjecting:

The **Hon. G.F. KENEALLY**: The Opposition does not want to hear this. Members opposite like to be able to take cheap shots at the State Transport Authority but they do not want to know what the truthful position is. In the past 12 months, the operational deficit of the STA reduced in real terms and—

Members interjecting:

The **Hon. G.F. KENEALLY**: The Leader of the Opposition tries to suggest that he is an accountant. If he took off his political hat and put on his truthful hat, which he finds difficult to do, he would know that what I am saying is the truth. The Auditor-General's Report quite clearly shows the improved position of the STA.

It also shows that the increase in the requirement of the South Australian taxpayer to provide funds to subsidise the operation of the STA is because of the capital debts of the STA. The first major capital debt which STA has to service is the O-Bahn, for which members opposite (quite rightfully so in terms of its operational performance) want to take the credit. That is a \$100 million debt that needs to be serviced by the South Australian taxpayer. The Opposition wants to ignore its responsibility for that; it committed the South Australian Government to the capital debt of the O-Bahn. The other major capital debt—

Mr Olsen interjecting:

The **SPEAKER**: Order! The Leader of the Opposition is—

The Hon. J.W. Slater interjecting:

The **SPEAKER**: Order! I call the member for Gilles to order. The Chair can manage without his assistance. Until interrupted by the very disorderly interjection of the honourable member for Gilles, the Chair was about to caution the Leader of the Opposition who has interjected continually from the moment he sat down at the conclusion of his question. The honourable Minister.

The **Hon. G.F. KENEALLY**: The other capital debt that the present Government (and the State Transport Authority) has to service is the signalling equipment—another innovation of members opposite when they were in Government. They are the two major capital investments.

We are not criticising them, because they are both very necessary, but they are the cause of the increased subsidy required from South Australian taxpayers to run the STA.

Taking out the servicing of the capital debt, operational costs of the STA have decreased in quite dramatic terms in the past 12 months. That is something for which the STA ought to be given due credit; it should not be rubbished in this House by members who want to play with figures.

In terms of patronage figures—and members opposite know this—this year is the first time that the STA has had the capacity to accurately assess the numbers of people who use the STA. This is the first time that it has had the technology to be able to accurately assess the true patronage of the STA. I am prepared to acknowledge that some two years ago when I introduced a charge on pensioners using the STA, there was a consequential drop in patronage figures because hitherto, for some five years, they travelled free of charge. I introduced a charge of 20 cents, which has increased in line with the CPI since then. That has had an impact upon patronage in non-peak periods, but patronage in peak periods has increased.

The heaviest demand on the STA, as a provider of a commuting service in Adelaide, is in the morning and evening peak periods. I would much sooner see the STA with a more even flow of patronage; that is, people using it in non-peak periods. That is not happening. In fact, there has been a decrease in those areas and I think that is largely because a pensioner fee was re-introduced. I might say that to some degree that was welcomed—not appreciated but welcomed—by those people who prefer to pay for the services provided to them. That is the truth of the matter. So, in terms of peak period patronage the figures have increased. They increased last year and they increased this year. So, the honourable member needs to again not only look at the Auditor-General's report but at the whole picture, and he needs to tell the truth.

SICK LEAVE

Mr DUGAN: Can the Premier inform the House of the measures being taken to deal with excessive sick leave in some sections of the Public Service as identified in the Auditor-General's Report? As reported in today's media, the Auditor-General's Report, tabled yesterday, identified a possible abuse of sick leave in the South Australian Public Service. In the Auditor-General's Report it is stated that there is the potential to save up to \$5 million a year if absenteeism is reduced.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: I think it must be acknowledged that the situation identified by the Auditor-General is serious, and the Government is determined to take any necessary action to stamp out this abuse. In saying that, I stress that the vast majority of public servants do not abuse the system, and I do not think that what the Auditor-General has identified should be used as some kind of Public Service bashing which, I guess, some in the community—and indeed those sitting opposite—would dearly like to do.

I might add, incidentally, that abuses of sick leave are not confined to the public sector. Any large private sector corporation has its problems in these areas and what we are seeing is a criticism—and quite rightly—and an identification of a problem in a sector. There is an abuse by some but certainly not by the majority.

There is no question, however, that if it continues it will have serious repercussions. It is not just the cost but the way in which those who are abusing the system then put pressure on people who are not abusing it. A backlash can occur, which induces or forces workers who believe that they are legitimately ill to go to work nonetheless. Indeed,

in some situations if they have the flu, or the like, they will spread it amongst other members of the work force. Obviously, we do not want to create that sort of situation.

Sick leave is available for sickness: it is not available as some kind of extension to annual leave or special rostered or paid days off. It is there for sickness. There have been complaints; indeed, a member in another place said there were too many days of sick leave. He said, 'Cut them down and we will save many millions of dollars.' I would disagree with that.

Indeed, there is an argument that legitimate sick leave should be extended and, provided it is legitimate, it will actually save many millions of dollars. However, where the system is abused, all right, it has to be dealt with, and that is taking place. We were alerted to the problems relating to the health system earlier this year. The Auditor-General suggested a review of the occurrence of sick leave in all Public Service departments.

After discussions with the Government Management Board, it was decided to launch a total review of the system in accordance with those recommendations. In May this year I wrote to the Auditor-General advising him that we would be looking at three areas of the Public Service, including clerical, blue collar and shift workers. After analysing information on sick leave, the Government Management Board will devise a means of eliminating any abuse of such systems. I expect corrective action to be taken before the end of the year and I am confident that we will be able to eliminate the problems identified by the Auditor-General and ensure that the system is observed properly and that the reasons why sick leave are provided are honoured by those in the work force and not abused by people taking advantage of it. We will see what affect those actions have as we analyse the figures over this coming year.

Mr S.J. BAKER: My question to the Minister of Labour is subsequent to the last question asked. Does the Minister of Labour agree with his predecessor that current award and industrial agreements make it difficult, if not impossible, to prevent abuses of sick leave entitlements in the public sector? In view of the Auditor-General's Report, will he immediately initiate arrangements within the Department of Personnel and Industrial Relations to require all departments and agencies to report their sick leave records on a quarterly basis—a little different from what the Premier replied?

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

Mr S.J. BAKER: If these reports expose abuses and anomalies caused by award and industrial agreements, will the Minister insist that trade union officials accept changes to those agreements? That is a little different to the question—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr S.J. BAKER: On 5DN radio news at seven o'clock this morning, the Minister of Health, in a comment on the Auditor-General's findings relating to sick leave in the hospital system, said that these entitlements were 'all within award and industrial agreements and these things are very difficult to change, if not impossible'. We have heard the Premier's reply. This is not the first time that Parliament's attention has been drawn to absenteeism. In 1985—

Members interjecting:

Mr S.J. BAKER: In 1985—if members opposite will listen—a major report by the Public Accounts Committee exposed undesirable practices in the Department of Correctional Services. The Auditor-General has now revealed potential abuses and anomalies in a number of agencies. In

the Education Department, sick leave taken by teachers based in the country averaged 3.3 days per teacher, compared with 5.3 days in the metropolitan area. In the Department of Transport, variations ranged from less than two days a year in some country branches to 11 days in the metropolitan area.

The Auditor-General's Report shows that, if sick leave taken by teachers alone could be reduced by one day per teacher per year, there would be a saving to taxpayers of \$1.52 million, and spread across the whole public sector this could amount to more than \$8 million. The Premier noted the fact that this matter is now being attended to—but that is some five years after this Government came to office. Will the Minister take corrective action if indeed awards are at fault?

The Hon. R.J. GREGORY: I thank the honourable member for his question. I would have thought that a member who aspires to be a Minister of Labour—but in another Government which I doubt will ever come to power—would understand that the sick leave standards embodied in the awards of the State Industrial Commission and also the Federal Commission have been there for a long time.

Mr S.J. Baker interjecting:

Mr HAMILTON: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, is it possible for the member for Mitcham to contain himself during at least one question in this House?

The SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. The honourable Minister.

The Hon. R.J. GREGORY: As I have said, the member for Mitcham should know that the awards and provisions in this respect are quite explicit. They have been established over a long time and they are there for very good reasons. It is possible for there to be abuses of sick leave. Indeed, the honourable member referred to the problem in the Department of Correctional Services and the Public Accounts Committee report. Amongst other things, that report recommended that the management practice of the Department of Correctional Services be changed so that people who may have been taking sick leave without authority were dealt with properly by the management of the Department of Correctional Services.

The use of sick leave is strictly governed by the award and by the management of various departments and statutory authorities. Workers are given sick leave on a daily basis for a limited number of days without the necessity for a doctor's certificate. If they require extended sick leave they need to have a doctor's certificate. If the member for Mitcham is saying that doctors are conspiring with workers to defraud Government departments, I would like him to say so in this House. But we are relying on doctors' certificates—

Mr S.J. Baker interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. R.J. GREGORY: A doctor's certificate is required for an extended period of sick leave. It is my view that the medical profession is basically honest in this area and that when workers present themselves for certificates, in the main, the certificates that are issued indicate what is wrong with them and, consequently, are accepted by the people managing the departments.

Another area that may be investigated concerns the factor that it might be the work place within the department that causes a person to be sick. For instance, a flu epidemic might be raging through a classroom in which a teacher has to work, and that teacher might get the flu. The honourable member would know from experience that in these situations some people might be off work two or three times during the winter months due to being in contact with

children in the classroom who are ill. It is just one of those things that we have to put up with until such time as we have a healthier society.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S EXPORT PERFORMANCE

The Hon. R.K. ABBOTT: Will the Minister of State Development and Technology outline to the House details of South Australia's export performance, given the Government's commitment to expanding our export performance? In his speech in reply to the presentation of the budget on Tuesday 6 September 1988, the Leader of the Opposition stated that last financial year the rise in the value of our exports was only 3 per cent, well under half the rise for all the States of 7.9 per cent. This gives the impression that South Australia's export performance has been poor and behind the national average.

The Hon. L.M.F. ARNOLD: I thank the honourable member for his question. I can certainly say that this is yet again evidence of the propensity of the Leader of the Opposition to try to talk down the Australian economy, to try to talk down the achievements and, as part of this desire, to keep on misuing data that has been provided for furthering the debate on the economy in this State. It is certain that the Leader has used some figures from the report, *The South Australian Economy*, issued by the South Australian Treasury but, as I shall identify in a few moments, he has used them incorrectly. He has misquoted, and that is an exercise of either malintent on his part or sheer incompetence.

We ought to look at the export performance of South Australia in two ways: first, over a period going back over the years of the Tonkin Government as well as the Bannon Government; and, secondly, to remember that there are two basic elements in export sales, one of those coming from the commodities sector which is affected by international commodity prices, and the others coming from the value-added sector (the export of manufactured goods or other value-added goods). These represent different trend lines, as I will mention in a few moments.

Coming to a comparison between the Tonkin years, with its performance relating to export in this State, and the Bannon years, we can see that during the Tonkin Government years South Australia's export position declined, based on figures provided in the same table quoted yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition. That showed that between 1979 and 1982 there was an export decline of some 23 per cent presided over by the Tonkin Government—that Cabinet of which the Leader of the Opposition was a member.

One can ask: did that reflect the national situation? Was the national export situation declining? The reality is that the national export situation was one of moderate—very moderate—growth against a 23 per cent decline in this State. Now, let us come to the situation of 1982 and beyond—in other words, the years of this Government: taking the figures from 1983 onwards, we can see that national growth in exports has been 61.5 per cent, and the growth for South Australia has been 67 per cent—in excess of the national growth rate.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. L.M.F. ARNOLD: The Leader said (and I quote from *Hansard*):

For the last financial year there was a decline of 3 per cent in South Australia's performance in real terms.

Well, he got his year wrong. He is like his colleague, the Hon. Mr Lucas—

The Hon. B.C. EASTICK: I rise on a point of order.

The SPEAKER: Order! Will the Minister resume his seat. The honourable member for Light.

The Hon. B.C. EASTICK: My point of order is that the Minister indicated he was referring to *Hansard* for this session of Parliament. I believe that that is not permissible under Standing Orders.

The SPEAKER: The point of order raised by the member for Light is valid. Standing Orders do not permit members to refer to debates within the same session. Although that particular Standing Order would appear not to have been specifically designed with Question Time in mind, it is a useful one to have and it avoids repetition of debate. I ask the Minister to avoid referring to debates taking place within the same session and also, as soon as possible, to wind up his remarks. The honourable Minister.

The Hon. L.M.F. ARNOLD: I apologise for using the Leader's own words as quoted in *Hansard*. The facts are that if he had gone on from page 67 to page 72 of this very document from which he quotes he would find another statement that puts the situation in much better perspective. First, it gets the year right, which he did not do (he was a year out of phase); and that further reference on page 72 indicates that, while there was a suffering of the export performance in 1985-86 and 1986-87 because of the drop in commodity prices, in the first six months of 1987-88, which the Leader chose not to refer to, there was a dramatic improvement with a 24.5 per cent rise on the corresponding period a year earlier. I tie that against the report of the Metal Trades Industry Association which identified that its South Australian members experienced in the year to March 1988—in manufactured goods not in commodities—a growth of 53.8 per cent compared to a national growth for the other members in the metal trades industry of 35 per cent.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable Deputy Leader. The honourable Deputy Leader now has the call.

ASER PROJECT

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: My question is directed to the Premier. What now is the estimate of the Superannuation Fund Investment Trust's full contribution to the ASER project, and what now is the estimated completion cost of the project? The Superannuation Fund Investment Trust informed Parliament last year that it would contribute a further \$17 million to the ASER project in 1987-88 to complete it. This would have brought the trust's full contribution to the project to just over \$127 million compared with an estimated \$58 million at the time the ASER agreement was signed.

However, the Auditor-General's latest report to Parliament shows that the trust invested a further \$54 million in the project in 1987-88, bringing its total contribution to \$165 million, with more to be put in during this financial year. As the trust's proportion of the total investment was planned to be slightly less than half at the time the ASER agreement was signed, these latest figures suggest that the completion cost of the project now is well over \$300 million compared with the original estimate of \$180 million.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: This matter has been canvassed consistently over the past four or five years as the Opposition has worked to try to undermine probably one of the most successful projects ever undertaken in this State—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.C. BANNON:—and here they go again. In the course of the Estimates Committee, I am sure that, when we have before us the Chairman of the South Australian Superannuation Fund Investment Trust, he will be able to provide that detail.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Mitcham to order.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: In relation to the figures on increased investment and involvement by SASFIT in that project, I refer the honourable member to Mr Weiss's remarks at the Estimates Committee last year when he was intensively questioned about this. The Leader of the Opposition thought he was on a real winner here: he was going to expose this financial investment and its problems. Mr Weiss was able to demonstrate conclusively that, with the change in scope of the ASER project, in fact the value and the return on investment had substantially increased. It is an extremely lucrative and profitable investment. I would have thought, rather than this being raised as a criticism of SASFIT, that the Deputy Leader should be rising to his feet to applaud the wisdom of that investment.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Members interjecting:

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I rise—

The SPEAKER: Order! Will the Deputy Leader resume his seat for a moment. I ask the Premier not to interject while the Chair is trying to receive a point of order from the honourable Deputy Leader. The honourable Deputy Leader.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I take the point of order in terms of the ruling given to the House on 11 August when you said, 'The Chair will use—'

The Hon. G.F. Keneally: Are you reading from *Hansard*?

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I am reading from a ruling of the Chair.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask members on my right to cease making interjections that constitute frivolous points of order. The honourable member—

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: On a point of order—

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I haven't discussed my own yet.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for Mitchell to resume his seat. I ask members on both sides to resume their seats.

The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy: You think you can just run this show—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Chair is most reluctant to have to name the Deputy Leader in the course of his point of order but, if he persists with that course of action, I shall do so. The honourable member for Mitchell has a point of order that he wishes to raise in the middle of a point of order of the Deputy Leader. I am not quite sure whether the Chair can entertain a point of order of that nature—

An honourable member interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! However, I will let the honourable member for Mitchell at least commence his point of order before ruling.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. My point of order is that less than a few minutes ago you gave a ruling which confined the use of *Hansard* in respect of matters—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Chair will not entertain that point of order at the moment because it is not a point of order regarding procedure occurring incorrectly in the

Chamber at the very moment that the Deputy Leader's point of order was being taken. It is in effect a response from the honourable member for Mitchell to the point of order being raised by the honourable Deputy Leader. Will the Deputy Leader continue with his point of order.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The point of order I raise is in terms of the ruling you gave on 11 August in which you stated that Ministers would be prevented under your ruling from debating a question. The Premier is clearly debating the question and imputing motives to the Opposition which are plainly untrue in answer to a simple question as to the cost of the ASER project. We are not knocking the ASER project: we are asking what it cost. The Premier gets up here—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I caution the Deputy Leader against himself beginning to debate other matters in the course of his point of order.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The point of order is clear: the Premier is abusing the Opposition and debating the question, clearly in contradiction of the very clear ruling that you gave to the House.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member will resume his seat. He is merely repeating the thrust of his point of order. At this stage there is no point of order. I ask—

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: With respect, Mr Speaker, to go through this business again, I have raised a point of order. There is a point of order. I ask you to rule on whether or not the Premier is debating.

The SPEAKER: I rule that, at the moment, the Premier is not debating. The honourable Premier.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: I was answering the question quite directly and—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable Premier will resume his seat. Members must get it clear in their mind that they cannot raise points of order simply because they do not like what another member is saying. The Chair will rule against members who use unparliamentary language or who clearly flout the Standing Orders, but the Chair cannot uphold points of order raised by members on either side which are, in effect, merely expressions of one side or another's discontent at the content of what another member is saying. The honourable member for Mitchell.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: I raise a further point of order, Mr Speaker. I believe that I just heard you outline to the House that a member is not entitled to raise a point of order. With respect, Sir, I would ask you to reconsider whether that is the meaning that you wish to apply because, after 18 years in this place, my understanding of Standing Orders is that a member is entitled to raise a point of order at any time and that the Speaker will then make a ruling.

The SPEAKER: The Chair does not disagree with the interpretation put forward by the honourable member for Mitchell. Points of order that are valid may be raised, but they should be based upon actual points of order and not merely upon a member's political displeasure. The Deputy Leader.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I have a further point of order. To get some explanation of what you are on about, are you saying that, unless we are absolutely certain that you will uphold a point of order, we should not take one? That is a nonsense ruling, with respect. The whole point in taking a point of order is to get your interpretation of what the green book tells us about the fashion in which this place should be conducted. The book of rules says that a member can take a point of order. I believe that the Premier is debating the question, but you do not agree. I accept your

ruling, grudgingly, as I have to. The book of rules says that I can rise, as you said yourself, and take a point of order and draw your attention to the fact that, in my judgment, the Premier is debating the issue.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will resume his seat. The Chair has been extremely tolerant, but surely the Deputy Leader is aware that the Chair did accept his point of order and then ruled on it. I did not say that the honourable Deputy Leader could not raise a point of order.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Mr Speaker—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Chair will not entertain any dialogue with the Deputy Leader and, if he persists in this course of action, he will be named. In the interest of harmony, I now call on the member for Albert Park.

LENSLESS SPECTACLES

Mr HAMILTON: My question is directed to the Minister of Education, representing the Minister of Consumer Affairs in another place. Will the Minister ask his colleague to investigate the claims made in a South African mail-order brochure by the Institute of Vision Improvement that its Lax-optic lensless spectacles enable people to immediately see more clearly without their normal glasses? I have been provided with a brochure which makes some very serious claims with respect to these Lax-optic lensless spectacles. Amongst other things, it is claimed—

Mr S.J. BAKER: I rise on a point of order. Mr Speaker, there are some rules about reading from booklets, newspapers and produced material.

Members interjecting:

Mr S.J. Baker: There are. You live by the rules or you don't.

The SPEAKER: Order! As well as Standing Orders, there is also the practice of the House. If I was to uphold the point of order of the honourable member for Mitcham, it would create an impediment in the speech of members on both sides for a long time to come. I do not uphold the point of order. The honourable member for Albert Park.

Mr HAMILTON: The article continues:

In irregular astigmatism, conical cornea, discrete corneal opacities and incipient cataract the pinholes often permitted a clarity of vision not obtainable by lenses.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Will the honourable member resume his seat for a moment. The honourable member sought leave to explain his question. I would suggest that the sort of vocabulary needed when asking the question requires some sort of explanation, and I think that the House should take it reasonably seriously. The honourable member for Albert Park.

Mr HAMILTON: My education may not be as good as that of other people, Sir, but I try. The article continues:

As a temporary expedient the pinholes are valuable for children with high astigmatism until they become sufficiently cooperative for precise objective refraction.

It further states:

As the pinholes help both distant and near vision they can be used by those who have broken their glasses while waiting for new lenses.

It further claims:

Following cyclopegia, which induces a temporary paralysis of accommodation, the pinhole provides protection from glare and compensates for the disturbed visual acuity.

It goes on to make many other claims about retinal separation. The final claim made by this company is that the Lax-optic glasses enable one to immediately see more clearly

without normal glasses. Finally, the birthday gift incentive says:

As part of our 21st birthday celebration we are giving you an attractive spectacle neck string so that you will always be able to have your pair of Lax-optic glasses near at hand.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member seems to have sufficiently explained his question at this stage. The honourable Minister.

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER: I thank the honourable member for raising his concerns about this matter. I will have it investigated not only by the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs but also by the health authorities because there may well be legislation with respect to optical prescriptions which may meet the concerns expressed by the honourable member.

CONVENTION CENTRE

The Hon. J.L. CASHMORE: Will the Premier admit that he seriously underestimated the cost to taxpayers of building and operating the Adelaide Convention Centre, and what action does the Government intend to take to stem the centre's operating losses? The Premier told the House in a ministerial statement on 27 October 1983 that the Government's maximum financial obligation under the terms of the ASER agreement for the Convention Centre and car park was estimated to be '\$1.25 million in the first year'. This equates to \$1.74 million in current dollars.

He also said that 'this amount can be expected to be significantly reduced depending on the extent of the revenues derived from the public use of these facilities'. However, the Auditor-General's Report reveals that the reverse has happened. It shows that, in the first full year of operation of the Convention Centre and the car park, the Government's financial obligations under the ASER agreement amounted to almost \$3.2 million, that is, \$1.4 million or 83 per cent more than the Premier's original estimate. Rather than this being offset by revenues generated by the centre and the car park, there was in fact a deficit of more than \$4.3 million which the Government offset with further contributions of almost \$4 million. The Government's total obligation to the centre and car park last financial year was therefore \$7 million—or three times the Premier's original estimate.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: As usual, the honourable member is ignoring the scope and nature of the operations. I am quite happy with the performance of the Adelaide Convention Centre but, as has already been pointed out in this place, we believe that the marketability and, therefore, the profitability of the centre in an operating sense can be improved considerably by the addition to its facilities of an exhibition hall. We are embarking on the capital expenditure for that in the coming financial year.

I would have thought that as the Opposition spokesman on tourism the honourable member would be very keen indeed to see the Convention Centre and accompanying facilities expanded as much as possible. While it is certainly true that initial financial estimates have to be revised in the light of operating experience, I do not think that one judges from the first year of operation, nor indeed from what essentially is an incomplete operation. Best guesses are made but, as far as we are concerned, the amount of usage, the bookings, and the economic value to the State and the return to the State from the Convention Centre have exceeded expectations, and that is really the bottom line.

I am less concerned with the direct outlay on these facilities, because we always accepted the fact that we would

have to subsidise them. It has been asked, 'Why we do not have a private operator running them?' The point is that nowhere do these things make a profit: there must be a subsidy. Therefore, the next question is, 'How do we justify a subsidy from general revenue?' I would have thought that anyone interested or involved in the tourism industry would know the answer to that, that is, because of all the other activity generated around it. In relation to hotel bookings, and the revenue that the Government gets through hotel occupancies and all the other economic activity in the city, we are well ahead in terms of the operations of the Convention Centre. The Government's decision to take the risk—and it was a risk, much criticised by those opposite both at the time of our taking it and at every opportunity since—is nonetheless a justified one and will stand up to scrutiny.

INDUSTRIAL SUPPLIES OFFICE

Ms GAYLER: Can the Minister of State Development and Technology say what has been the result of the work of the South Australian Industrial Supplies Office in providing extra work to South Australian industry through import replacements? The Industrial Supplies Office was established by the State Government in 1985, almost three years ago. The Executive Director of the ISO advised me last week that in three years the office has handled hundreds of inquiries, helping to bring work to companies in this State as a replacement for products and supplies which would have previously been imported.

The Hon. L.M.F. ARNOLD: I can certainly give the honourable member some information on this matter. It is a very impressive story that the Industrial Supplies Office has to tell. The office was established three years ago by the South Australian Government through the auspices of the Engineering Employers Association of South Australia, which directly hosts the Industrial Supplies Office, and the Manufacturing Advisory Council, a tripartite organisation to which the ISO reports. Of course, it is entirely funded by the South Australian Government. The office has three functions: first, to identify areas where Australian products and services could replace imports; secondly, to assist local business to identify local suppliers; and, thirdly, where necessary, to encourage local manufacturers to take on new activity to meet a demand currently being met from overseas sources.

I can say that, with respect to the figures for the South Australian Industrial Supplies Office, it rates favourably indeed with ISOs in other parts of Australia. The work of Graham Sutton and his team is to be highly commended. On this, the ISO's third birthday, I can identify that it has secured South Australian product replacing imports with respect to 137 projects with a total value of \$27 million. In addition, it is presently dealing with a further series of 76 pending projects worth \$30.5 million. In addition, it has assisted local firms not necessarily with import replacement but in terms of location of suppliers (which often involves the location of a South Australian supplier as opposed to an interstate supplier) involving 120 projects worth \$94 million. The House can see that 333 projects worth \$151.5 million worth of work have been brought to South Australia through the ISO.

Mr Lewis interjecting:

The Hon. L.M.F. ARNOLD: It might be indicated—as the member for Murray-Mallee is now about to interject—that this would not have happened, in any event. Well, the best that we can go for are the testimonials of the companies

themselves. I have just a few of the testimonials that we have received from companies, saying that the ISO has in fact put in a tremendous effort in helping them to identify South Australian sources for the manufacture of certain products, and from South Australian manufacturers who appreciated the ISO's assistance and its indicating that, for example, a certain product line was an area into which they should move and start production to replace imports.

I do not wish to take up the time of the House in reading out those testimonials; indeed it would take up much more time than the time available for Question Time. As I have said, in 333 projects to date we have seen added value to the State from what is a State funded organisation.

The Hon. T. CHAPMAN: Mr Speaker, on a point of order, I draw to your attention the documents referred to by the Minister of State Development and Technology and I ask for them to be tabled, in particular, the documents that he mentioned during the final stages of his reply.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not uphold the point of order. The honourable Minister.

The Hon. L.M.F. ARNOLD: Mr Speaker, to conclude my remarks: these letters are from individual companies and I will happily make them available to any member of the House for perusal so that they can see that I am telling the truth to this House and see the comments that have been made. I would not wish to table them without personally checking with each of the companies to ensure that they agree to that taking place. But I am happy for any member of this House, on a confidential basis, to see these letters.

Mr S.G. EVANS: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I would like to have clarified whether or not those documents are part of a docket that the Minister had, because if they are, he must table them. I think that matter should be clarified.

The SPEAKER: Can the Minister give the House an assurance that the documents concerned are not part of an official docket, so that we can proceed with the rest of Question Time?

The Hon. L.M.F. ARNOLD: These are photocopies of letters—they do not look like a docket, and they do not comprise a docket. In reading them out—which I do not intend to do—I would not have named the companies; I would simply have read out the text. I repeat: they are available for members to come and see if they dispute what I am saying. If they are attempting to dispute that the ISO is serving South Australia well, then so be it on their part.

RADIO STATION 5AA

Mr INGERSON: Will the Minister of Recreation and Sport say whether the Government is reviewing its investment in Radio Station 5AA following further major losses incurred by the station last financial year? In his report, the Auditor-General reveals that 5AA incurred a trading loss of \$820 000 last financial year. This brings the accumulated loss of this station since the Government took it over in 1984 to \$4 million. Previous statements by the Minister about its performance show that the station continues to fail to meet the Government's expectations.

On 23 September 1986 the Minister told the House that he hoped that there would be 'a major redress in the next financial year' in the station's financial performance, while on 19 February last year he said that the TAB 'is fairly confident that it can turn the situation around in relation to the operation of the station'. The results for the past 12 months, revealed by the Auditor-General, show that there

has been a further serious deterioration in the station's financial performance, rather than any turnaround.

The Hon. M.K. MAYES: I am disappointed that the honourable member has raised this question again. He obviously does not understand the relationship that the TAB has with the 5AA radio station.

The Hon. J.L. Cashmore interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. MAYES: The member for Coles is again knocking another institution. She cannot resist it; she has got to get in there and knock another institution. This year the TAB has increased turnover by almost \$60 million. The member for Bragg does not understand the relationship that exists in terms of generation of income through the TAB via 5AA, the support that the racing industry has and the difficulties that were in fact encountered not over a year ago in regard to the extension of those services to the community.

The honourable member knows full well, because people in the industry have spoken to him about this, that 5AA provides a very important service to the racing industry in this State, and has assisted the industry in its growth, and particularly, of course, it has assisted the TAB in its massive growth in the last year. This is the only thing on which the honourable member has to hang his hat—and so he decides to knock 5AA again. I am sure that people in the industry will be very disappointed yet again with his response. They constantly tell me how disappointed they are in the persistent way in which he continues to knock the racing industry, which is growing in this State. The honourable member does not recognise the important role that 5AA has, and this is sad and unfortunate.

He has constantly not realised the way in which 5AA has supported the industry. When the newspapers initially withdrew their support from the arrangements with the TAB for race coverage, 5AA was very important in maintaining its support. Members opposite who are involved in the industry know that what I am saying is the truth: they understand the situation. Unfortunately, the member for Bragg does not understand the relationship or the way in which 5AA is so important in supporting the TAB and the industry in this State.

The TAB has achieved a record turnover, resulting in a record input of funds not only into the industry but also to the Racecourse Development Board, from which funds are directed into the community as a whole to develop new racecourse facilities throughout the State, thus encouraging the industry's growth. The member for Bragg again fails to recognise that important relationship and is understating 5AA's importance. He is not satisfied with the attacks he has made over the years on the TAB, on the trotting industry or on individuals in it: he is now again undermining this important industry in South Australia which is such a large employer generating something like \$1.5 billion within this State. I am disappointed in the member for Bragg, as I am sure is the industry also, and I expect that it will make that disappointment clearly known to him.

HARDYS BUILDING

Mr PLUNKETT: Will the Minister of Transport inform the House whether the old Hardys building adjacent to Henley Beach Road at Mile End will be affected when the Highways Department replaces the Bakewell Bridge?

The Hon. G.F. KENEALLY: I congratulate the honourable member on asking a question so soon after I have received a briefing from the Highways Commissioner on this very subject. The member for Peake has shown a

considerable interest and involvement in developments along Henley Beach Road, and that is to his credit, as I am sure all members of the House will agree. The Highways Department is currently examining various alignments for the approach roads and the structure to replace the Bakewell Bridge on Glover Avenue/Henley Beach Road, Mile End.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. G.F. KENEALLY: When the Liberal Party was in Government in 1980 it should have done something about it. We are doing something about it. Although examination of the various alignments is not expected to be completed until early in 1989, present indications are that no land will be required from the old Hardys building located on the north-western corner of the Henley Beach Road/East Terrace/Deviation Road intersection. I think that every member will be pleased about that.

I am not sure whether or not it is a heritage building, but I could check on that. I rather suspect that it would be. Access to and from the property may change as a result of the revision of the local road network associated with the alignment of the new structure. That will not be clear until all of the investigation and planning work has been undertaken. I think it will please the honourable member to note that there is no likelihood at all of the Hardys building being under any threat.

SCRIMBER

The Hon. H. ALLISON: Will the Minister of Forests give the reason for the significant escalation in the cost of the scrimber project, and can he say how many orders have been received so far for the product? On the ABC this morning, the Minister nominated the scrimber project as a major reason why he believed the financial losses of the Timber Corporation, currently amounting to almost \$17 million, will be turned around. The Auditor-General's Report reveals that the cost to bring scrimber into production is now estimated to be \$29.4 million, representing an escalation of more than \$7 million, or 33 per cent, over the past 12 months. When the managing director of the project, Mr Graham Coxon, was interviewed on the ABC's *7.30 Report* on 29 July, some five weeks ago, he stated that no orders had yet been received for scrimber.

The Hon. J.H.C. KLUNDER: First, I point out to the House that the \$29 million to which the honourable member refers is shared between two agencies on a 50:50 basis, and that Satco, therefore, is required to pay only \$14.5 million of that. The scrimber product is a relatively difficult product to sell prior to the time that it has been produced. Indeed, it is very difficult to sell things that one has not actually made yet. The honourable member needs to be very careful—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.H.C. KLUNDER: —as do other members opposite who represent electorates in the South-East, in talking scrimber down, because the prosperity of the South-East is very largely tied up with the investment by this State Government in the various undertakings that exist in that area. If members opposite want me to make economic decisions instead of decisions that look after jobs and people in the South-East, let them stand up in this House and say so. Then we will see how long it takes the people in the South-East to wake up to their members who are trying to knock down the efforts of Government in that part of the State.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Some of the unbecoming noises in the Chamber would be more appropriate to the Hill in Sydney or Bay 13 at the MCG. The honourable member for Fisher.

BUSES

Mr TYLER: Is the Minister of Transport aware of the new Scania Metro buses, recently introduced in Tasmania, which 'kneel' to allow easy access? Has the State Transport Authority investigated the feasibility of this new concept and given any thought to the possibility of using these buses in South Australia? Specially designed buses have recently gone into service in Hobart. Designed with elderly passengers in mind, the buses actually 'kneel' to allow easy access. This is done by the drivers' activating a switch to deflate the front left air bag so that the bus dips at the front to within 150 mm of the roadway for easy access for elderly passengers. The air bag is reinflated within a few seconds to normal ride height. Although designed for elderly passengers this feature, I am told, facilitates access for a wide range of passengers, including the young and people with certain disabilities.

The Hon. G.F. KENEALLY: I thank the honourable member for drawing my attention to the article from which he has quoted, and I have taken the opportunity to check with the State Transport Authority as to whether or not it is aware of this development in providing ready access to transit vehicles for people with handicaps, the elderly, the young, etc. I am pleased to say that the authority is aware of the development in Tasmania and of the purchase of these Scania buses. I think that the first contract run is being produced in Melbourne and that the second or future contracts will be undertaken in Tasmania.

When I had the opportunity overseas to look at some of the technologies used to facilitate the boarding of buses by people with handicaps, I looked at the bus lift concept which some American cities use, and I was also advised of the air bag deflation system which, in effect, as the honourable member has said, gives the impression that the bus is kneeling to allow passengers to board. As at least 80 per cent of the people who use buses in the Adelaide metropolitan transit system board them from the kerbside, there is not a great variation between the kerbside level and the lower step of the bus.

However, the State Transport Authority will carefully monitor how these buses perform and, when the next contract for additional buses for the authority is being contemplated, this is certainly one aspect that the authority will have in mind to ensure that that very important sector of the community who use public transport—the handicapped and those people who are not able to step up on to a high step—are able to access the buses.

I should say that the South Australian Government has been very well aware of the needs of these people, and that is the reason we introduced the access cab system which has been a tremendous success throughout the metropolitan area. Hopefully we will be able to extend it to some major country areas. The demand for access cabs has outstripped our capacity to meet that demand but within this budget is provision to extend that program, and that is welcome. So, we are not unaware of the needs of people, particularly those in wheelchairs or those who, for whatever physical disability, are unable to step up into a bus and use public transport. We will continue to do what we can to ensure that that access is available to them.

WOODS AND FORESTS DEPARTMENT

Mr D.S. BAKER: What action will the Minister of Forests take to improve efficiency in the commercial operations of the Woods and Forests Department? The Auditor-General's Report reveals a significant increase in operating costs in the department's sawmills. They increased by more than 30 per cent to \$55.2 million with the result that, even though there was a large increase in earnings from sales, the sawmills still returned a loss of more than \$1 million. The Auditor-General has expressed concern about this result and has called for 'an improvement in production efficiency to reduce operating costs'.

The Hon. J.H.C. KLUNDER: The honourable member is correct. The Auditor-General has referred to the need to improve efficiency and the department has given me a list of actions which it has already undertaken. These include the introduction of stellate tipped saws into the Mount Gambier Sawmill; the review and restructuring of the management within the commercial division with resultant improvements in delegation and decision-making; improvements in occupational health and safety, and rehabilitation; the improvement in performance in dry milling through the introduction of high speed moulders and dockers; and improvements in the grading of products through training to ensure appropriate mix of first grade and merchantable grade products.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEES

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

That a message be sent to the Legislative Council requesting that the Attorney-General (Hon. C.J. Sumner) and the Minister of Tourism (Hon. Barbara Wiese), members of the Legislative Council, be permitted to attend and give evidence before the Estimates Committees of the House of Assembly on the Appropriation Bill.

Motion carried.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 6 September. Page 646.)

The Hon. J.L. CASHMORE (Coles): I would like to examine the State budget on three levels: the level at which it is presented to Parliament in the form of a dozen or so different documents; the level at which the Auditor-General assesses the financial management of the State's affairs by the present Government; and the level at which the voters of South Australia, the general public, assess the Government's financial management of South Australia.

First, I refer to the presentation of the budget to Parliament. We now have more material before us than ever before in my 11 years in Parliament. There are probably a dozen documents that have been circulated, of which several are absolutely central in terms of the Estimates of Payments, the Estimates of Receipts and the Capital Works Program. The others are explanatory and, in some cases, contradictory. I must say that it has rarely been so difficult to compare a current year with a previous year as it is in this current budget.

For the past several years, in the portfolio areas in which I have had a special interest, it has been extraordinarily difficult to compare present payments with previous pay-

ments, simply because the method of accounting has persistently varied from year to year. It is my normal custom to send copies of the relevant budgets to people who are interested in the field, and they have frankly found it almost impossible to identify various components of the budgets, simply because they have been presented in a different form.

I refer to the Minister for Environment and Planning in the Estimates of Payments for this year and the Aboriginal heritage conservation line, the heritage conservation line, the native vegetation management line and the State heritage conservation program, each of which has been altered in its structure and for none of which is it possible to determine precisely the comparison between this year's payments and the previous year's payments. It makes the work of an Opposition difficult and it means that the continual (I will not use the word 'manipulation') changes in presentation tend to mask the true effect of the budget from the eyes of both Parliament and the people. Certainly the Estimates Committees present an opportunity to clarify those points. However, it is hard to know where to look if the ground is covered with foliage, so to speak, and that is the case in very many of the various portfolio areas.

Another point which should be made is that the program estimates which traditionally have been presented to the House on the first day of the resumption of sitting after the break following the presentation of the budget by the Premier are, for the second year in succession, not to be presented until the last day of the sitting week. For those members of the Opposition, particularly shadow Ministers who have a responsibility to be on an Estimates Committee on the first day of sitting next week, that allows precisely two working days to contact relevant people to show them what is in the program estimates. That is insufficient. I believe that the Government should be open to very serious criticism on the basis that it is impeding the work of Parliament by delaying quite unnecessarily their presentation to Parliament (because I have no doubt that these documents are ready), so that they can be subjected to proper parliamentary scrutiny.

During Question Time today, yesterday and in the preceding weeks prior to the presentation of the budget, Ministers opposite attempted to justify expenditure in the form of mismanagement by the Government of tens of millions of dollars. In the past hour today, in Question Time yesterday and in the previous sitting week we saw the Government try to justify the increase in the cost of the *Island Seaway* from approximately \$16 million to \$21 million. That is the kindest and most generous estimate, because it may well be as high as \$28 million. We have seen Ministers attempt to justify a loss of \$17 million incurred by the South Australian Timber Corporation. We have seen the Premier try to justify the fact that the taxpayer has contributed \$1.4 million more for the Adelaide Convention Centre than he himself estimated a couple of years ago.

We heard the Minister of Health on radio this morning, and the Minister of Labour in the House today, attempt to excuse an abuse of sick leave which amounts to an estimated \$5 million as pointed out by the Auditor-General. We have seen the Minister of Recreation and Sport attempt to justify—indeed, almost to applaud—a total trading loss of \$4 million by radio station 5AA on the grounds that this was all in a good cause because it was promoting the racing industry; and the list goes on. In that list alone, there is well in excess of \$30 million, every dollar of which could have been very well used in a whole range of areas for the benefit of the taxpayer.

I mentioned that I will assess the budget and its impact in terms of its presentation to Parliament and its effect on

the people. The effect on the people of South Australia is very well explained in one of the Government's own documents (*Economic conditions and the budget 1988-89*) presented by the Premier. On pages 8 and 9 under the heading 'Overview of the State economy' it states that South Australia's share of total national activity—economic activity—is estimated to have slipped in 1986-87 and 1987-88 because of downturns in the motor vehicle and dwelling construction industries. It indicates that employment has fallen and that South Australia's employment growth rate is lower than the national growth rate of 1.9 per cent in 1986-87 and 3.5 per cent in 1987-88. Heaven knows, they are not high growth rates.

South Australia has performed very poorly on a national basis in employment. Full-time employment rose .9 per cent in 1987-88 after declining slightly in 1986-87 but it remained well below the national growth rate of 3.1 per cent. Most of that growth has been in part-time employment, not in full-time permanent jobs, and among women, a large proportion of whom have sought employment simply in order to try to make ends meet. That is the principal problem with this budget: the difficulty that ordinary South Australians have in making ends meet is growing more severe as each month passes.

I link up that line of thought with the tourism budget. The paper on the State's economy presents the tourism industry as an important part of the State's export sector. Page 42 of the document entitled *The South Australian Economy* states that expenditure by international and interstate travellers for vacation and business is estimated to represent about 6 per cent of total South Australian regional exports. One way in which we can really boost the State's economy—and the Minister and the Premier keep telling us this—is to boost the tourism industry. What are the principal impediments to boosting the tourism industry? To find them one should look at another section of this document, which identifies the largest employers in South Australia.

Employers are listed on page 52 and they rank from the mining and motor vehicle industries through to basic metal products, electrical equipment, domestic appliances, publishing, communications, finance, retail, and tourism and leisure. In the tourism and leisure section only one organisation is listed, that is, the Adelaide Casino. The criterion for being included among the largest employers is that none employ fewer than 1 000 persons. It is significant that the tourism industry—the fastest growing industry—has only one organisation listed, and it is a statutory organisation at that.

Probably the next largest employers in the tourism industry in South Australia are the international hotels—the Hyatt and the Hilton—and the Adelaide Convention Centre, which is a large single employer. After that, most tourism operators in South Australia are small businesses and, in the main, very small businesses. Suburban and country hotels would come into the category of small business. Most other operators are husband and wife teams who work extraordinarily long hours for relatively little return, simply because they enjoy being in the industry. So the fastest growing industry in this State, which contributes reasonably significantly to export income, is based on small business. If all the small businesses in the tourism sector in this State could each employ one more employee, employment in South Australia would take off like a rocket, but I will explain to the House why these tourism businesses are simply not able to do that.

I do so by referring to the May/June 1988 issue of *ASBA News*, the official publication of the Australian Small Business Association. On page 2 of the newsletter are published

the results of a survey questionnaire from the previous newsletter which, as ASBA states, should concern any responsible Government. The results from ASBA members reveal:

87 per cent of South Australian businesses are paying higher premium rates under WorkCover than they paid for their previous private workers compensation insurance. In fact some 76 per cent are seeing no premium rate savings whatsoever.

32 per cent of businesses have had recent premium rate increases under WorkCover.

91 per cent of businesses whose employees have made claims under WorkCover have not been reimbursed within 30 days of claim lodgment. Hence business is funding WorkCover's inefficiencies.

17 per cent of businesses have had employees claiming against WorkCover in just seven months of operation. This statistic should be sobering news to the Government which flippantly ignored Professor Michael Porter's report that alerted them to community behavioural changes to claim patterns that would result from WorkCover. Unfortunately for the Government it appears that the Professor was right.

29 per cent of businesses have experienced significant cost increases as a result of land tax increases.

That is the general impact of some State Government imposts as they affect small business. The significant impact on the tourism industry is, in the main, much more intense, because the tourism industry is labour intensive and the hotel industry, in particular, operates in a highly competitive market and runs on very fine margins.

For some Adelaide hotels, their land tax bill has doubled in the past two financial years and, when hotels are leased by a landlord who owns more than one property, which is the case with all SA Brewing Holdings hotels, the increase has been several hundred per cent. That includes lessees who have advised me that their land tax bill has increased from \$6 000 and \$8 000 in the 1986-87 financial year to \$12 000 and \$16 000 in the current financial year. No business can sustain that kind of increase unless its profitability is very high indeed. That is not the case with hotels. The Government, which claims to pin such great hopes on the tourism and hospitality industry, will find that, in the next 12 months, the hotel industry will reflect the pattern of the petrol retailing industry in the 1970s. This is not the shadow Minister of Tourism being the prophet of doom and gloom: I am echoing the views of the industry and conveying them to Parliament.

There will be a period of enormous rationalisation and a large number of these businesses will go to the wall because they simply cannot sustain the cost structure that this Government has imposed upon them. For example, in respect of WorkCover, under the old scheme hotels paid a rate of approximate 2 per cent of total wages; from September last year the rate was pushed up to 2.8 per cent plus the first week's wages and in March this year further increases took the rate to 3.3 per cent. That is just one example of many. Another example is land tax. Land tax, and the effect of the multiple holding rate on the Government's revenue from land tax, is having a devastating effect on the development industry.

Again, a Government that claims to be pro development is, in effect, killing the housing industry by causing first home buyers to accommodate an additional \$4 500 for the average sized block simply because of the flow and effect of land tax on multiple holdings. If one multiplies by eight the average cost of a block of \$25 000, one finds that eight blocks aggregate to a cost of \$200 000 (the level that attracts the multiple holding rate); thus the land tax increase which the developer has to pay and which has to be placed on the cost of the block adds approximately \$4 500 over the 30-year life of a mortgage. I doubt very much whether the ordinary home buyer has any idea that the Bannon Gov-

ernment will, through land tax, scoop that much out of their pockets over 30 years.

That is the fact of the matter and that is the hidden agenda in this budget. People may not be keenly aware of how and why, but they are growing to a realisation that the reason why ends are not meeting is State Government taxes and charges. That is what an overall examination of this budget displays. The Government's revenue is increasing despite its claims that various concessions are being made. Expenditure has not been cut significantly, although I must say that in the areas that are critical to me, namely, environment and planning, there have been severe cuts. There has certainly been an increase in the marketing and promotion budget in tourism, but the increase is not anywhere near the order of 49 per cent claimed by the Minister. The fact is that inflation and media costs are running at approximately 20 per cent and that reduces significantly the value of the increases. It simply means that South Australia is still behind every other State in the Commonwealth in terms of tourism marketing and whilst the situation has been improved somewhat by this budget, it has not improved our competitive position in comparison with the other States. The time allotted to me does not enable me to analyse further the impact of this budget on the State's national parks, but I shall do that on another occasion.

Mr M. J. EVANS (Elizabeth): In the time allotted to me in this debate, I would like to discuss a number of aspects of the budget with a particular focus on housing and taxation policy as these areas are of special significance to my district. As this debate covers the whole spectrum of the State's activity one cannot do it justice in the time allowed, and so I will concentrate on those areas where I have alternative proposals and suggestions for improvement based on constructive criticism.

I fully support the broad policy direction of the Government and the budget, but it would be pointless to dwell on areas of agreement. However, I do wish to specifically praise the way in which financial information is now being marshalled and presented to Parliament. I am also very pleased to note the Premier's recent advice to me that, for the first time, the program performance budget documents will contain significant references to output measures, including performance indicators. I would also like to place on record my thanks to the officers of SAFA to whom I spoke recently and who were able to assist my understanding of the complex but essential documentation that they now provide.

I now wish to make one or two more general comments on specific areas of activity. The northern region was particularly successful in the budget context with major funding for stage II of the Lyell McEwin Hospital redevelopment, a \$170 000 grant for technology education in our local schools and funding for the establishment of the combined Elizabeth and Munno Para Schools Board, among other items. In addition, the local economy is on the move, with the massive investment by car manufacturer Holden's in its Elizabeth plant which is taking on increasing numbers of employees. Hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent on modernising the plant and our future as the focus of vehicle assembly operations is secure.

I now want to refer to housing policy. Rents are continuing to rise and will no doubt do so for some time yet. Fortunately, we have had the last of the 'catch up' rent rises which have been imposed to make up for the rent 'freeze' that we had just before the last election. The Minister has belatedly promised that future increases will be limited by the rate of inflation. Unfortunately, the Minister has also placed a time limit of only 18 months on the duration of

this promise which is not as good as it seems, as many workers and pensioners do not even receive the full CPI adjustment to their income. No wonder the Minister of Housing refuses to release the Housing Trust budget to Parliament so that it can be properly scrutinised in advance like that of every other Government department.

In the context of the budget debate, I must again demand that the full details of the Housing Trust budget be released so that everyone can see for themselves just how the money is to be spent and how the ever increasing rent taken from tenants every week is spent. If the Minister of Housing has nothing to hide, let him bring his budget into the open for all to see.

Last year's figures in the Auditor-General's Report, presented long after the event, are not good enough: we need to know what is planned for the future, in time to offer constructive criticism and, if necessary, to seek changes in strategy. If tenants and taxpayers are to pay more and more every year, they have a right to know how their money is to be spent and to have a say in shaping the policy.

As members will recall, I strenuously fought the creation of yet another bureaucratic office simply to administer Government employee housing. I was very concerned to note from the Auditor-General's Report that this office has not yet lodged separate accounts for the year ended 30 June 1988, even though this appears to be contrary to the basis on which the office was originally established. There can be no doubt that the Government is pursuing a wasteful and inefficient policy by establishing a separate office when the Housing Trust is well able to take advantage of the economies of scale which such an organisation has to offer.

This has now been recognised with respect to the Emergency Housing Office and it is regrettable that the Government has yet to learn this obvious lesson with respect to Government employee housing. The Housing Trust is more than capable and is well-equipped to handle the administrative and maintenance workload which Government employee housing would impose. Now separate and expensive systems will be required to establish another agency to execute a function nearly identical with the work of the Housing Trust.

I must also call attention again to the massive commitment of funds to the Emergency Housing Office even though, as I have said, this has now been incorporated into the Housing Trust itself. Unfortunately, the EHO spends a great deal of money but very little of it on emergency housing. It deals with thousands of inquiries and it allocates a few houses, but to seriously think that this is a function which only a wasteful structure such as this can perform is absurd. The Housing Trust itself is able to provide high priority housing as and when required. It has a system of allocating houses on a priority basis when this is justified by medical, financial or personal circumstances and the application is judged against all other requests for priority in a way which ensures equity and fairness between all applicants. That is social justice, not the *ad hoc* approach of the EHO, which simply consumes funds which could be spent on houses for those in genuine need.

While it is certainly true that many people need advice on emergency housing, it is also true that other organisations were providing that service on a voluntary basis before the EHO came along. If emergency houses are needed, the trust is able to house people once and for all without the need for further transfers. Alternatively, if they are only eligible for or need only short term accommodation, the trust could immediately allocate recently vacated houses, if necessary, without the need to undertake the normal vacancy repairs. Given that almost \$11 million is spent each year on vacancy

repairs, the trust could well do with making some economies in that area. This may be one way of helping the trust in that area.

It must also be noted that the trust has a very high level of obligation to those who are long-term tenants and who have never mistreated or abused their property as a small minority—and I emphasise that—of short-term tenants do. Instead of massive expenditure on vacancy maintenance, emergency housing administration, excess water rates, Government employee housing bureaucracies and the like, many long-term tenants consider that it is time the Minister devoted a higher priority to helping those tenants who have been long-term residents of the trust.

Their rent continues to rise at a substantial rate with the average rent per house rising over 17 per cent in the last 12 months. They have difficulty in obtaining any substantial maintenance on their house and many feel neglected in favour of those who abuse the system and the property of the trust. Social justice has a different perspective for these people and it is time it was given more recognition.

The cooperative housing projects which are so favoured by the Minister are also a source of concern to me. I am well aware of the success stories in this area and I am very pleased that the Elizabeth electorate is host to the Magill Homes for the Aged and the associated Housing Co-operative, which is an organisation of which everyone involved may be proud. However, this is not true across the board and the Minister must take note of the comments of the Auditor-General in this regard. It is not enough to justify the expenditure of public money on these cooperatives with the simple explanation that it provides for housing diversity. The trust and its expert architectural advisers (including those in the private sector) are very capable of providing diversity if that is what is needed, but I choose to place the highest priority on housing for people in the most efficient way we know how and that is my preference for the highest priority for the taxpayer's dollar in this important area of social responsibility.

I understand that the trust has recently collected many of these aspects of policy into one central focus and that is a commendable and long overdue move. However, I hope that it will enable us to see better justification for these low accountability projects than we have seen to date. Cooperatives are fine when they are dealing with their own money. When a substantial public subsidy is required, one begins to wonder just how they are to be made accountable for that money and how one is to judge the relative fairness of allocating housing funds to these bodies rather than to those people who patiently wait their turn on the public housing waiting list year after year. I look forward to hearing more on this topic at a future date and perhaps during the Estimates Committee hearings.

I would now like to raise the question of purchasing rental homes, which is also particularly important. It is essential that the Government encourage tenants to buy their Housing Trust home and provide real incentives for them to be able to do so. The Government could, for example, abolish stamp duty on the contract, saving hundreds of dollars. It could change the law to significantly reduce the administrative costs and it could offer a better scheme of concessional interest rate loans to long-term tenants seeking to purchase.

A new system of land titles, specifically designed to cope with the unique problems of dividing a double unit, could be legislated into existence, thereby simplifying the system and reducing the cost. My suggestion to this effect at last year's Estimates Committee has so far gone unheeded by the Minister, but I believe that this aspect of the problem could benefit from some lateral thinking and I invite the

Minister and his legal advisers to further consider this issue. While several hundred double units have already been sold throughout South Australia, we desperately need an accelerated program if we are to make real progress in giving people a home of their own and a valuable stake in their local community.

The funds generated by the sales can help build new homes for those on the long waiting lists, while giving low income families their only chance to save for the future and not waste money on rent for a property they will never own. The Government is to be congratulated for the way in which it has finally decided to embrace the sale of public sector houses to the tenants and especially its use of private land agents to promote the sale process.

Unfortunately, many people in the target group are not accustomed to home ownership and purchase, and the massive commitment which a mortgage represents may be too great a hurdle for some to jump. Accordingly, special incentives are essential if substantial progress is to be made. We have the opportunity to make a fundamental change of major significance in our community as a social justice measure of much greater importance than many of the social justice strategies announced in the budget. The sale of trust houses, particularly the double units, to low income families will give a whole group in our society the opportunity to own their own home, something which the present economic circumstances are otherwise likely to deny them.

They may also then participate in the capital gains which have hitherto been the sole province of the middle and upper socio-economic groups. It will also give them the opportunity to make a commitment to their local community which they may not otherwise have been able to make and many areas such as my own district and that of the Minister of Housing will benefit enormously from this process.

Let there be no mistake; this is real social justice—moving low income families from the relentless and unproductive rental trap and into the reality of an affordable share of the great Australian dream. While a double unit may not be the most desirable property to purchase, there is no doubt that it could be made affordable in a way which no other property will be. At the end of 20 years, the purchaser owns 100 per cent of a double unit, desirable or otherwise, but at the end of the same period, his neighbour who is still renting from the trust owns nothing and is many thousands of dollars in rent out of pocket.

We have a unique opportunity to take advantage of an historic situation and the future of whole communities will depend upon the Government's commitment to making this work on a grand scale. In the hands of the tenants these properties are a real and appreciating asset. In the hands of the trust, they are massive liabilities which will serve the long-term financial interests of neither the State nor the tenant. This has been well demonstrated by the Public Accounts Committee in its well researched and documented reports on asset replacement in the trust. The Government has taken the first tentative steps in the right direction. We must build upon this early tentative start if this extraordinary opportunity for fundamental change and social justice for low income families and communities is not to falter.

I would now like to turn my attention to taxes and charges, a very contentious topic. It is about time that the State Government reviewed the way it collects tax and imposes charges. We are still living with the systems established years ago and, in some cases, they are no longer fair or efficient. The Government needs to impose taxes to fund

public services and we must all pay our share. However, we have a right to know that it is cost effective and equitable to all concerned.

Motor vehicle charges such as registration and drivers licences, for example, could be eliminated with real savings to the ordinary taxpayer. While some of the cost would need to be recovered in higher petrol taxes, at least the system would be more efficient and therefore cheaper for all concerned. Stamp duties, which are payable on almost every transaction from buying a car or house to signing a contract or deed, are a real disincentive for ordinary people as well as for business. They must be abolished in respect of as many transactions as possible and replaced by other more efficient means of raising revenue. Although I hesitate to say it, that includes land tax and FID taxes.

Some aspects of the existing system could be retained with, for example, the duty on new cars remaining and significant flat charges being levied through the Lands Titles Office. The FID tax could also replace the existing duty on cheques and ensure that those who conduct the most significant transactions pay the most. The average person would pay a very small amount on day-to-day transactions, but those with major transactions would pay far more. Naturally, business would benefit from the abolition of basic stamp duties on legal transactions, with savings in efficiency and convenience.

While increasing any tax, even if to reduce another, is not a popular undertaking, we have the right to expect Government leadership on these issues to ensure that we pay the minimum tax to obtain the services that the community needs. This means that we must have efficient taxes which require the minimum bureaucracy to administer them and which do not force people to change the way they conduct their lives or their business in order to chart their way through a complex maze of obscure tax law. Any such review must be based on a clear public commitment that the total taxation raised should be less after the changes so that no 'backdoor' taxation opportunities or increases can occur.

In this context, it is appropriate to also discuss the State's public debt. The public debt is a proper matter for public concern and it is encouraging to note that the Government has released significant amounts of information on the debt and on its importance to the people of South Australia. While the total debt of the State is now nearly \$7 billion, this must be offset by financial assets owned by the State leaving us with a net debt of some \$4 billion. It is essential that the net figure is more clearly defined so as to ensure that it includes only assets which are indeed liquid or at least liquidatable. While a long term home loan is acceptable in this context, the inclusion of public assets such as schools or highways would not be acceptable.

However, I would certainly wish to congratulate the Government and its officers for the excellent work they have done in defining the assets of the State and its overall financial position. While one might not agree with every aspect of the financial management policy, this is quite secondary to the work that has been undertaken to put our house in order and to use the best principles of corporate management to encapsulate the broad financial health of the enterprise known as South Australia.

I am also very pleased to note the favourable trend in our net debt—another significant achievement, but this still leaves us with the question of the State debt and its relative size. Debt can have many useful purposes, and it can also be a dangerous financial burden which can hold the State back. While our position is reasonable, even good, relative to that of the other States, the fundamental question remains

as to the absolute size of the debt and its effects on South Australia. It also raises the question of the value of debt as an instrument of public policy.

For a financial enterprise such as ETSA, where a commercial charge based on full cost recovery is made for a specific service, debt is essential to smooth out the peaks of capital costs incurred in the construction of massive power stations and distribution systems. It must never be used to subsidise the cost of power, and the full cost of that debt must be built into the charging system. However, in the case of more general public works, such as schools and roads, the value of debt is less clear. It is even less obvious where the debt is used to fund minor works and even maintenance and, of course, it is irresponsible to use it in the way that the Tonkin Government did to meet a revenue shortfall.

Given that the debt servicing cost of \$534 million is now of the same order of magnitude as our annual capital payments of \$558 million, I feel it is essential that the use of debt and the way in which it drains the capacity of the State and its taxpayers should be reassessed. We must look towards long-term mechanisms to fund the construction of schools, roads, parks and other non-commercial activities from annual revenue. A radical thought, some would say, and obviously it would take many years to implement, but a gradual and phased reduction of the State's public debt, combined with a gradual increase in capital works funding through revenue, would result in a long-term change to the structure of the public sector economy.

Clearly, an exception must be made for those State enterprises which may be run on commercial lines and which have periodic massive capital works expenditure, provided that they operate on a full cost recovery basis. This fundamental structural change could well be enshrined in our Constitution—without the need for a referendum, although I suspect that such a measure would certainly pass—so that any future Government could not simply revert to borrowing in order to offset a short-term revenue fall. With those remarks, I indicate my support for the Bill. I commend my remarks to the House.

Mr INGERSON (Bragg): This afternoon in Question Time we heard one of the most amazing diatribes ever heard from the Minister of Recreation and Sport. He was replying to a very simple question about whether the Government is reviewing its investment in radio station 5AA. The most recent Auditor-General's Report indicates that last year 5AA lost \$820 000—and that loss was after a contribution of \$750 000 from the TAB—with thus a total loss in less than four years of \$4 million. I find it beyond belief that a Minister could stand in this place and say that a loss of \$4 million in a subsidiary of a statutory authority does not matter and that the Opposition has got it all wrong. The TAB has already invested \$7.4 million in this venture. In essence, that money could have and should have gone to the racing fraternity. This begs the question: what is this Minister really all about? It is easy to get up here and get stuck into the Opposition, and it is very easy to get stuck into the shadow Minister of Recreation and Sport—because all he needs to do is to forget to answer the question.

Mr Tyler: He answered the question.

Mr INGERSON: He did not bother to answer the question. I would now like to make some comments on taxation. This year the State Government has increased taxation by 10.6 per cent. That is well in excess of inflation. Many times we have heard the Premier saying that it is all right as long as the rate of increase is no greater than the inflation rate, but here we have the State Government increasing its income from taxation by over 10 per cent. The Premier stated that

there had been a reduction in land tax, but in recurrent receipts there is an increase in land tax by some 12.1 per cent. He said that small business in particular will benefit from this. Obviously, the Premier has no comprehension of how land tax costs are passed on to the small business sector.

He has no comprehension of how the small operators in strip shopping areas have to pick up the increased cost of land tax. If there is a 12 per cent increase in land tax it is those people who pay. It is quite amazing to me that the Premier can walk away from this and maintain that many small business people will not suffer. Obviously, he just does not understand how the proprietors of business premises pass on the cost of land tax.

In relation to motor vehicle registration fees, licences, and other sundry areas, there is an increase of 6.2 per cent—again above the rate of inflation. Who pays here? It is the motorist, the consumer, the user of the motor vehicles. It is those people who continually must pay. I heard the Premier say that he had given some very significant reductions in payroll tax, and yet there is an increase of over 15 per cent in payroll tax—more than double the inflation rate. There was a big throw-away line about pay-roll tax from the Premier and yet in this taxation line we see that it has increased by more than double the rate of inflation.

In the business franchise area, petrol tax has increased by 12.9 per cent, or nearly 13 per cent. That will be obtained from the consumer, the driver of a motor vehicle. Where does all that money go? Some \$25 million goes into road tax and the rest disappears into general revenue. Why does not that money go to the Highways Department? That was where it was originally intended to go. Today, just over a third of that money goes into roads. In the tobacco area, there is an increase of 15 per cent—again, more than double the rate of inflation. This time some of it is to go into a new special health, sporting and cultural fund, and it is hoped that some of the sporting bodies will derive some significant benefits from that. As I have said, there is a very significant 10 per cent increase in tax in this budget.

The Premier's bleatings about recent rises in Government charges are utterly sheepish. They follow the Government's now familiar line that the rises are in line with inflation and that charges are kept within the CPI. At least the Premier and his clones are single-minded—but so are sheep. As we all know, the new financial year for South Australians opened with a fusillade of higher Government charges. Transport costs are up, water and sewerage charges are up and drivers licence fees are up. Of course, this is not new. State tax revenues have now increased nearly 100 per cent since the Labor Government took office six years ago. We know that South Australians pay the Government an average of \$100 a week. This is well documented. The cost of public transport, motoring, electricity and water has leapt by just over 70 per cent in six years—or 11.5 per cent a year. South Australians' average weekly earnings, before tax in that time have risen from \$289 to \$442—a rise of 53 per cent, or 9 per cent a year.

The Premier's lame and sheepish excuses are not new. He has consistently said that rises should be restricted to the CPI rate or to inflation. The Bannon Government's attitude is one of simply accepting inflation. It is giving in to inflation and pandering to it. However, inflation is an obvious enemy of us all. A worse enemy, though, is the acceptance of inflation. The worst offence is for the Government to blithely surrender to inflation and not to attack it. There has not been a single spark of recognition or resolution from the Bannon Government in relation to what is clearly its foremost duty in overcoming inflation. The

Government has accepted inflation. It would perhaps argue that it is not its fault and that the problem stems from interstate and overseas. We never hear from the Government that inflation and its acceptance are diseases that injure all South Australians and that it will fight to overcome it by better management, more efficient methods and clear leadership in the public sector.

The STA and the E&WS in particular are not just Government departments: they are enterprises and businesses that sell services to public customers. They should act like businesses, and the Government should ensure that they fight inflationary pressures just as private industry and commerce has to combat cost rises against market conditions and consumer resistance. Private industries cannot always automatically pass on cost increases to customers, and continually have to look at improving efficiency in order to survive. A comment by the Auditor-General in his report was very interesting. He said:

While review for economy and efficiency at the operational level is an important and continuing task, I am of the view that considerable benefits might be achieved also in areas which provide support to the operational levels of public sector agencies. In particular, I refer to the need for the provision of improved information for management planning and control.

That area was also highlighted in the Collins report which dealt specifically with the STA. Mr Bannon's sheepish utterances about Government charges amount to nothing more than following a mesmeric CPI. Does he believe that he can mesmerise South Australians into following him?

Here is the Leader of the Government and the State and, since he is also Treasurer, the Leader of the State's economy telling us to accept inflation and keep it ingrained in expectations, and be thankful that the Government keeps its tax increases within the CPI. Is this leadership? Is it responsibility? Is it planning for a better and more secure South Australia? Where is the plan for South Australia? I am not talking of a socialist plan, I simply mean a basic, sensible plan that can be recognised and understood. Where is a plan that is helpful to industry, small business, individuals, families, and the battlers of this world who are entitled to at least a glimpse of the future into which they are heading or being led?

There is no plan. The Bannon Government lives on hope—hope that windfalls such as Roxby Downs, the Holdens-Toyota merger, the submarine project, and various tourism initiatives will do the job for it. That is not governing for the people: that is abdicating to *laissez-faire*, hoping that the market will solve everything. It might, and if it does, be sure that the Bannon Government will be quick to take the credit, to accept the praise as speedily as it accepts inflation.

However, the market might not deliver. In 1988 we see weaker retail sales in South Australia, and a continuing low level of capital expenditure by South Australian industry. What does this show when linked with impending wage rises, hardening interest rates and increased Government charges? Unchecked, without any planning, they could lead to a decline in economic activity and, inevitably, disemployment.

Where is the Government's plan to combat this possibility? There is none, and there is also none to combat inflation. The Bannon Government whistles in the dark in the hope that everything will work out. Investment and consumption determine the health of the economy: in South Australia neither are robust at present. Given that many effects of the 1987 Stock Exchange crash are yet to be felt in this State, the cue for the Government is plain. The Government should stop dithering and should stop accept-

ing the sickness that is inflation. It should stop shying away from the responsibility to plan for South Australia's future.

I now turn my attention to the STA and to comments that were made today by the Minister of Transport. He said that the STA was in a significantly improved position. The Minister said that the STA had come in within budget, but if one looks at the Auditor-General's Report one sees an abnormal item of some \$6 million—an item that was added to the accumulated shortage. When one looks further at the report under that item, one sees that the accumulated shortage represents annual leave, retiring and death gratuity, workers compensation claims, and third party accident claims, to make a total of some \$6 million.

It is interesting that the year before that figure was not included, so all we have had is this little slip of \$6 million into the budget. It is hidden in the accumulated deficit. In fact, the operating loss overall, including all the provisions which the Premier said he was going to include last year, was \$6 million over budget. Therefore, we do not have a balanced budget situation as the Minister of Transport said earlier today.

The Auditor-General's Report contains comments about the Crouzet ticketing system. It is interesting to note that all the things we have talked about over the past 12 months have been substantiated by his comments. The new ticketing system had an estimated cost of \$5.7 million but its final cost was \$10.7 million. The Auditor-General states:

The authority's financial records at 30 June 1988 show that \$10.7 million was expended on the project. That amount does not take into account all system modification costs which became necessary on implementation of the system on 27 September 1987. These costs cannot be separately identified from the authority's final records.

I wonder what that cost is? I wonder whether it is the \$16 million to which I alluded previously? I wonder whether it is true that the Crouzet ticketing system cost \$16 million and not the original \$5.7 million that was estimated? Then, the Auditor-General states:

... while initial problems associated with the introduction of the Crouzet system made revenue verification difficult (and some \$300 000 of revenue may have been foregone), revenues collected since the introduction of the system are in line with budget expectations—and the expectations seem to have been reasonably based.

That sounds quite good, but the figures relating to patronage were again down this year. Of course, they are reasonably based, but why are they down—because the STA is not providing a service that the community requires. The Auditor-General goes further—and this is probably the most interesting part of it. I remember when this system was going to be introduced, just before the STA union's holiday in April in Paris. The STA, through the Minister, said that it was going to introduce the system to cut \$1 million worth of fraud and that it would be a very efficient system. However, the Auditor-General now states:

... the operating costs of the new system are likely to be in the order of \$4 million in a full year.

We were going to save \$1 million with this system, but now it will cost \$4 million a year to run! A very interesting system we have! On the next page the Auditor-General refers to its introduction and its lack of testing. I had a discussion recently with a person from one of our biggest statutory authorities about the introduction of a new computer on-line system in relation to betting. I was told that that authority would not introduce any computer system until it had been thoroughly tested for at least 12 months. Here we have a system, which is substantiated by questioning of the Auditor-General, that was introduced with very little testing. This most sophisticated computer—

Mr Tyler interjecting:

Mr INGERSON: It does not make any difference whether it has been tested elsewhere. The TAB does not introduce systems without testing them, and it has the biggest single computer system in the State. The previous Minister knows full well that it would not introduce a computer system without properly testing it. Yet, here we have a system that cost something like \$16 million instead of \$5 million being introduced without any proper testing. That is disgraceful.

Mr Tyler interjecting:

Mr INGERSON: The O-Bahn was tested.

Mr S.J. Baker interjecting:

Mr INGERSON: I thank the member for Mitcham for that. It is like putting the *Island Seaway* in the water without proper testing first. It is the same thing. The Auditor-General has clearly questioned the 'testing' requirement in future. Unfortunately for the consumers in South Australia, he has identified the lack of testing in relation to this system too late. As the Leader so clearly pointed out today, over the past 12 months we have seen a further drop in patronage of the STA. The Minister said earlier that we now have a system that shows us how many people are using its services. If that is the case—

Mr Tyler interjecting:

Mr INGERSON: That is nonsense, because we know that there are fewer paying customers. If the system is working so well, why is it that the Minister, through his department, has people standing at bus-stops individually counting people getting on the buses? That happened last week at two bus-stops in the southern areas of the electorate of Fisher. They were out there physically checking the number of people getting on the buses, yet we have paid some \$16 million for a ticketing system which just is not working properly.

It is also interesting to notice in the Auditor-General's Report that the cost of the Government contribution for the overall STA system has risen from \$1.53 per journey to \$1.99 per journey. I am very much aware that that includes a very significant increase to cover services that were not included in the previous year. If the graph is looked at closely, it shows a significant increase from a total cost of \$2.82 per journey to \$3.16 per journey, which is a very significant increase in the overall cost to the community. It is a pity that, when the Minister stands up and says that the system has improved dramatically over the past 12 months, he does not get his facts correct.

Mr GROOM (Hartley): That was a very disappointing contribution from the member for Bragg.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr GROOM: Well, he does need a new speech writer but, if anyone was whistling in the dark, it was the member for Bragg. In actual fact, this is a budget of achievement. It is a balanced budget. The Opposition has done nothing more than attempt to downgrade a very fine budget and, in so doing, it seeks also to downgrade South Australia. The 1987-88 budget proposed a financing requirement of some \$355 million with an overall cash deficit of about \$14 million. However, the results for 1988-89 show not a deficit of \$14 million but an overall cash surplus of \$34.4 million to 30 June. That allowed a consolidated deficit balance of \$30 million, which was left over from the Tonkin years, to be wiped out and produced an overall surplus of \$4.3 million to 30 June 1988. At the same time, the financing requirement was reduced from \$355 million to \$310 million, which is a remarkable achievement on the part of any State Government.

In 1987-88, the budget deficit was forecast at \$14 million, but we have brought in a surplus. Not only have we brought

in a surplus, we have wiped out the Tonkin deficit and provided a \$4.3 million overall cash surplus. In addition to that achievement, we have absorbed the unplanned second tier wage increase in the 1987-88 budget. Despite Opposition attempts to downgrade this State, South Australia is well governed and financially well managed. The results speak for themselves, yet the 1988-89 budget setting has not been ideal for a State Government: we had the share market crash in October; and for the third consecutive year, there have been reductions at the Premiers' Conference in the level of funds available to the States, with South Australia suffering an effective reduction of \$130 million (or 5.1 per cent).

There have also been global borrowing limits set by the Commonwealth. These have been reduced and South Australia has been affected to the tune of some \$42.5 million. There were Federal spending reductions in the May 1988 mini budget of about \$982 million to the States, and a further reduction in financial assistance grants to the States of \$650 million, which is an enormous burden for the States to carry. South Australia has had to share that burden. In addition, the Commonwealth Grants Commission recommended that South Australia's share of general revenue should be reduced by \$15 million in 1988-89, although I notice that that is to be offset by special revenue assistance of \$10.2 million. The setting for the 1988-89 budget is not ideal, yet the Government has been able to bring down a remarkable result.

It is a balanced budget. There is no increase in taxation rates for 1988-89. There is an increase in the payroll tax threshold which means enormous gains for small business, and there is relief on land tax, which again is of considerable benefit for the small business community. There is expenditure of about \$20 million on the social justice package. There are payroll tax concessions of \$8 million, land tax concessions of \$11.5 million and commercial concessions on electricity tariffs of another \$3 million. Yet, at the same time, we have entirely wiped from the books the Tonkin Government deficit of \$63 million.

Mr Becker: That's not true.

Mr GROOM: The member for Hanson says it is not true. The fact is that the Tonkin Government inherited a \$1 million surplus from the outgoing Corcoran Government and, in three short years, converted that surplus to a \$63 million deficit. At the same time, it used capital works moneys to refund current requirements. In the August 1981 budget, the Tonkin Government took \$44 million from capital works to fund recurrent expenditure.

In August 1982, when going to the polls, the Tonkin Government said that it had a balanced budget but, in reality, another \$42 million was taken from capital works. As events transpired, that became \$51.9 million and, together with the \$6.1 million accumulated deficit, it diverted about \$100 million in capital works moneys and at the same time ran up a \$63 million deficit on the current account. All in all, it frittered away over \$150 million in three short years while it was in charge of South Australia's finances.

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member for Hartley to sit down. I ask honourable members on my left-hand side to contain themselves. They will all have the opportunity to respond during the 10-minute grievance following this debate. I ask them to control themselves to the extent that we can hear the honourable member for Hartley.

Mr GROOM: No wonder there was a recession in South Australia during those years: because the Tonkin Government used capital works money to fund recurrent programs

but, at the same time, due to total financial incompetence, it ran up a current account deficit of \$63 million. And members opposite have the audacity to challenge this Government on its financial record! Further, between 1979 and 1982 the Tonkin Government raised State taxes and charges on 194 separate items, which I have previously outlined to the House. Under the previous Liberal Government there were record tax increases; \$100 million in capital works moneys was frittered away (producing a recession); and it ran up a \$63 million deficit. It was this Government that had to grapple with the financial incompetence of a Liberal Administration during those three years in South Australia.

The last capital works moneys of \$28 million was used during 1983-84 when we first came to office because we inherited an appalling situation. An amount of \$25 million was proposed for 1984-85 in the August 1984 budget, but it was not used which, again in a short space of time, was a remarkable achievement on the part of this Government. The FID tax is an essential part of South Australia's finances. It produced \$38 million in 1987-88, and it is estimated that in 1988-89 it will produce \$41.7 million, yet the Opposition opposed this taxation measure in 1983 for short-term political gain. Quite clearly, it is an essential part of South Australia's overall equitable tax base.

Year after year the Opposition criticises and attacks SAFA yet, to the end of June 1988, SAFA had general reserves of \$110 million and retained earnings of \$99 million. Not only has it contributed \$205 million to Consolidated Account from its operating surplus of \$279 million as at 30 June 1988 but it has contributed and made provision for a further \$74 million for 1988-89. At the same time, it has both general reserves and retained reserves totalling \$209 million. That is a remarkable achievement. It handles something like \$11.7 billion in funds. An additional contribution of \$300 million is planned for 1988-89 from SAFA's estimated surplus for that year, which is again a truly remarkable result on the part of a State Government instrumentality.

That is not the end of the achievements of this Government. South Australia is a low tax State and I draw the attention of honourable members to 'The Finances of South Australia,' an information paper which has been prepared by the South Australian Treasury. The table on page 49 shows taxation revenue as a percentage of gross State product. Looking at the up-to-date figures for 1986-87, South Australia records 4.4 per cent. That is the second lowest taxation GSP ratio of any Australian State. Tasmania has 4.9 per cent, Western Australia 4.8 per cent, Queensland 4.1 per cent, Victoria 5.2 per cent and New South Wales 5.8 per cent.

Let us compare that with the Tonkin years. In 1982-83 South Australia recorded 4.2 per cent while New South Wales recorded 5.6 per cent. Comparing that with the movement of the other States, it is a remarkable achievement during that time. South Australia has held its own. It has maintained its position as a low tax State, despite the poor efforts of the Tonkin Government in its management of South Australia's finances. South Australia is a low tax State, but members opposite do not like to face that fact.

Page 48 of the report reveals that, according to Grants Commission analysis, the State has an ability to increase the overall tax burden by about 4 per cent before the tax burden would reach the weighted average level applicable across the six States. So, South Australia has maintained its position as a low tax State and has 4 per cent available before it catches up to the other States; yet I heard the member for Bragg and other members opposite trying to pretend that South Australia is a high tax State and that, somehow, with a magic wand, they kept it as a low tax

State during their period of administration. They did no such thing. Anyone can pinch capital works money. If you want to induce a recession, you can take capital works money but that does not demonstrate financial responsibility because it is admitting that you are \$100 million out in your receipts, and that is what occurred. South Australia is a low tax State and it is about time that members opposite faced that fact.

There is no doubt that South Australia has been reducing its debt, and that was confirmed by the Auditor-General's Report, which shows a reduction of \$50 million from the previous year. When members opposite say that, miraculously, the Tonkin Government lowered our debt burden compared with the present Administration, one has only to look at page 56 of this document to find that, as a percentage of GDP, in 1986-87, South Australia recorded 19.4 per cent. In the Tonkin years of 1981-82 it was 22.5 per cent. In 1982-83, when this Government inherited part of the Tonkin years, it was 23.3 per cent. That is a remarkable result and it is no good pretending that, under the Tonkin Government, South Australia's net indebtedness in the public sector was reduced. It was not. It is this Administration that has reduced State indebtedness and the State taxation burden. It is this Administration that has been competent with regard to not using capital works moneys, unlike our predecessors in Government.

What has happened to the Opposition's incentivisation slogan? I read only last year that the Opposition wanted everyone to get incentivated. That never occurred. The fact of the matter is, as the Premier said in his concluding comments: This budget marks the achievement of two major themes of the Government: the restoration of a sound financial position and the introduction of an ongoing program of social justice.

In Mr Keating's recent terminology, it is a budget that can bring home the bacon.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON (Premier and Treasurer): I am pleased to follow that eloquent and accurate contribution by the honourable member for Hartley, because he very correctly analysed the flaws in the analysis by a number of members opposite. Because I do not want to unduly detain the House at this point of the debate, I will confine my remarks to the lead speech by the Leader of the Opposition and, particularly, to those matters where he purported to analyse the budget and the State finances. He also spent time recycling his usual economic statistics. The rhetoric remains unchanged. He leaves blanks which he fills in with whatever figures come into his mind at the time he gives his next speech. We have heard that part of his speech again and again, and he makes it about three or four times a year. I guess it encourages him: it must make him feel better. However, it must be worrying for his colleagues that they hear this trash recycled because they have long since stopped being encouraged by it. There is not much point dealing with it now because it can be dealt with in other contexts and, indeed, it will be.

The Leader of the Opposition's remarks about our economic performance, the budget and the risks it purports to take must be dealt with very directly because, as was shown today in this House when the Minister of State Development and Technology indicated quite clearly that the Leader of the Opposition had got a year mixed up in attempting to interpret some statistics, so we find that, in a number of instances, he is simply unable or unwilling to read the factual tables or understand the financial management and restructuring behind certain decisions. Let us deal with some of those. He began by saying that South Australia has had the worst sustained economic performance since the depres-

sion—under this Government, presumably. It is a pretty cheeky assertion by someone who was a member of a Government which handed to us one of the biggest debts in the State's history and an economic situation about which we despaired of being able to do something. However, I cannot heap too much blame on him as he was there for only a few months.

It is very interesting that a lot of statistics in these economic indicators are quoted from the 1981-82 financial year. It is convenient for the Leader of the Opposition to stop in the middle of 1982 because that ignores the fact that we came to office in November 1982—in other words, that calendar year was almost finished—with the previous Government's budget already delivered and in operation. In fact, the effect of the economic recession and the problems in our public sector finances continued to work their way through into the middle of 1983.

So, it is very convenient for the Leader of the Opposition to ignore the crucial final stages of that administration; to ignore, for instance, the telephone calls that I received, as the newly-elected Premier of South Australia, from a number of manufacturing industrialists who said, 'Congratulations on coming to office, but we've got some bad news for you; we've got some major retrenchments coming up this Christmas.' It was in the order of hundreds of jobs, but when I said, 'We had no inkling of this; this is not a very nice sort of thing to do with a new Government coming into office and attempting to get things reorganised', the response was, 'Yes, but you will understand that we could not say anything about it in an election context because it would have been seen to be political'.

Thus, when we are analysing the statistics let us remember that the recession that this Government had to cope with was accelerating and continuing to do so. It was not until the combination of the South Australian Labor Government with the Hawke Labor Government (elected in March 1983)—and its urgent work to get on top of the looming multi billion dollar deficit that Treasurer Howard's last budget left in train—that the economy started to come good again. When one makes those comparisons, I think that a vastly different picture emerges. The Leader of the Opposition claims that this is the worst sustained economic performance of any Government since the depression. However, gross State product in South Australia, from 1983-84 until the end of 1987-88, has grown by almost 35 per cent.

This compares with a decline in the size of the economy under the previous Government. We are talking about growth rates under the Liberal Government in 1979-80 of minus .1 per cent (an actual reduction in GSP growth); in 1980-81 of 0.5 per cent; a further reduction in 1981-82 of 1.4 per cent; and a 1982-83 result of nil. They are the figures. We inherited a growth rate of minus .1 per cent from the Tonkin Government. Our heritage, our record, is 35 per cent over that period. For the Leader of the Opposition to talk about badly sustained economic performance in the face of those statistics is staggering. Even the gabbling member for Mitcham must surely understand that they are dishonest figures.

I turn now to the budget risks. The budget, says the Leader of the Opposition, risks a great deal on some heroic assumptions about economic growth. I would suggest that our assumptions on growth are reasonable. Of course, growth rates can change—and change quite markedly—over the course of a year. We can gauge those growth rates only on the basis of economic analysis. We can crosscheck that with the Commonwealth assessment, and it is in this respect that the Leader of the Opposition takes issue with us. He says that we believe that South Australia will have the same

economic growth rate as the rest of Australia and that this is a very bad assumption because over the past three years our economic growth has averaged only 2 per cent while the national economy has grown by 3.8 per cent.

Let us again look at the facts. The South Australian economic growth performance since 1982-83 has been superior to that of Australia. I refer the Leader of the Opposition to Federal budget paper No. 4 entitled 'Commonwealth Financial Relations with other levels of Government'. In fact, I should not have to refer him to this document because he quoted from it. However, he did not look at the implications of the document; he did not look at the figures that show that South Australia had an average nominal growth of 12.2 per cent greater than the average nominal figure for Australia of 10.8 per cent. In the period 1983-84 to 1986-87 growth in real terms amounted to 35 per cent, as I have said. Therefore, I would have thought that in the coming year it would be reasonable to assume, based on past performance, that we would at least match Australia's economic growth.

The third criticism that the Leader of the Opposition says makes our budget risky is that we say that there seems to be an inconsistency in forecasting overall State economic growth to match the national economy, and yet employment in South Australia is running at a lower level than the national figure. Again, we are looking at those figures as realistically as we can. I would very much like to predict a similar increase in employment in that period and I hope that our estimate of 1.5 per cent growth is exceeded, but we have to make a careful and realistic assessment.

So, I respond to that criticism by saying: first, growth in gross State product does not need to be equal to the rate of employment growth. Generally, the two rates move in the same direction, but they do not automatically equate and an examination of the figures will show that because, for instance, gross State product can increase based on improved productivity, which means that less people can produce more. As part of the restructuring that is taking place in the South Australian economy, that has certainly been the case. We are developing greater efficiencies in a number of sectors of our economy. That is something that should be welcomed, but it means that we can increase production without necessarily increasing employment at the same rate.

Secondly, the estimate is conservative, and I think it is appropriate that it should be because it is one of the important assumptions on which we base our budget figures, and they should not be inflated. It should be remembered that that has an impact on revenue predictions, as well. I would be delighted to see employment increase, not just because there would be more South Australians getting jobs, but because our revenue would also improve and that would improve our budget position.

Thirdly, growth in South Australian employment has definitely improved. This year to July 1988 saw employment rise by 2.13 per cent compared with 2.79 per cent for Australia. In the first half of this year from January 1988 we have seen an increase of 1.3 per cent, which is better than the national figure of .67 per cent. So, I think that, although it is a conservative estimate, we could well see our growth rate increase.

The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Tyler): Order! The Deputy Leader will have an opportunity in a few moments during the noting of grievances. In the meantime I ask him to pay the Premier some courtesy. The honourable Premier.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: The Leader of the Opposition, in his attempt to paint South Australia as a highly taxed State, talked about tax collections exceeding budget esti-

mates by 18.3 per cent. In the context with which we have just been dealing, where he criticised growth rates in this State, I find that even more curious—a very strange argument. On the one hand, we are criticised because apparently our economy is not growing and our growth rates are low. He says that this is a very bad thing and, if the position was as the Leader suggests, I would have to agree with him. On the other hand, he acknowledges that tax receipts have grown. An analysis of tax receipts shows how closely they are tied to economic activity. The only area in which tax rates were increased was the petroleum franchise. Taking that into account, there is still this increase, and the bulk of additional revenue in 1987-88 flows directly from a higher level of economic activity.

The Leader of the Opposition is totally inconsistent. The facts are there. There are two major elements; and the first is pay-roll tax collection. Why does that tax go up if the rate has not changed? The simple answer is that, because more people are in employment, payrolls are higher. The land tax collection was of the order that we estimated. Secondly, in relation to stamp duty collections, there is increased economic activity, increased property transactions and increased sales. If there is an increase in the number of sales, that is not a bad indication of health in our economy. Let us move on from the inconsistencies of the Leader of the Opposition—

Members interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: I hope that in his interjections the honourable member for Victoria, whose business acumen, at least, I respect even if we do not agree on political matters, is serious. I appreciate his loyalty to his Leader—he is trying to help him out—but he must be pretty embarrassed by a lot of what has been said. He will concede that as I go through some of the figures. I suspect that at least the member for Victoria can read the odd balance sheet and does not get his years mixed up or make mistakes as between liabilities and net assets. However, we will come to that in a minute.

The Leader of the Opposition says that the only reason I have been able to claim a reduction in debt relates to some paper revaluation regarding Sagasco holdings. I do not understand why that is a criticism. There is an absolute reduction in debt. It is the first time on record that we have seen such an absolute reduction. SAFA has certainly revalued its shares in Sagasco holdings to a market value, and that is quite appropriate. It is odd that we are criticised in relation to the value of an asset which under Liberal policy would be sold off to make a quick dollar. The Liberals saw that they could lower taxes in the short run and make good fellows of themselves. Certainly, that is not what we are into: we are looking at the overall health of the public sector and, if a company's value improves, if it is in a better position, that should be welcomed. Of course, it reflects on our debt position.

The Leader of the Opposition goes on to say that the dip in indebtedness will be short lived. The fall in the State's debt in absolute terms is a significant achievement, and certainly we do not see it as being short lived. We have reduced State net indebtedness by some \$329 million in real terms. In addition, net indebtedness has been reduced from 22.4 per cent of GSP under the Liberals in 1980-81 to 17.2 per cent in 1987-88. That is not a bad record in financial management.

This long-term trend—and it has been a long-term trend, and one would hope that it will continue or at least stabilise over time—has reduced net indebtedness as a ratio to GSP

by 23 per cent. That is a very significant reduction. The figure of \$600 million that was quoted includes \$210 million of depreciation. Actual borrowings and asset rundown will amount to \$395 million—far less than the figure cited by the Leader of the Opposition.

I guess it was when he referred to SAFA that I found his arguments hardest to follow because, instead of his indicating what I would have thought should be an objective and open response to SAFA and its performance, which would be to recognise the value to the State and the prudence with which SAFA has managed its assets and its sheer success as a financial institution, we heard a shonky analysis that attempted to undermine and criticise that achievement. I was not surprised: it has happened before; it is a continuing campaign, but not a very successful one. Certainly, it is misconceived.

Referring back to one of the Auditor-General's recommendations of a year or so ago that allocation should be made to the reserve, one of the criticisms of SAFA was that that action was not taken last financial year. I remind the Leader of the Opposition that SAFA's general reserve of \$110 million is equal to 37 per cent of the expected 1988-89 SAFA profit. That is a pretty healthy reserve, which anyone dealing in corporate terms would recognise. In addition, what the Leader of the Opposition has overlooked is that a further provision to cover risk of \$9 million has been made in 1988-89. There is prudence in the provisions area as well. If we total both the reserves and that provision, we see that about 40 per cent of the expected profit is covered in that way.

There was another criticism, of course, and it is easy to criticise in relation to a large and complex financial institution with a number of operations and subsidiary companies: one can try to hone in on an area where one thinks there has been a major mistake or error. There may be a loss in a particular arm of a portfolio (and any major investor would know that this is the case) and, by honing in on that and ignoring the total picture, one can make things look bad. That does not wash and an examination of SAFA's annual report would demonstrate that clearly.

One of the criticisms related to what the Leader of the Opposition claimed was an unwarranted currency fluctuation exposure and loss by South Australian Finance Limited (UK), an arm of SAFA. True, there is a recorded loss of \$16.8 million, according to the Leader of the Opposition—about eight million pounds Sterling. Let me explain that transaction. The loss by SAFL (UK) arises from a movement of US dollar assets against pounds Sterling liabilities: assets against liabilities in different currencies. The movement in asset values reflects a loss for SAFL (UK) certainly, but, in turn, reflects a profit for SAFA to which these liabilities are owed. There is no loss to the total group. This mismatch in assets and liabilities is not normal. It arose because of a change in the tax circumstances in the United Kingdom which required a rapid correction and which led to a mismatch. Overall, the situation is that, if one looks at the group and the way it is operated, one sees that money paid by one company to another does not mean a loss to that group; it is an accounting adjustment as between the members of the group. The prudence we are talking about in relation to managing foreign currency exposures, I would have thought, is very graphically demonstrated in that instance, despite the circumstances that had to be dealt with. Therefore, that criticism is quite misconceived.

We then come to the big point, the major issue about SAFA's gearing and how its equity to total funds ratio had slumped drastically. The Leader of the Opposition said it had slumped from 32 per cent to 20 per cent in just one

year. I would like to make two points about that but, first, let us get the figures right. The Leader of the Opposition says he was comparing equity to total funds, but in 1987 he compared equity to liabilities. In fact, we got two figures which did not relate to each other at all. The equity to total funds figure that he should have used was in fact 24 per cent as at 30 June 1987 compared with the correct figure of 20 per cent that he used for 30 June 1988. Unfortunately, we are getting used to these errors. It is interesting that a big point is made about this drastic change in gearing and prudent equity levels, in the one year comparing equities to liabilities and in the other equity to total funds.

Even the member for Victoria, whose loyalty is unquestioned surely must feel a little uneasy when confronted with that. I suggest that perhaps he paddle up and give some advice to the Leader of the Opposition. He might do better giving it on the front bench as a replacement for some of these people who are either asleep or braying foolishly at every opportunity. The important point about that is not so much the change as between those years but where that places SAFA in terms of prudence in its management as a major financial institution, and indeed a very important one for this State.

One looks at the rates for major banks. I do not compare that with the companies and so on which are going to the share market and indeed attracting investor funds with far less guarantee and security than the State Government and its assets can give. We do not have to look at that. Let us look at some of the major financial institutions, such as our leading private banks. Westpac has a rate, using the same equity to total funds ratio, of 7.2 per cent; the ANZ Bank has a rate of 6.6 per cent; and National Australia Bank has a rate of 7.5 per cent. In other words, in relation to SAFA we are talking of something like three times the ratio of those major financial institutions. That is the perspective that we should put on this, and it just shows how shallow the Leader of the Opposition's supposed criticism, especially when added to his totally inadequate arithmetic, can be.

On the question of revenue, the Leader again uses the broad brush approach. When he was delivering this part of his speech I must admit that, even though I have heard it many times, I just shook my head at the sheer crudity of an approach which in no way attempts to disaggregate the various components of State revenue, nor indeed of State outlays. The Leader referred to the growth in total revenue. When speaking on radio or outside the House, he refers to State tax but, of course, he has to be more careful for the *Hansard* record, so he uses the right figure. The Leader says that the growth in total revenue as a percentage of gross State product has averaged 19.5 per cent since 1982-83, which is very high. Of course, that is a gross revenue figure. If we concentrate on the area to which the Leader of the Opposition's criticism is directed, that is, State taxation, the State's own source of revenue, however broadly we draw that, we see that we have averaged 7.3 per cent.

Of all the States, that is the lowest figure. There is no acknowledgement of that, and I suspect there is no understanding of it. In relation to outlays as a percentage of gross State product, again, the honourable member says that we have averaged 16.8—the highest of the mainland States. However, he does that by excluding Commonwealth funds on passed and their relationship and treatment in the budget. If one excludes those, because they are simply on passed from the Commonwealth into various programs, in fact our growth of 9.5 per cent is the lowest of all States, in outlays.

I think the record of the South Australian Government in the management of its finances, as exemplified by this

budget, is very clear indeed. It is very successful, and we have done that against a background of a program of priorities of addressing need. The Leader of the Opposition attempts to debunk the social justice strategy and its important programs. He says that there is only \$4 million of new money there. He ignores totally the reallocation of priorities. Obviously, we will not each year be able to increase our outlays. What we are trying to do is cut them back—and the Leader of the Opposition was urging us to do that. Yet, somehow he believes that by redirecting our existing program into areas of need we are not putting new resources into those areas. But, of course we are putting new expenditure into those areas. The fact that we are deriving it from savings in other areas is surely not to the point. We will continue to do this. It is the only responsible way to go. In the light of the sort of criticisms that the Opposition has made, it would have welcomed it.

Having made those points on the budget, with which I have now dealt, the Leader of the Opposition then turned to the matter of general economic indicators, and so on. I have already covered that point. I do not really think there is anything further I need to say on that. But I must say that I am very disappointed at the shallowness and the inaccuracy of the analysis that was made, and at the sheer repetitiveness of the criticisms. I think we have come to a point where, no matter what is in the budget or what is in the State's economic indicators, or what is happening on the national or international scene, the same things will be parroted by the Leader of the Opposition and his associates—and that is totally unproductive and, I suggest, readily discredited. I commend the Bill to the House.

Bill read a second time.

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

That the House note grievances.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): First, I refer to the Government's inability or its indisposition to answer questions during Question Time in this House. Instead, it showers abuse on the members of the Opposition. To highlight this, I refer to the response of Ministers during today's Question Time. Government Ministers were asked a series of legitimate questions, based largely on the Auditor-General's Report, which was tabled in the House yesterday. Opposition members attempted to highlight deficiencies, as we believe that that is essential in the public interest. All the questions that were asked in the House brought forward nothing but a tirade of abuse from the Government. The questions asked were simply legitimate queries that would be raised in the mind of any member of the public who had the time or inclination to look at the Auditor-General's Report.

Let me point out to members of the House what transpired during Question Time today, and I direct these remarks particularly to members opposite who seem to think that such practices are above board and that this is the way in which the Government should operate. I asked the Premier a question about the estimate of the Superannuation Fund Investment Trust contribution to ASER and I asked what the total cost of the ASER project was, suggesting that it could be \$300 million. The Premier did not attempt to answer that question but abused me roundly and suggested that I was knocking ASER. It is a favourite ploy of the Government to respond to whatever legitimate question is asked by the Opposition by giving us a tirade of abuse. And that was the response to my query.

Later the member for Bragg asked a question (I do not have the order in which these questions were asked but I want to refer to a number of them), quite legitimately, about the loss incurred by radio station 5AA again this year. One can well remember the fanfare with which the Government announced the sale of 5AA and on that occasion we were abused for knocking when we suggested that the radio station might be in trouble if the Government took it over, because most Government enterprises under this Administration have not been particularly successful—and indeed, this one has not been successful. So, the member for Bragg asked whether the Government is reviewing its investment in radio station 5AA following the further major loss incurred by the station last year. That loss was of the order of half a million dollars, which means that the Government has lost \$4 million since it took over the station.

One would have thought that this was a matter of some importance to the public of South Australia. However, in response to his question the member for Bragg got not a vestige of an answer but an absolute tirade of abuse from the Minister of Recreation and Sport, who then sat down looking like a cat that had just had a bowl of cream—to the obvious pleasure of the Premier and his deputy. Members opposite must understand that that is not acceptable conduct in relation to the way Question Time should be legitimately conducted in this place, and I would be very disappointed if people in the media, who are interested in providing facts to the public about what is going on with the Administration, believed that it was acceptable behaviour.

The Minister of Forests was asked about what action he will take to improve the efficiency of the commercial operations of the Woods and Forests Department. Reference was made in the question to what the Auditor-General had said about its operations and the significant increase in operating costs. The honourable member who asked that question certainly did not get any information. Another honourable member asked about the operation of the scrimber plant and said that the cost of setting up that plant had escalated dramatically, with the project now estimated to cost nearly \$30 million—some \$29.4 million—which represents an escalation of more than \$7 million or 33 per cent just during the past 12 months. In response, that member got a tirade of abuse from the newly appointed Minister of Forests. I thought the Minister was going to have an apoplectic fit or something as he put on such a show of anger that we should dare to ask a question about the enormous amount of taxpayers' funds that have been poured into this project.

The member who asked the question made the simple request as to whether there had been any orders. However, the Minister of Forests did not attempt to answer the question or to justify this expenditure. All he did was to suggest, in a tirade of abuse, to the approving nods of the Premier, that members of the Opposition were not interested in employment. How can the Government justify this, in the light of its building, for example, a ship costing nigh on \$30 million to go to Kangaroo Island, which ship has had to be surveyed to see whether it is okay, with the crew refusing to sail it? Its initial cost was estimated to be \$11 million.

Further, in relation to the scrimber project, for which no sales have even been negotiated, the Minister said, 'Don't you know anything about business? Don't you know that you cannot sell a product until you make it?' Of course, most prudent business people make sure that there are some orders in the pipeline or that there are likely to be some orders before they pour millions of dollars of their funds into a project. So, we got a tirade of abuse from the Minister

of Forests for asking that question. Further, the member for Mitcham asked the Minister of Labour about whether he agreed with his predecessor that current award and industrial agreements make it difficult, if not impossible, to prevent abuses. The member for Mitcham went on to explain that the Government had been looking into this for a long period of time.

Mr S.J. Baker: Six months.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Yes, at least six months. A newspaper report that I read subsequently indicated that the period was longer than that. What did that member get—a tirade of abuse from the Minister of Labour asking whether he understood the industrial law of the State. There was no attempt to say that this was in the too-hard basket for the Government, that no way could it come to grips with it. All these legitimate questions were raised during Question Time today and all we received from the Government was a tirade of abuse.

In my judgment it is high time that it was made plain that this practice is unacceptable to the people who observe the operations of this House and the operations of the Premier of this State, who seeks to avoid questions and in reply resorts to a tirade of abuse of members opposite. It should be unacceptable to the media. I know that it certainly would be unacceptable to the public of South Australia if people knew what was going on.

The Auditor-General's Report indicates clearly that the Government is pouring large sums of money into ventures of dubious worth to this State. If the Government believes that it can hide behind a tirade of abuse, it has another think coming. If it thinks that it will diminish the efforts of the Opposition to engage in legitimate questioning, it is certainly very much mistaken.

In this grievance debate I wish to briefly raise a totally unrelated subject but one which is of importance to my electorate. I was approached by the mother of a handicapped child, who has to travel for about one hour daily by bus which is under contract to the Education Department to the Magill Special School. The mother is concerned that this bus, which travels from the Hills to the special school, has no seat belts.

All of her efforts seem to have failed. The Education Department does not appear to be particularly interested or, if it is, it suggests that it has no authority to order that seat belts be placed in this bus. I point out that something must be done. If the parents wish these handicapped children to have the safety of seat belts when being transported through the Hills to the Magill Special School, then seat belts should be provided. I do not care that the current law provides that there need not be seat belts in buses. This is a special case. If what the mother tells me is correct, the disinclination of the Education Department to do something about the matter seems to be a very poor state of affairs. I will certainly make further inquiries in relation to this matter because, as I say, it is far from satisfactory.

I had hoped to have time in this grievance debate to quote some classic extracts from the Roxby Downs select committee report, because we are on the eve of that great venture being opened, but that will have to keep for another occasion.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Tyler): Order! The honourable member's time has expired. The honourable member for Chaffey.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD (Chaffey): Last year the Deputy Premier introduced a Bill in this House to amend the National Parks and Wildlife Act. An important part of that Bill was the accompanying schedule which identified,

according to the National Parks and Wildlife Service, birds that were regarded as being endangered, vulnerable and of rare species. After extensive debate in this Chamber and in another place, the Bill, with the schedule, was eventually passed by both Houses. I will refer to comments that were made by the Hon. Dr Cornwall (page 2299 of *Hansard* of 1 December 1987) who was acting on behalf of the Government in another place. The Minister, in moving an amendment, stated:

I think that, on a quick reading, this amendment is very similar if not identical to one that is on file from the Hon. Mr Davis.

The amendment was:

Page 20, after line 44—Insert new paragraph as follows:

(e) by inserting after subsection (2) the following subsection:

(2a) The Governor may, by regulation, amend schedules 7, 8 and 9 and the tenth schedule by deleting species of animals or plants from, or including species of animals and plants in, those schedules.

As a result of that amendment, which was initially put on file by the Hon. Mr Davis, the provision became part of the legislation. The amendment was proposed because, on the advice of many prominent people in the community, it was found that in many instances schedules were not accurate. The Hon. Dr Cornwall gave an undertaking, on behalf of the Government, that the schedules would be reviewed as a result of the amendment. The Minister stated (page 2300 of *Hansard*):

I mentioned the other day the question of endangered, vulnerable and rare species. The definition of those species that are endangered, vulnerable and rare is set out very well in the 1985 publication of the South Australian Museum, which was edited—

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Are you in order in reading from *Hansard*?

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: Yes, this is from last session. I am well aware of Standing Orders. The Minister continued:

—in my recollection, by Heather Aslin, and to which Shane Parker, who was used properly as a significant and senior source of reference by the Hon. Mr Davis, was a major contributor.

I am led to believe, in relation to the schedules of rare and endangered birds, that Shane Parker was in fact not consulted at all. The Minister continued:

That was used as a reference point for fauna. With regard to flora (plants) the State Herbarium was used as the formal and official reference point, and that work was generally coordinated by the survey and research grants of the Department of Environment and Planning. So, that is how it has all come together. I will also give the undertaking that the department, the National Parks and Wildlife Service or the Survey and Research Branch will be only too happy to consult with anyone who wishes to make a submission, and that certainly includes... the Hon. Mr Davis.

The point I am making is that the schedules are totally inaccurate. To this stage the schedules have not been reviewed. I am led to believe, on good authority from sources within the National Parks and Wildlife Service, that the Minister will proceed with prosecutions against fruit-growers in the Kingston-on-Murray area because of the destruction of some of these so-called rare and endangered species at a time when they were in plague proportions during the last fruit season and the growers' properties were under severe attack.

At the time there was significant publicity and National Parks and Wildlife officers visited the properties concerned and endeavoured to trap many of the species. They achieved that to some extent and took birds to a distant location in the vicinity of Lake Merreti where the birds were released. I think that the birds were back on the properties in Kingston long before the officers of the National Parks and Wildlife Service were able to return to Kingston themselves.

The devastation that occurred during the fruit season earlier this year has left some of those families destitute. In

one instance, I know that the wife of one of the growers has been forced to go outside the property to seek a job to try to maintain that property. If what I am led to believe from sources within the department is correct, that the Minister will now proceed to launch prosecutions against the growers concerned, that will be an absolute disgrace and a total betrayal of the undertaking given by a Minister in another place that the schedules would be reviewed.

Leading ornithologists in this State have stated quite clearly that the schedule is totally inaccurate, and for the Government to consider proceeding with prosecutions against growers trying to protect not only their livelihoods but those of their families, when the legislation is inaccurate and urgently needs review, is an absolute disgrace. Certainly the Minister and the Government will hear a lot more on this subject if those prosecutions proceed. I urge the Minister to make immediate inquiries within the department and find out whether this will be the case. If it is, I hope he will take the necessary action to see that the proposed legal action is not proceeded with because it will be a total miscarriage of justice to prosecute fruitgrowers on legislation that is just not accurate.

I have referred to many prominent authorities, including a Mr Ragless, who is an ornithologist, an associate of the South Australian Museum, and a life member of the South Australian Ornithological Association and the Adelaide Ornithological Club. He agrees that the birds for which the growers are likely to be prosecuted are not rare. In fact, they are very common—so common as to have caused extensive damage in the Riverland. I refer mainly to the Regent parrot and the River Rosellas. In no way can those two birds be regarded as endangered, vulnerable or rare.

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

Mr S.J. BAKER (Mitcham): I will refer to some of the things that have been witnessed in this House in recent times, particularly the performance of the Premier. It is very noticeable that the Premier refers back continuously to 1979-82, the last period in which the Liberal Party was in Government in this State. The reasons escape me why the Premier keeps referring back to that period, 5½ years having elapsed since that Government was in office. Perhaps it is because he has no new ideas and the only good ideas came out of the 1979-82 period, or perhaps he is concerned that people may well desire return of a Liberal Government to this State and he does not want that to happen, so he spends most of his time abusing the Opposition and quoting selectively from instances between 1979 and 1982.

As an economist, I ask members of this House, as well as the press, to understand a couple of simple economic facts. We know that there is a multiplier effect that operates in the economy. We also know that in the period 1979-82 we suffered one of the worst drought situations that this State has known for many years. Further, the State was in one of those economic cycles where it troughed at the wrong time for the Liberal Party, yet the history of that Party in those three years is quite magnificent.

The Premier has said that we had an uplift from 1983 to 1985, but every economist in this country will acknowledge that that sort of uplift, without some form of huge capital injection from an unknown source, can only have been due to the efforts of the previous Government, because the multiplier effect takes sometimes one, two or three years to work its way through the economy. So, the Premier cannot take credit for any uplift in 1983 to 1985, but he can certainly take the blame for the downturn occurring ever

since, when his Government has been in power. He continues to refer back selectively to situations that occurred from 1979 to 1982 and never gives credit for the huge initiatives that took place. This House has, over a period, heard many references to the history of achievements, despite difficult economic times, by the last Tonkin Government. The Premier refers back selectively, because he is dead scared that people will want to change this Government. He will do everything in his power to stop them, and so he quotes statistics selectively.

I question the Government's behaviour in the House, and this matter has already been referred to by the Deputy Leader. It has always been my belief that if Question Time is used in such a way as to make a political point, the Government is quite entitled to come back with another political point. We have heard various answers given by Ministers in response to questions asked by the Opposition, those answers taking up issues or debating points raised in the explanation of the question, and that is quite legitimate. However, I object to the way in which all questions are now responded to by Premier Bannon and his inept Ministers with abuse. Today and yesterday we had examples of legitimate questions being asked seeking information about ASER costs (which the public would like to know), 5AA, the scrimber project in the South-East, the Central Linen and State Clothing undertakings, and the South Australian Timber Corporation. All were asked without lengthy explanations, and that suggests that Ministers should not have been given the right to respond in the way that they are doing.

I remind the House that on 11 August the Speaker called on Ministers 'to refrain from introducing irrelevancies or unduly provocative comments in their replies, particularly when questions have not incorporated material of that nature'. Erskine May, at page 363, quoting a ruling from 1861, states:

An answer should be confined to the points contained in the question, with such explanation only as renders the answer intelligible, though a certain latitude is permitted to Ministers of the Crown.

The latitude of abuse has gone too far, and there will be a breakdown of this Parliament if that behaviour continues. It is not good enough for the Government of the day, when asked questions, to heap abuse on the Opposition. I am not a particularly sensitive person, but I would just simply like the truth to be known in this House. I would like the truth to be known by the public of South Australia. The way in which this Government—

The Hon. J.L. Cashmore: You're not particularly sensitive, but you're not overly sensitive.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Duigan): Order! The member for Mitcham has the call.

Mr S.J. BAKER: If abuse is to be allowed in this Parliament such as we have seen from Government Ministers, this Parliament will fall apart. That sort of behaviour cannot be sustained. Ministers are accountable to the Parliament and to the people of South Australia. Legitimate questions asked by the Opposition are answered in the hysterical way in which Ministers carry on. I know that someone will eventually print the truth and say that the Government is failing in its duty to reveal the facts.

I do not need to go over the losses that have been made by the various corporations and statutory authorities because they are all detailed in the Auditor-General's Report, and in the Government's budget papers as well. Those losses must be explained. We cannot have taxpayers throwing away their money through inept Government management. Therefore, Ministers must answer the questions and they must answer them in a way that gives the people of South

Australia a clear indication of where the problems lie and what the Government intends to do to retrieve the situation.

My second point concerns the South Australian Government Financing Authority (SAFA) and the issue of non-repayable capital. Most people would probably have little understanding of this matter but they should, if possible, acquaint themselves with it. Under the non-repayable capital deal, all Government departments and authorities have assigned their obligations to the Treasurer, who has assigned them to the South Australian Government Financing Authority. In the process, it means that, if an authority has an outstanding loan of \$200 million and the common rate of interest is 13.5 per cent, that authority is debited to the tune of \$27 million in interest. It does not have to repay the principal but it will continue to repay that \$27 million for the next 200, 300, 400 or 500 years, depending on how long this little rort goes on. If one consults an economist about managing loan profiles, one understands that, when the real rates of interest are of the order of 6 and 7 per cent, one should pay off the principal because the ultimate cost of not doing so is far too high. SAFA has got itself a long-term milking machine.

Mr D.S. Baker: The Premier has that with the taxpayers.

Mr S.J. Baker: Not only does the Government slaughter the taxpayers, it has all the authorities under control now, as well. Some of these loans were taken out at 5 or 6 per cent, so not only is the ball bouncing in the Government's direction with respect to the common interest rate of 13.5 per cent (and contained in the charges for electricity, water and other authority payments): it is also on a continuum, as I said, for however long this financial arrangement is in place. It is a gigantic rort: a milking machine set up very cleverly by the Government. Most loans should be paid off very quickly.

Mr BECKER (Hanson): I get a little annoyed when I hear people of the Premier's ilk referring back to the Tonkin Government deficit and the 1982-83 financial year.

Mr Tyler: Don't you want to be reminded of history?

Mr BECKER: I want to remind the Parliament and have it recorded in *Hansard* yet again that the Tonkin Government brought down a balanced budget and, within weeks of that budget, an election was held and the bulk of the financial year was under the control of the Bannon Government, which blew the budget. Let us look at the figures. In statement A attached to the Auditor-General's Report for the year ended 30 June 1983, the recurrent figures were as follows:

RECURRENT	\$
Receipts during the year	1 923 808 320
Payments during the year	2 032 765 428
Deficit	<u>108 957 108</u>

The same statement reveals the capital figures as follows:

CAPITAL	\$
Receipts during the year	293 884 310
Payments during the year	242 001 866
Surplus	<u>51 882 444</u>

The deficit for the year was \$57 million and there was a carryover of \$6 million from the previous year, making a total deficit of \$63 million on the Consolidated Account. Although the result showed a deficit of \$57 million, the actual figures presented to Parliament were nothing like the original estimate. The receipts were in excess of \$40 million and payments in excess of \$107 million. In that short eight-month period during which the Bannon Government had control of the State Treasury in the 1982-83 financial year, the Government ran with the tide.

Let us look at where the excessive expenditure occurred. My figures are only approximate because I have not had time to extrapolate the exact details for every department. In health, there was a budget overrun of \$50.4 million. In education there was an overrun of \$25 million on salaries and wages; \$13.5 million on various administrative charges; and \$6.5 million on miscellaneous expenses. On the police line, there was an excess of \$6.7 million for salaries and miscellaneous expenses. For community welfare, the excess for salaries, wages and miscellaneous expenses totalled approximately \$2.7 million. In the Engineering and Water Supply Department, there was an overrun of approximately \$24 million. In the agriculture line the overrun was \$2.7 million and, on a line for which there was no provision—natural disaster relief—the blow-out was \$39 million. No-one had any control over the last matter, but my point is that there was a huge overrun from the predicted budget.

The Premier, the honourable member for Hartley and anyone else can argue all day long but, as long as there is a heartbeat in this body, you will never convince me that the Labor Party did not spend up big. It certainly did. All up, there should have been a balanced budget on receipts and payments of \$2 161 989, but that did not happen and we know what really did happen. Premier Bannon must accept the blame for blowing the budget in the way he did.

Let us look at the bare statistics of the last two budgets. For the financial year ended 30 June 1987, there was a surplus on the day-to-day operations of the State of \$2.2 million and, on the capital account, a surplus of \$7.6 million. For the financial year ended 30 June 1988, the surplus on day-to-day operations amounted to \$10.4 million and, on capital account, \$23.9 million, or nearly \$24 million. Approximately \$31.5 million was taken from the capital account and used to pay off the Consolidated Account. The Premier can rightly say that the Consolidated Account is in surplus by \$4 million. What he has not told the people of South Australia is that he has taken \$31.5 million from the capital fund to pay off the operations of the day-to-day finances of the State.

The \$31 million that the State borrowed in excess of requirements could have gone into housing. If the Government is to use that money, I have no objection to its being given to the Housing Trust to provide housing for the disadvantaged. It would be in the Government's interests to look after those in need and those who require social justice.

We have had a continual reminder of the social justice provisions introduced by this Government. It has been there for ever and a day; it is just that all these little figures have been pulled out, put into a document and called the Government's social justice strategy. In actual fact it is just taking figures from various lines. It is a little like the document *The Budget and its Impact on Women*, merely extracting from the budget documents various items that affect women. Fair enough: if they can understand the contents, good luck to them, although I do not think some of them could because they are not trained in that way.

Members interjecting:

Mr BECKER: Let's face it, there are not 25 000 female economists working in the Government. On the first page of the Auditor-General's Report he comments on the State's financial position, as follows:

Balances in special deposit accounts and deposit accounts at Treasury at 30 June 1988 amounted to \$247 million, a decrease of \$115 million on the corresponding balance date last year.

Remember, it is a decrease of \$115 million in special deposits. He goes on to say:

Cash and investments held at Treasury at 30 June 1988 amounted to \$251 million—a decrease of \$81 million on the level

of cash and investments held at the end of the previous financial year.

He further states:

A withdrawal of funds by the Electricity Trust of South Australia in connection with a debt defeasance arrangement was the main contributing factor to the decrease in those balances.

I am concerned that our cash deposits are starting to run down, and there is a warning: I would not like to see cash investments held at the Treasury fall any lower. In times of high interest rates and tight liquidity—and we are advised in a roundabout way that the Federal budget is trying to bring in some measure of consumer restraint—we, as a Government and a Treasury, should be looking for more cash funds and investments to be held by the State Treasury.

I am not so enthusiastic about the South Australian Financing Authority—I have yet to be convinced about the operations of that organisation—but the Auditor-General has given us fair warning. On page xi, under the heading 'Audit Issues', the Auditor-General draws our attention to the South Australian Centre for Remote Sensing. I have mentioned this matter previously in debate, and I hope now that I have the opportunity to convince the Government—and perhaps the Public Accounts Committee and the Auditor-General—to have an in-depth inquiry to ascertain why the Centre for Remote Sensing lost a contract worth \$5.7 million to assist the Ethiopian Government: why there was this bungle and why there has been a cover-up in the documentation on the loss of this contract.

Mr INGERSON (Bragg): I would like to call on the Minister of Transport to arrange for a refund to be made to a constituent who has been incorrectly fined and who lost his licence because of an error made in the Motor Registration Division. On 4 June last year the constituent purchased a motor vehicle from a dealer on the Main North Road. At the time of purchase the vehicle had six months and 27 days remaining on the registration which was to expire on 31 December 1987.

At 3 a.m. on 15 January on his way to work, the constituent was stopped by police for driving an unregistered vehicle. He did not realise that the registration had expired and the next day registered the vehicle. As a consequence of having driven an unregistered vehicle, he had to go to court. At the same time, three years remained on his driver's licence. At the court hearing, which took place on 1 June 1988, he was convicted of driving an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle. He was fined a sum of \$219 and lost his licence for three months.

That seems pretty reasonable, because it is all within the law, except for the fact that when this person purchased his vehicle he went to the Motor Registration Division and applied for a transfer of registration. That transfer of registration was duly noted and forwarded to him on an official form on 11 June 1987, seven days after he had purchased the vehicle. At that time he was advised that the expiry date was 31 December. I have discussed the matter with the Motor Registration Division, a letter from which states:

We wish to advise that according to our records the said vehicle was transferred and the registration renewed on 15 January 1988 in the name of Mr McCoy. Prior to this the vehicle's registration had expired on 31 December in the name of Tom Jones Motors, 346 North-East Road, Klemzig. It appears that no notification of sale was received by this division from Tom Jones Motors, neither was a transfer into the name of Shaun McCoy prior to 15 January 1988.

That letter basically supports the case that Mr McCoy was driving an unregistered vehicle. At the same time an official notification was sent to Mr McCoy by the Motor Registration Division, dated 11 July, notifying him of the transfer. So, we have two separate documents floating around in that

office. There is no question that Mr McCoy has not received the change of registration document and as a consequence he was found to have driven the vehicle illegally.

It seems to me that, because in this case there has been a major error by the Motor Registration Division, and because it was difficult for anyone to make a decision relative to Mr McCoy, particularly when the evidence put out by the division was damning against him, the Minister must do two things: first, organise, if possible, the refunding of the fine of \$219 to Mr McCoy because it was not his fault that he did not receive the registration disc; it was an error of the division (whether that error resulted from internal or administrative arrangements is of no concern).

Secondly, and more importantly, I believe that we need to set up in this State an appeals system to provide people who have been incorrectly charged because of administrative errors with some recourse against those errors. The problem here is that this person has not only been fined \$219 but also lost his licence for three months, thereby losing employment and income for a period. Whilst he does not see any need at this stage to take action against the State because of an error made by the State, he believes that he should at least receive recompense for the fine.

I ask the Minister to investigate ways and means of introducing simple appeal procedures against administrative errors made by the Motor Registration Division. This is the second instance in which an error made by that division has been brought to my attention. While that is only two times, it is two too many as far as I am concerned, and some sort of appeal system needs to be introduced. Further, I would like the Attorney-General to look at individuals who hire cars interstate and bring them into South Australia, particularly if they are registered in Tasmania.

Earlier this year there was an incident involving two young gentlemen who hired a Tasmanian-registered car in New South Wales and drove it to South Australia. On the way there was an accident in which the driver was killed and the passenger was badly injured. When the parties involved claimed third party insurance they found that the Tasmanian Government was not prepared to cover the third party insurance expenses of the passenger. After investigation I found that, because the accident occurred in New South Wales, the problem is with the reciprocal agreement between the New South Wales and Tasmanian Governments.

This incident highlights the need in this State for the Attorney-General to make clear to all people hiring cars, vans or any passenger vehicle, to find out what responsibilities they have in regard to third party insurance. My investigations with SGIC in South Australia indicated that it will cover all residents of South Australia. However, we need to have it spelt out clearly by the Attorney whether that is the case, because it is easy for SGIC as the insurer to say that it will pick up the tab. I would like to see this matter brought before the Attorney and I call upon him to make the situation clear to Parliament.

Mr D.S. BAKER (Victoria): Last night, in the time available, I dealt with the soft sell of the budget and the way that it was very cunningly sold to the public of South Australia, especially the advertisement in the *Sunday Mail* paid for by South Australian taxpayers. The advertisement was very misleading and today we have heard speakers from both sides of the House trying to justify the budget figures. Comparing what has happened in the past with the present situation is not relevant because, as I said last night, all taxpayers want to know is what is going to be dragged out of their pockets on payday by the Government. All people

in business want to know is what extra cost they will have to pay under this Government's administration.

Whether or not one likes it, this is an anti-business budget. The budget is directed against those people in the community who employ people; and it is directed against people out there doing things for the State and developing the State. As members would realise, in the past few months there has been considerable debate about the level of development occurring in this State. Of course, when the heat is on the Premier is gone, and the Premier would not get involved in that. The figures in the budget reflect what the Government expects to take next year. That is how we see that that development cannot prosper; it is where we see the direction of the budget; and where we see who will pay the extra bills.

Turning first to taxation, it has been claimed in various publications put out by Treasury and the Treasurer that taxation is not going to increase next year, that it will be static, and in some cases they claim rebates. That is absolute nonsense. For anyone to claim that, they do not understand the realities of the financial institutions that they are supposed to be running. As to taxation, actual receipts last year were \$1.084 billion. Estimated income for 1988-89 is \$1.2 billion. In anyone's language that is an increase of 10.7 per cent taken from the people of South Australia who are employing people, who are developing South Australia and who we desperately need in this State to get us up off the floor.

The Treasurer says that we are not on the floor. There are many indicators around and one does not have to fiddle with the figures and say that they are in real terms, qualified terms or unreal terms. The facts are there. South Australia has the highest bankruptcy rate of any State. One does not have to worry about being able to add up, which the Premier and Treasurer cannot do, along with most members opposite—because the figures speak for themselves. The economic climate in this State is not good because this Government is taking extra money from the people who employ others, and from the people who are in business.

Land tax, which is supposed to involve a giant rebate to the citizens of this State, naturally falls on small business and big business, too. The majority of employers in this State are involved in small business, yet land tax has increased from \$56 million collected last year to \$63 million this year, and that shows how hollow is the Treasurer's claim that there are some concessions. The Treasurer introduced a Bill to show us what the concessions are, but we saw that there is also a loading on people in the metropolitan area of .5c in the dollar over a certain figure. So, those people in the city who are doing the most, and where the most competition is, will get a 'double whammy' if they are in the business sector.

It is totally unjust for a Government of any political persuasion not to index the threshold level of payroll and land tax. That is totally unjust, and it should be thrown out in this State. With inflation at its present rate, in one year (with what is called bracket creep by the Federal Treasurer) in comes the net, and it includes many more people and, although the Treasurer has claimed very shallowly that he has given back a rebate, it is not a cash rebate. It is a 'journalistic rebate' as written by Treasury officials. It is a tax which, if we had left the scales as they were, we would have collected. I cannot see how that can be a rebate.

Money in the hand is a rebate. Money in the hand is what it is all about. That is what controls taxpayers and the people out there who have to buy food every week. That is what controls the people who have to get on buses every week to go to work—they want money in the hand. Cer-

tainly, they do not want the illusory journalistic stuff dribbled out by the Premier of this State. It is ridiculous. That is what is happening. During the land tax debate the Premier said:

Overall land tax revenues in 1988-89 should increase at a rate closely in line with the increase in land values.

That is quite scurrilous, because land tax in this State will increase 12 per cent next year. As a person with an interest in land development, I know that every land developer and landowner in this State would be pleased indeed if their property increased at 12 per cent in the next 12 months. However, that will not happen. Yet that is the extra increment in land tax that those people will have to pay.

This budget is aimed squarely at the business community and it is anti-business because the majority of our tax—in fact, 75 per cent of the tax grab from the people of South Australia—comes from the business community. This comprises \$800 million. That is why exemptions are not linked to the CPI; and that is why more and more people are having to pay dearly for the management of this State. The Auditor-General correctly and at length, and members opposite should read his report, says that the management of this State and the financial management should be closely in line with what happens in the private sector and, unless this Government can get some expertise on the front bench and get some management going, we will continue to wallow.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEES

The Legislative Council intimated that it had given leave to the Attorney-General (Hon. C.J. Sumner) and the Minister of Tourism (Hon. Barbara Wiese) to attend and give evidence before the Estimates Committees of the House of Assembly on the Appropriation Bill, if they think fit.

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

The Hon. J.L. CASHMORE (Coles): It cannot have escaped the notice of members of the House that the Government is distinctly edgy. In the past two or three weeks, all members of the Government, from the Premier down, have been in a state of agitation. It has been particularly apparent at Question Time, when the Premier has seemed ill at ease.

The Hon. H. Allison interjecting:

The Hon. J.L. CASHMORE: The Ministers are snappy and abusive, as the member for Mount Gambier says. The backbenchers have obviously been given their instructions in Caucus to just, let us say, keep the pressure on and keep the aggro up, and they are obeying their instructions to the letter. All in all, one has the distinct impression that there is a lot of pressure on the Government and that the Premier may well be contemplating an early election. He is reasonably sure that the United States presidential election, once completed, and notwithstanding whoever becomes President, will result in some kind of economic downturn, the very severe effects of which will be felt in Australia around about the middle of next year, and the Premier would very much like to clear the decks before that occurs.

There are many examples of this extraordinary animus on the other side, but I shall refer to just one in particular—and this occurred yesterday. I have noticed that the Premier is lashing out in a now uncharacteristic fashion and on several occasions in recent weeks I seem to have been the target of his somewhat hysterical anger. Yesterday's example

startled me somewhat, and I thought I would research the background of this matter. What I have discovered has confirmed my view that the Premier of South Australia is indeed distinctly edgy, is grabbing at straws, and is lashing out in a way that betokens no good for the Labor Party.

During Question Time yesterday, in response to a perfectly civil and valid question from the member for Alexandra about the *Island Seaway*, the Premier, first, hurled a bit of abuse at the member for Alexandra, brought the Leader of the Opposition into the general ambit of the abuse, as well as several other of my colleagues, and then said:

I might say that it is part of a pattern, a pattern begun by the member for Coles, who, to get a cheap headline in the holiday silly season and to try to drum up a bit of tourism notoriety, set up a scare story about the shortage of water supplies on Kangaroo Island.

But, said the Premier, 'It did not happen to be true.' I thought, 'This is odd, this happened many years ago, surely the Premier cannot be thinking of that particular instance.' So, I went through my files and I looked back for a recent silly season—I looked back to last January and then to the January before and, finally, when I got to January 1985 I found a press statement which, presumably, is the statement to which the Premier was alluding. He claimed that I was drumming up a bit of tourism notoriety in the holiday silly season. I shall read to the House this news release, dated 6 January 1985. Headed 'KI needs better services', it stated:

State tourism and environment authorities and local government have been urged to act to protect environmentally fragile areas of Kangaroo Island during the coming Australia Day long weekend.

Shadow Minister of Tourism, Mrs Jennifer Adamson, said that Kangaroo Island was experiencing its greatest ever influx of visitors as a result of the new *Philanderer* passenger and car ferry service, but not enough had been done to provide the necessary facilities and services on the island for campers and motorists.

I went on to say that the Government had known since it took office that the *Philanderer* would start that summer with a potential 600 extra visitors per day but that the Government had done little or nothing to prepare facilities for them. I further said:

People are going over with their cars and camping at places like D'Estrees Bay, Vivonne Bay, Western River Cove, Emu Bay and Pennington Beach, where there are no facilities at all—no toilets, no showers, no gas or electric barbecues and no fresh water.

I called for action. I wanted control of the number of visitors at Seal Bay and referred to a shocking cruelty that had been inflicted on the seals on the previous October Labor Day weekend. I talked about the progressive provision of facilities at key visitor points, in other words, toilets where campers could use them instead of fouling natural camping areas, and the designation of camping and non-camping areas so that fragile areas could be protected. I called for the provision of subsidised water at American River—one of the island's most popular resorts during the holiday season. Well, that was duly reported. Before I made the statement I had been prompted to include the water as a result of requests from operators on Kangaroo Island.

I note from my files that, following phone calls from two operators, I decided to check with the Kangaroo Island Regional Tourism Association to see whether the problem was as serious as operators claimed. I conducted such a check, was informed by the then Chairman of the association that that was the case, and it was on the basis of that case that I made the statement. It strikes me as strange indeed that almost four years after the event the Premier, in a frantic effort to thrash around and attempt to absolve himself of his own responsibilities by casting aspersions at the Opposition, should dig up a small press release from

January 1985 and cast it back, at the same time alleging that it was not true and had no foundation in fact.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.L. CASHMORE: It does not necessarily show that he is shonky, although that is one aspect of it. It shows that he is under incredible pressure. He is starting to crack under the pressure, and is lashing out in all directions. It is showing. If I was one of his colleagues I would be very edgy, and it is clear that they are.

The members of the ALP remind me, in the parlance of the pastoral industry, of a mob of cattle when a thunderstorm is approaching. They are nervous, they are twitchy, their heads are in the air sniffing and they wonder what is coming. The Premier has been lured into the Chamber by this invitation. Members opposite suspect that there is trouble in the air and indeed there is. I would guess that the Premier suspects that he has not very much longer in office. He is doing his best to discredit the Opposition rather than going ahead governing in the best interests of the State. He is picking up some extraordinarily flimsy and very stale threads in an effort to achieve his goal.

I refute absolutely what the Premier said yesterday in Question Time that the shortage of water supplies on Kangaroo Island in 1985 did not happen to be true. It was true then and it has been true every summer since. In addition, the designation of camping and non-camping areas to protect fragile areas has not been undertaken. The information to ensure that visitors book accommodation well ahead of departure has not been undertaken. The control of the number of visitors at any given time to Seal Bay has indeed been undertaken by virtue of the imposition of fees for those who want to visit Seal Bay. That is a form of control immensely popular with the Bannon Government. It is a form of control that it is trying to exert over the entrance to national parks. It is the first time in the State's history that fresh air and exercise have been taxed and not only at last week's rate. The Premier is an exponent of fresh air and exercise and readily gives the example to the people.

Mr Olsen: Taxing fresh air and exercise; it's about the only thing left to tax.

The Hon. J.L. CASHMORE: It is about the only thing left to tax. As the Leader says, there is not much left. We have taxes on pretty well anything that anyone can buy or sell. The Premier is looking innocent and amazed. He cannot deny that the level of taxation in this State has risen faster under his Government than under any other. He is now at the stage where he is taxing picnic parties, innocent family pleasures, fresh air, exercise, blue skies and gum trees. You name it! Everything is coming under the Bannon hammer. If it will lead to increased revenue, he will do it: that is what the Premier is saying to South Australians.

The Hon. T. CHAPMAN (Alexandra): I say to you, Premier, take your seat in the Parliament like a man.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable Premier must not interject as he is passing the Chair and the honourable member for Alexandra must direct his remarks through the Chair and not directly to the Premier as 'you'.

The Hon. T. CHAPMAN: With respect, Mr Speaker, I plead that the Premier remain in the Chamber while I address the House on a matter of great importance.

The Hon. J.C. Bannon: I'll listen.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier is completely out of order for that last interjection.

The Hon. T. CHAPMAN: I will go slowly until the Premier returns to his office where he can hear me on the speaker box. After the last State election in 1985 I, like most Liberals in South Australia, was feeling pretty depressed.

We had received a fair drubbing, to say the least. Admittedly, I was very pessimistic about our chances of getting to Government again in the short term or, indeed, in the foreseeable future. However, in recent weeks, and particularly so far during this week, I see the wheels starting to drop off the Labor Party.

Indeed, traditional Labor voters, had they had the opportunity we have had this week to witness the performance of the Government from the Premier right through his front bench, would be ashamed of their Party. I do not recall members opposite performing so belligerently, ruggedly and rudely as they have in recent months. This week the Premier, of all people, has dropped his guard, done his cool and carried on (as described by the member for Coles) to an extent that I have not seen a Premier stoop to in my experience in this Parliament.

The Hon. B.C. Eastick interjecting:

The Hon. T. CHAPMAN: Desperate people do desperate things. Yesterday at the very end of my explanation to a question calling on the Premier to visit Kangaroo Island and to discuss matters with the respective councils that are of great concern to that community—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. T. CHAPMAN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I accept your apologies and now have your attention. So, let me continue.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Alexandra should not have referred to a private conversation between the Opposition Whip and the Chair as to who would be the next speaker following the member for Alexandra.

The Hon. T. CHAPMAN: I would take you up on that, Mr Speaker, but I haven't got time. I have something very important to proceed with. Yesterday when I was concluding my explanation to the Premier I referred to a precis of a submission that was made to the councils, which was ultimately put in writing to the Premier, by a very well respected pharmacist at Kingscote on Kangaroo Island. Incidentally, that pharmacist is Mrs Rosiland Cordes, who is acting in her professional capacity following the death some time ago of our resident pharmacist on Kangaroo Island and who is carrying on the business for his widow. Mrs Cordes, along with 44 other business representatives on the island, submitted evidence to the council indicating the impact that irregular services of the *Island Seaway* had had on their respective businesses.

Mrs Cordes, a pharmacist, said that the delays in the sailing of the *Island Seaway* "may cause a major crisis", because certain medications are not permitted to be air-freighted in the absence of the shipping service. When the Premier rose to answer the question, including that last point, he stated:

I doubt whether the latter point is correct.

I have not yet been able to ascertain whether or not the Premier misheard me, but on face value it appeared that he doubted that what I said was a fair and accurate record of the pharmacist's submission or, indeed, he doubted the credibility of that pharmacist.

In the interim I have been informed that that lady went to school with the Premier; he knows her personally. I am sure that he did not recall that fact when he made that somewhat untoward comment in the House yesterday. But let us have a look at the correctness of the statement. With a little research during the period between Question Time and today, I found that the Commonwealth Civil Aviation Act (No. 63) 1988 dictates what shall or shall not be transported on civil airlines. That Act and its regulations prevents explosives; flammables and corrosive materials being

transported, more especially on civil aircraft which are *en route* in passenger services.

The materials to which my constituent and local acting pharmacist referred were as follows: first, in the aerosol category or in the potential explosives category, salbutamol, beclomethasone, sodium cromoglycate, terbutaline, ipratropium, tramazoline and anaesthetic sprays; secondly, in the flammable category, chloroform, ether and alcohol concentrates, etc.; and, thirdly, in the corrosive category, hydrochloric and other acids which are required in the pharmaceutical and hospital service arenas. Those terms relate to a particular professional area and I am not aware of the medications or technical requirements of any of them, but I am assured that they are important in the servicing and the welfare of a community, particularly in one which is isolated like ours.

Our pharmacist, along with the rest of the community, sincerely and honestly submitted evidence to respective councils on the island and that material was equally sincerely and honestly conveyed yesterday to the Premier in good faith. It is one thing for him to get up in this House and reflect on the Opposition; I suppose that it is of similar import, if it is important at all, for him to reflect on me; but I think it is in pretty poor taste for him to reflect on someone outside who is genuinely trying to convey a community message to the Government of the day. I believe that yesterday he stooped to such a level that he should return and apologise to this House. I know that when *Hansard* is circulated to that community, he will not be as welcome as he would otherwise have been had he been straight in answering the question put to him yesterday on behalf of that district.

I repeat that the Premier and a number of his Ministers in recent times have been acting so arrogantly and so unreasonably towards the Standing Orders of this House, the Opposition generally and certain members on this side in particular including the member for Coles, that I believe it constitutes deplorable behaviour which, as I have said, I have not experienced previously in my 15½ years as a member of this place.

Mr DUGAN (Adelaide): I noticed two items in the State budget that were in excess of \$1 billion, one being expenditure in the health area. For the first time in 1988-89, and now again in 1989-90, the health budget passed the \$1 billion mark, and that included both the operating and capital funds for the health system in South Australia. I will return to the health budget in a moment in terms of a number of major capital works programs in the Adelaide electorate.

The other item which passes the \$1 billion mark is the total capital works program for 1989-90 amounting to \$1.129 billion. A substantial amount of that sum is being spent on a number of major programs within the Adelaide electorate. Other projects will be of considerable benefit to people in all electorates. For instance, \$11 million will be spent by the Pipelines Authority on the natural gas pipeline connection to Whyalla, which will be of considerable benefit to all South Australians in terms of access to the grid and, further, the work undertaken in the northern region of the State will benefit many workers. In the energy area also a substantial amount is being spent on the interconnection to the electricity grid in the eastern States. That represents a substantial investment in capital infrastructure which is of vital importance to the State economy and all South Australians—the consumers of electricity as well as the constituents of all members in this place.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: It is a national project, too.

Mr DUIGAN: As the member for Mitchell reminds me, it is a national program which brings together the electricity generating capacity of the three southern States and ensures that the crisis situations which have arisen from time to time can be overcome, whether due to a breakdown in equipment, excessive demand on the grid for one reason or another, or bushfire, as occurred in both South Australia and Victoria.

Leaving that aside for the moment, I wish to turn to the total capital works program and to items that will have a considerable benefit for all South Australians and for the Adelaide electorate in particular, in which a number of these major projects are being undertaken.

The benefit will apply to South Australians generally because a number of these projects are simply being built within the central part of the metropolitan area because that is the most accessible part of South Australia, and it is important that many of these agencies and services serving the whole of South Australia, be located within the central business district. The important thing to note is that, on my first reading of the public works program, I note that \$53 million worth of public works programs will be undertaken in this very year within the Adelaide electorate, involving a significant contribution from the public sector to the building work that has been undertaken throughout South Australia generally.

The Opposition, during the course of this debate, has been wont to look at those economic indicators that it believes indicates a lack of confidence and a downturn in the economy. One indicator which never features in that analysis is the non-residential building activity particularly in the central business district. It does not matter whether one looks at private sector non-residential building activity or at public sector non-residential building activity, there is only one thing that one can say about it: it is substantial and is making a major contribution to employment, to the viability of South Australia, to the investment climate within the central business district and to the confidence that people have in South Australia.

Let me turn now to some of those items. Nearly \$9 million has been spent in the health area and a substantial amount of money has been spent on the redevelopment of the Adelaide Children's Hospital. This has been done in anticipation of the merger of the Adelaide Children's Hospital with the Queen Victoria Hospital, and it is important to ensure that the operations of both those fine institutions in South Australia—supported as they have been by public campaigns of fundraising and other activities over so many years—are able to continue in what will inevitably be a very fine women's and children's medical institution in the centre of Adelaide.

There is a program involving expenditure of just over \$24 million for the phase I redevelopment program of the Adelaide Children's Hospital of which some \$4 million is being spent this year. In addition, \$1.5 million is proposed to provide for laboratory facilities for paediatric research at the Adelaide Children's Hospital, of which \$500 000 will be spent this year.

At the Royal Adelaide Hospital there are two substantial projects, and these are in addition to some other major programs that are announced in the budget. I refer to the quite significant and major decision of the Government to provide car parking facilities for the staff, workers, patients and their visitors at the Adelaide Children's Hospital by returning the northern car park area to parklands and building a car parking station on the Royal Adelaide Hospital grounds, as well as an alternative facility on the other side of North Terrace. These programs are announced elsewhere

in the budget. In particular, as far as the Royal Adelaide Hospital's health operations are concerned, there will be a centralised theatre complex estimated to cost a total of \$18.5 million, of which nearly \$3 million is being spent this year. In addition there will be a substantial upgrading and alterations to the north wing entrance, including facilities for outpatients.

They are two of the major areas in the health budget. In addition, \$1.5 million to \$2 million is to be spent on Government offices within the city in refurbishment and relocation. Nearly \$10 million is being spent on the arts in various parts of the city, including the conservatory in the eastern parklands at Hackney, and nearly \$2 million on the Aboriginal Resource Centre. Nearly \$500 000 has been allocated to fire protection in terms of redevelopment of the Nailsworth fire station. The sum of \$3 million is being spent on the Park Terrace, Ovingham section of the ring route, and I hope that, once that is completed, there will be in next year's budget a further \$2 million to complete the ring route around the inner northern section of that area.

In addition, \$1 million will be allocated to the completion of the Adelaide Railway Station concourse and barriers. A further \$7 million will be spent on the Convention Centre further down North Terrace to complete that major project. The police attract a \$12 million investment from the State Government for the construction and completion of the communications centre and a further \$8 million will be allocated to the nursing facility at the South Australian Institute of Technology. That is a very short summary of the major projects provided in this budget for major social facilities and social infrastructure within the Adelaide electorate.

Mr OLSEN (Leader of the Opposition): The Auditor-General's Report presented to the House yesterday contains further serious and significant criticism of the administration of this Government. It also highlights many areas in which savings could be achieved and opportunities to limit spending and, therefore, reverse the high taxing policy of this Government. However, in this speech, I will deal with the Government's attitude to this sort of criticism. This afternoon the Opposition asked a series of questions about revelations in the Auditor-General's Report.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The Deputy Leader has already said this.

Mr OLSEN: I am well aware of what the Deputy Leader has had to say earlier in this debate. Reference was made to the further massive decline in the patronage of STA services, the escalation of the Government's costs on the ASER project and the completion cost of that project itself, financial inefficiencies of the Woods and Forests Department and the Timber Corporation, and the losses of radio station 5AA, which is owned by the Government. To each and every one of these questions the Government's attitude was, 'How dare you ask these questions. How dare you question, on behalf of taxpayers, what we are doing with their money.'

Take radio 5AA for example. The member for Bragg quoted two specific statements to the Parliament by the Minister of Recreation and Sport over the past two years in which he promised there would be a financial turnaround. The Minister's undertakings have not been fulfilled so, when he was questioned today about his failure to fulfil his commitment to the Parliament, he ignored what he said before and complained that the Parliament and, therefore, the taxpayers should not be bothered about radio 5AA because it is doing a great job for the racing industry. The Minister should recognise that many taxpayers are not inter-

ested in racing and wonder why their money is tied up in this radio station. It is a relevant question, and I can assure the House that it will be pursued.

I refer also to the Premier's attitude to the ASER project. To justify the agreement he signed in 1983, the Premier told the Parliament at the time, as the Opposition pointed out today, that the Government's maximum obligation under that agreement to the Convention Centre and car park would be a maximum of \$1.25 million and that it could be deferred by profits generated by the operations of these facilities. The Opposition supported the ASER project at the time the agreement was signed and it has continued to support it because the former Liberal Government negotiated for the project. However, the Premier takes the attitude that, because there is general public support for the project, it should not be questioned in any way. He asserts that we should not ask for the reasons why the Government's contribution to the Convention Centre and the car park has escalated by 83 per cent. He asserts that we should not ask why the Government's total contribution last financial year was over \$7 million—more than three times the Premier's original estimate.

The Hon. H. Allison: We forecast this two years ago.

Mr OLSEN: Indeed, we did forecast the matter several years ago, and we have consistently asked questions about the financial commitment of this Government yet, under the guise of creative accounting or commercial confidentiality, the Parliament and the taxpayers have been denied that information. It is an attempt to conceal rather than reveal. It is an attempt to deny taxpayers and the Parliament their legitimate right to know how taxpayers' money is being spent by this Government.

The Hon. B.C. Eastick: Not only consistently asked but also responsibly asked.

Mr OLSEN: Consistently and responsibly asked, and this House has been consistently denied information by the Premier.

The Hon. H. Allison interjecting:

Mr OLSEN: One cannot take on face value any of the reassurances made by the Government, given its track record of recent years. The Premier says that we should not ask these questions because the facilities are generating economic returns in other areas. That is simply a diversion. Those returns would have been generated whether the centre was costing the Government \$1 million or \$7 million. However, one of the major reasons that the cost to the Government is so much higher is that there has been a massive escalation in the cost of building these facilities. This has occurred because some of the Premier's union mates and some of the officials have used nothing short of blackmail tactics to force up some of the labour costs on those projects. Stories abound about deals obtained by builders labourers, and some of these issues still need to be addressed.

The bottom line is that the taxpayers will be picking up some of the cost of these deals well into the future. However, the Premier wants to sweep all this under the carpet; he does not want the public to know the full story, because it would be embarrassing for the public to know it. Why can the Premier not tell the House precisely why the Super-annuation Fund Investment Trust said that it would invest a further \$17 million last financial year to complete the project, but ended up putting a further \$54 million into that project? Why can the Premier not tell the Parliament and the public what the estimated completion cost of the project is now?

He was quite happy to be associated with the announcement of the ASER project as a Government initiative. In 1983 we heard him say that the completion cost would be

\$180 million in 1986 dollar terms. Why can he not now tell the House why there has been such a massive escalation in its cost? What is he hiding and why is it negative to ask such questions? Surely the public has a right to know, because it is an investor in the project. It is the public's funds—the taxpayers' money. The Premier refuses to answer these legitimate questions because he would have to own up to a great deal that he hopes will remain concealed.

The Opposition and the Parliament are entitled to answers to questions like these because this Government continues to demonstrate a complete inability to manage major projects in which it has an involvement. I have referred to the escalation of the cost of the Convention Centre. There are other examples, such as the Justice Information System, which was estimated to cost \$14 million in 1984 dollar terms and which is \$19.6 million currently. However, the Auditor-General has now reported that the final cost could go as high as \$50 million.

The Motor Registration Division's on-line system was costed at \$4.5 million in 1985 or \$5.7 million in current dollar terms, but this has now blown out to \$11 million. At the same time, delays in implementing both these systems are reducing the impact of their longer-term savings.

The use of computing systems within the public sector has been the subject of a series of major reports in recent years, but major difficulties remain in keeping the cost of establishing them under control. The capital and operational costs of these systems now have an annual impact on the budget approaching \$50 million, and because of this major escalation in the cost of the new systems to which I have referred, and plans by the Government Computing Centre to spend \$5.3 million this financial year, the Auditor-General has recommended a major independent review of the management of information technology within the public sector. This is a recommendation that the Government must approve without delay because, despite a series of major reports in recent years, the Government still fails to get its act together.

As a result, there is the potential for further waste of taxpayers' money. I can give other examples of major blow-outs in Government projects: the *Island Seaway*, from \$11 million to possibly \$28 million; the Crouzet ticketing system, from \$5.7 million to \$10.7 million; and the scrimber project, from \$22 million to \$29.4 million. Time and time again this Government has demonstrated a complete failure to ensure that costs are kept under control.

The Hon. T. Chapman: Would you let them manage your farm, your deli or your garage?

Mr OLSEN: This lot wouldn't be managing anything of mine, I give you the drum, given the track record of this Government over the past five or six years of specific promises being broken repeatedly, consistently and without flinching, with the Government continuing to attempt to paint a rosy picture of the economy when it is faltering, refusing to recognise reality, and denying that this State's economy has faltered—and faltered badly. Unless and until the Government is prepared to recognise that there are some major difficulties with our economy, it will not in any meaningful way attempt to overcome those problems.

Even the budget papers indicate that there will be no reduction in unemployment during the next 12 months. The Government has no vision; no plan to tackle the levels of unemployment. Rather, the Government says, 'We will reduce taxes by \$22 million.' What an absolute sham! Actual land tax receipts will go up 12.5 per cent. The same number of businesses will pay 12.5 per cent more.

Members interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Duigan): Order!

Mr OLSEN: With the level of bankruptcies the highest in South Australia since the Great Depression, fewer businesses are paying 12.5 per cent more. That is why we have an unemployment problem in the community. Let me digress for a moment and cite one example. A young man took over a supermarket on Norwood Parade in about November of last year. His land tax bill was in the order of \$6 000 to \$8 000 at the time he purchased the business. He had been there only a few months when he received his new land tax bill, which had gone up to some \$14 000.

He telephoned me and said, 'What do I do? I can't afford to pay this massive increase, without any notification.' He lodged an appeal with the Government. He was only leasing the premises, but the Government said 'The property value has gone up: you must be the beneficiary of this so you have to pay the extra land tax bill.'

An honourable member: Or shift out of town.

Mr OLSEN: 'Or shift out of town.' That was the other response of the Government: 'Shift out of town if you have a problem.' That means you shift out of town where there are no customers and you go broke anyway.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr OLSEN: The answer is clear, and the specific election promise that we made in 1985 stands and is repeated today: to give land tax relief to small business operators, who happen to be the largest employers in this State and in this country. The only way we will tackle unemployment in this country and this State in any meaningful way is to get off the backs of the small business operators so they can employ people.

The supermarket operator to whom I referred, in order to pay his land tax bill, reduced his staff by two; he reduced his wages bill to pay the land tax bill. That is what is happening, not with hundreds but with thousands of small business operators. That is why the unemployment levels in South Australia are higher than in any other State in Australia. That is the track record members opposite stand up and defend. It is absolutely indefensible. We have the highest level of poverty in any State in Australia, yet the Government has the hide to stand up and say that all is well out there: no-one is hurting.

Members of the Government should get out of Parliament and start talking to some of the people in the community about the impact of the policies of this Administration. How on earth someone on the average wage, buying a home and educating one or two children, can make ends meet, I do not know. Over the past five or six years taxation levels in this State have risen higher than in any other State in Australia.

Members interjecting:

Mr OLSEN: That is a statement of fact. I know that the honourable member is not worrying about it too much because he is retiring at the next election and does not have to front up at the ballot box next time round. I know that he is not so concerned. Indeed, many of his colleagues sitting on the back bench will not be back next time because of the policies that this Government is pursuing, because of the difficulties being experienced by people out in the electorate. If you want any proof of that, just look at the Adelaide and Port Adelaide by-elections and the last referendum results. In the past six to nine months on every occasion that the people, the electors, have gone to the ballot box they have rejected the Labor Party solidly and decisively.

The Government should have no fear—there is a changed mood and attitude in the electorate because people have had enough. People are being squeezed, they are hurting, they have had enough and they want some relief. People

want to keep their pay-packet to spend on the things they want for their family: they do not want it taken away in taxes, charges, electricity, water rates, land tax and payroll tax. You name the taxes and charges that soak up the pay-packets of individuals and families and the ability of small business people not only to employ but just to remain in business. The former Minister well knows that there are people and businesses out in the community going broke at a greater rate than at any time in South Australia's history. That is an indictment of the economy of this State and the policies pursued by this Government over the past six years.

In other words, the chickens are coming home to roost and the people paying the price are the individuals in the community who cannot insulate themselves against the Government's policies. They bear the brunt of the Government's policies and they are hurting, which is why at the ballot box on three occasions this year they sent a message to the Labor Party, which ignores that message at its peril. I do not mind the Government's being arrogant enough to say, 'We don't worry about what they are saying out there.' If the Government sticks with that line, its members will be sitting on this side of this House in about 18 months—have no fear about that. I was referring in particular to a number of Opposition questions put to Parliament to highlight the Auditor-General's Report on major losses in a number of Government instrumentalities and blow-outs in programs put forward by the Government.

Members interjecting:

Mr OLSEN: If the honourable member wants me to repeat some of them, I will. The Auditor-General indicated that the blow-out in the Justice Information System was from \$14 million to \$50 million and the Motor Registration Division's on-line system went from \$4.5 million to \$11 million. That is the sort of lack of management control that the Government has over its departments. The Government is not managing taxpayers' money efficiently or effectively. I will repeat the exercise that we highlighted to the House of the investment of \$50 million in a New Zealand timber company that does not employ one South Australian, while at the same time the Government cuts back in other clear areas. What an abdication of responsibility on the part of South Australians. The Government invested the money when the company was broke. It had auditors telling it at the time it invested the money that the New Zealand-based timber company was virtually bankrupt, but it went ahead and invested the funds. The Government is throwing more good money after bad because it is not prepared to front up and admit that it is a bad investment. The Government would not cut its losses and walk away from that investment.

The Government has tried to save face by investing more money in this company, yet it is the South Australian taxpayer who bears the brunt of that. At the same time, delays in implementing both of the systems to which I previously referred are reducing the impact of their longer-term savings. The use of computer systems within the public sector has been the subject of a series of major reports in recent years, but major difficulties remain in keeping the cost of establishing them under control. The capital and operational costs of these systems now has an annual impact on the budget approaching about \$50 million. Because of this, there has been a major escalation in the cost of the new systems, to which I have referred, in the plans by the Government. We have a whole range of measures which highlight where the Government has mismanaged taxpayers' funds.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: What page was that?

Mr OLSEN: If the honourable member for Mitchell wants me to repeat it for the third time, I will be more than happy to do so. The cost of the *Island Seaway* went from \$11 million to \$28 million, while the Crouzet system went from \$5.7 million to \$10.7 million. I will go on repeating these facts if the honourable member is so dense as to be unable to pick it up, although I have already said it twice so far.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: You don't know; someone handed you that to say.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Duigan): Order!

Mr OLSEN: If the honourable member would care to read the Auditor-General's Report—

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I have, but you haven't.

Mr OLSEN: Oh yes I have. I am quoting the Auditor-General's Report and the honourable member knows it. The honourable member knows that all these figures come from the independent—

Members interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! There have been interjections from both sides and I would ask all honourable members to desist.

Mr OLSEN: Thank you for your unbiased assistance, Mr Acting Speaker. The independent accounting—

Members interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! There have been continual interjections from both sides. The Leader has been responding to interjections from his own side, and he is now responding to interjections from the Government side. I ask the honourable Leader not to respond to interjections and I ask honourable members not to make any.

Mr OLSEN: The fact is that the Auditor-General, the independent accounting umpire to this Parliament, has given a report to this Parliament that is a damning indictment of the performance of the Government. These are not my views, but the Auditor-General's views. The former officer in the Treasury in South Australia is giving a very clear indication of the economic directions of this State and the performance of this Administration. Time and time again, the Government has demonstrated a complete failure to ensure that costs are kept under control. It has even failed to keep under control abuses of sick leave within its own departments.

The Hon. J.L. Cashmore: So much for the internal audit in the Health Commission!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr OLSEN: Exactly, and I will refer to that in a minute, if time permits. This afternoon, the House heard the Premier promise to have this problem under control by Christmas. But he avoids the central issue: why did it take the Auditor-General to identify the problem in the first place? The Government has been in office for almost six years. It cannot evade its responsibility. In 1985, it was presented with evidence of abuses in the Department of Correctional Services. In 1986, it proclaimed the Government Management and Employment Act, which enshrines principles and objectives for good management, which, if followed, should have prevented these abuses occurring in the first place. However, the Minister of Health let the cat out of the bag this morning. He said on radio that the industrial agreements would make it difficult, if not impossible, to cut out abuses in the system. In other words, he admitted that, because union control of this Government is so strong and so all embracing, rorts in the public sector are entrenched. The Opposition will not accept that.

Ms Gayler interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr OLSEN: There must be the capacity within Government departments and agencies to stamp out abuses in the

system. This involves, for the benefit of the member for Newland, rorting the system. That is what we are talking about—taking out abuses in the system.

Ms Gayler interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr OLSEN: Well, this is interesting, Mr Acting Speaker. The Auditor-General has indicated that millions of dollars are being abused.

Ms Gayler: I am not supporting rorts—

Mr OLSEN: Well, the honourable member's interjection a moment ago was interesting—

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Interjections are out of order. I ask the Leader to continue his remarks without responding to interjections.

Members interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Gunn: Toss the honourable member out!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! There will be no interjections.

Mr OLSEN: We are talking about rorts in the system, abuses in the system, the elimination of which would save millions of dollars. These are rorts and abuses in the system that this Government has consistently ignored. We have learnt from the Auditor-General's Report that 16 Government agencies now have internal audit teams. The House is entitled to ask: why were not these abuses picked up by internal audit? Why has the Government allowed a situation to develop where public servants in city areas take much more sick leave than those based in the country? Will the Government put this down to climatic or other unlikely factors rather than its own inefficient management? If the Premier was really serious about tackling these problems, he would immediately arrange to monitor the performance of all Government departments and agencies. He would insist that on a quarterly basis, for the whole of this financial year, sick leave records be submitted to a central point.

In this way, trends and areas of most abuse can be quickly identified, and action can be ordered to stamp out these abuses. I agree with the Premier that the majority of public servants are honest and hard working, but they deserve more concern and action from the Government to protect their reputation from those who will seek to exploit and abuse the system. The Department of Personnel and Industrial Relations is charged with the responsibility of ensuring good management practices in the public sector. The Premier should immediately direct the department to monitor the issues the Auditor-General has raised.

Ms Gayler: He has already done that.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Newland to order.

Mr OLSEN: I will ignore the interjection. He would do this if he was serious about coming to grips with this problem rather than putting out a perception today that he will tackle the problem and have it under control before Christmas. The Government has had six years to come to grips with the problem, but it has ignored it, and it has evaded its responsibility.

The Hon. R.G. Payne interjecting:

Mr OLSEN: Well it was in 1985—

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mitchell is out of order by interjecting and the Leader is out of order in replying. I ask the Leader to direct his remarks through the Chair.

Mr OLSEN: I will repeat, for the benefit of the member for Mitchell and other members, that it was in 1985 and 1986 when this Government was in power that it was drawn to the attention of the Government that there were abuses in several Government departments of sick leave and other

benefits. Yet the Government has done nothing about it, despite the fact that it has been drawn to its attention year after year. We are saying that, if the Government is fair dinkum for a change, it will take some action.

The Hon. J.L. Cashmore: It can't because of union control.

Mr OLSEN: It would want to have a little more resolve as an administration than it has had previously. It would do this—

The Hon. R.G. Payne interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Mitchell to order.

Mr OLSEN: And the member for Fisher, Mr Acting Speaker. Certainly if the Government—

Mr Tyler interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I do not need help from the member for Fisher or the Leader.

Mr Oswald: This place is getting out of control.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! It is not being helped by—

The Hon. B.C. Eastick: The Leader happens to have the call.

The ACTING SPEAKER: He has indeed. He is not being helped by interruptions.

Mr OLSEN: The Government would do this if it was really serious about coming to grips with undesirable work practices in the public sector. The Premier is not really serious about it because under Labor Governments over the past 20 years work practices, dictated by some union officials, have become entrenched to the point where they are now costing taxpayers millions of dollars. At a time when taxpayers in South Australia are reeling after having to put up with a tax hike of 109 per cent over the past six years, an increase in electricity tariffs, transport fares and water rates greater than any other State, there is no capacity within the household budgets for South Australians to absorb any further costs.

The Auditor-General has identified not millions but tens of millions of dollars of waste and inefficiency where proper management techniques within the various departments would ensure that we did not have to have another 6.6 per cent hike in real terms in taxation levels this year. Yet, again, tax increases and charges are not being limited to the consumer price index but are increasing in real terms. I referred earlier to the plight of people out there in the community who are struggling to make ends meet. It is an unfortunate reality that the people who are least able to protect themselves against a hike in taxes and charges are the people on the bottom rung of the ladder, the lowest socio-economic group, those on the smallest incomes. Those people do not have a choice about using public transport or a choice to avoid the escalation in costs of STA bus, train and tram fares.

They are the people who have to rely on public transport to get to and from work and who have had to absorb increases in transport fares at double the rate of increases in Victoria. This State during the 1950s and the 1960s diversified from an agricultural based State into a manufacturing industry because the Playford Government established economies of scale here. The cost of production in South Australia was less than in the eastern States, so that we could produce a motor vehicle or washing machine here and have access to the consumer markets on the eastern seaboard, where they have been and will continue to be, and maintain that manufacturing base.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Duigan): Order! The honourable Leader's time has expired. The honourable member for Semaphore.

Mr PETERSON (Semaphore): During this grievance debate I will speak about the present school staffing dispute. The *Teachers Journal* of 17 August contains an article detailing a meeting of over 300 principals and school council chairpersons where they unanimously rejected the State Government's proposed new staffing arrangements. After reading that article and items that have appeared in newspapers about this matter I have tried to assess the true protest about these proposals. I suppose that it would be easy to write off the teachers' protest as being one of self-interest, because that is a simple argument to put forward.

However, that cannot apply to the parents' protest. They protest in the interests of a fair go for their children's education and future. I have received many letters from school councils, which are comprised of people who are prepared to put their time and effort into the school on behalf of the children who go to those schools. Of greater impact on me have been the hundreds—and I mean hundreds—of letters that I have received from individual parents. Tonight I take the opportunity to congratulate those parents for the interest, concern and efforts that they have put into taking the trouble to write a letter of protest about this situation. When parents protest in this way it shows their concern.

From the correspondence I have received it seems that one of the concerns is the proposal that during 1989 it is proposed to provide staff for the number of children expected in April of that year, with an additional half-teacher being appointed in July if the number of children enrolled between April and July is between one and eight. Another concern is that the half-time teacher cannot be given a full-time class, so the additional children will have to swell the numbers in other classes, which will obviously make them larger. If the number of children enrolled between April and July is greater than eight then a full-time teacher would be appointed in July.

Another concern is that, to create this additional class, it would seem most likely that children would need to be shifted from another class. Additional staff may be appointed in October to match any further enrolments if the average class size in the school is greater than 27 children. The next concern is that to have an average class size of 27, it seems likely that at least some classes would be over 30. This is a serious concern for upper primary classes but is untenable for junior primary classes. It could well mean that more classes would need to contain children of at least two year levels, even three year levels.

These points were put to me and encapsulate the problems that are seen by the parents: bigger classes; the children being shifted from class to class throughout the year; more combination of year levels in classes; less individual attention for the child; and fewer special programs. A letter I received from a high school council states:

We feel that the proposals have been ill-considered and disregard the disruption which will be caused to the educational programs of children in schools, particularly those schools with enrolments in the junior primary years. We also feel that the proposals have no apparent regard for the morale of teachers in schools many of whom (under the new proposals) would face displacement from their current schools at the end of this year. The anxiety associated with this prospect and the trauma of the displacement exercise, which would almost certainly follow in the many schools with a junior primary population, must ultimately be to the detriment of children in those schools . . .

Naturally our greatest concern is the effect which the proposals, if implemented, would have on the children of this school and, in particular, on the children of the junior primary school.

In the past our junior primary teachers have been able to welcome children who began school on or shortly after their fifth birthdays into a secure and caring classroom environment within which their development could proceed without disruption for the remainder of the school year. In this situation a variety of

class structures was possible and staffing flexibility in the early part of the year gave our school the option to cater to the specific needs of individual children, to concentrate on professional development, to provide extra classroom support, and to foster programs involving parents/community for the benefit of children.

If the new proposals were implemented many of the good things which have been happening in our school will no longer be possible.

The following point was directed to the Government:

If it is the desire of our Government to foster the development of a vigorous and effective society, the education of our children is of paramount importance and, in this process, the foundation established in the early childhood years is crucial. We believe that if the proposals which have been promulgated are implemented, more than a decade of positive development in early childhood education will be negated. This will be to the detriment of our children and, ultimately, our State and our nation will be the losers.

I previously made the point about education and that the children of today are tomorrow's adults, the mums and dads, and the people who make the decisions in our country.

It is interesting to note the comparison on pages 24 to 26 of the budget papers between public and private education and the drift away from public education. In the budget the Premier states:

In the period between 1982 and 1988 total enrolments in Government schools fell by about 22 900, of which 20 500 occurred in primary schools and 2 400 in secondary schools . . . In the six years to 1988 total enrolments in non-government schools increased by about 9 600 of which 5 500 occurred in secondary schools and 4 100 in primary schools.

Mr Tyler interjecting:

Mr PETERSON: Yes, 300 teachers. That was a wonderful interjection, thank you.

Mr Tyler interjecting:

Mr PETERSON: I will return to that in a moment. The reasons for the difference in enrolments are many, but one is the lack of confidence in the public system. There is a great lack of confidence. Recently, a program was presented by the Education Department for parent participation in schools. I think that may have been before the current Director was appointed.

The Hon. H. Allison: PASS.

Mr PETERSON: Yes. That Parents and Students in Schools Program was implemented only six or seven months ago where the whole idea was to encourage people to be involved in the children's education and to serve on the councils—

Mr Tyler: An excellent idea.

Mr PETERSON: An excellent idea, as the honourable member says. It is a wonderful idea. How can people be expected to have confidence in the system when the Education Department does not listen to their protests about the proposal to reduce teaching capacity in the school, because they see it as increasing the size of classes? People are standing up in their droves and saying, 'This is not right. I don't want that for my child. I want my child to be better looked after by the system', but they are ignored. The Education Department does not want to hear any of the arguments. It says, 'Don't come forward and tell us your problems.'

At the same time that it says that it does not want to hear any protest and it does not take any notice of what is said, it asks people to come to the school and to get involved and help the education system. It says, 'Help your children's education, but don't tell us what you want and, for God's sake, don't tell us when we are wrong. You just come along and do all the work, but we will tell you what you will get.' That is not on. If the Education Department wants people to become involved and to have an interest in their children's education, it must listen to those people.

Give them a go! The department must show them that it is serious. Let them know that their word has some merit, that the department will listen to it, that there is some effect from what they say. The direction in education must depend upon what they want for their children and what they have to say. If the department ignores the parents now, it should not go to them next year and say, 'Come to the school', because they will say, 'What for?' or they will say, 'I will take my children out of that school and put them in a private school' because they can have a say in their education. The department cannot have it both ways. It cannot have the people putting in their time working in a school if it will not give them any credit for the time and effort that they put in for what they want for their kids. That is exactly what is happening with this staffing program.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Duigan): Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

The Hon. B.C. EASTICK (Light): At a time when we are hearing from some members of the other side, by way of self-adulation, the value of this Government to the people of South Australia, with the spending of millions of dollars of funds—in fact, billions, the member for Adelaide said in his contribution—I come back to one of the more unfortunate aspects of being a member of Parliament. I want to take us out of this setting and talk about some of the things that one sees in the electorate office fairly regularly. Regrettably, there is a rather more depressing side to this very great country in which we live.

I will refer in a minute to a letter which I received today from people working in this area in Sydney, because I believe it very quickly picks up some of the problems that we have here. As we talk in these glowing terms, as members of the Government are doing at the present moment, we want to recognise some of the real problems that are at our back door. We have a situation where, not irregularly, men and women (including grandparents) come through the door and advise us of the complete contempt of the Family Court by one party in a broken marriage with respect to access to the children of that broken marriage. I speak of a situation where a child is given the opportunity to share the love that it has for its two parents, but one parent refuses to make that child available to the second parent with whom he or she does not normally live, because of some fit of pique or some desire to hurt the other partner but, in so doing, hurts the child more than others. Also, there is the situation where grandparents are denied the opportunity of access to their grandchildren.

The person concerned has the misfortune to have to get the contempt purged by going back into court. The person is advised that unless he or she—mainly he—has \$500 in their pocket, they cannot even go into the Family Court to have that contempt purged and obtain access to the children as was granted by the Family Court.

I want to talk about children who are taken from their families, in some cases because of a behavioural problem. I question (and I know that fortunately the Minister now questions) the capacity of some of the people within the welfare system to properly judge the position in which a child fits, relative to its parents. Regrettably, in many cases the child is taken and placed in a situation far worse than the situation in which it lived with its own parents or within the conflict which existed. In other instances, they are put with people who are of or about their own age and, if they happen to be female and are placed in a living situation with males, they find themselves very quickly in the position of being sexually abused by the male and/or their

accomplices and/or other female people in that home where they are supposed to be in a protected environment.

It happens, and I doubt whether any member here can truthfully say that this sort of situation has not been drawn to their attention. On a not infrequent basis our attention has been drawn to the inroads of drugs—a little bit of cannabis at school or down behind the pub, or whatever the case may be. That results in young people committing larcenies and undertaking other rebellious activities to assist the habit that they have developed. I noted members opposite nodding. Fortunately, people recognise that the same thing or similar activities occur in other electorates.

I have a letter from Margaret Noffs, the wife of the Reverend Ted Noffs of the Wayside Chapel at Kings Cross, New South Wales. Because he had a heart attack, Margaret is taking over the work that Ted started. I acknowledge that in the letter she is seeking continuing financial support, but it is the message of the letter which I wish to share with the House tonight. The letter states:

Dear friends,

As usual, no-one is to blame, just an abstract set of rules called 'guidelines'. As you probably know by now, we have a program that has been operating for as long as I can remember at the Wayside Chapel, caring for the young who would otherwise be homeless and more often than you care to think, through no fault of their own, for those who are prostituting themselves in order to survive, for those who are taking drugs, more often than we care to face, in order to forget.

I am not talking about young children who are almost adults; I am talking about children. Children who belong nowhere. Children who belong somewhere but are not wanted. Children who are so neglected that you can't say they have lost their way because they have never been shown any way to lose. The children we care for are between nine and 16 years of age and they belong to nobody.

Our children, Australian children, the world's children, and everyone denies responsibility for them. For years the Wayside Chapel, through your assistance has cared for as many as possible. For years many of you have helped us care for these children with your own donations, but although there is Government funding for this, that, and anything else, there is none for our children; they do not meet any department's guidelines; they do not exist. Nobody in Government is unpleasant to us about the problem; nobody can possibly deny its existence; nobody even tries to.

Nor can we do it here in South Australia, as witnessed by the series of articles in the *Adelaide News*. The letter continues:

They do not fall within their department's guidelines. These children, when the point of finance is raised for their support, do not belong to one department but to another department; in that department they are too young to receive support; in another department they just do not have any finance to give, no funds anywhere! Money yes! Children in desperate need, yes! But wrong guidelines!

How many years do our workers have to work in the hardest area of social concern that I know of, without any backup with their work, seriously under-staffed so that they are literally laying down their lives just because they love these children whom so few people would love anyway? How many years do we have to watch the children die because we do not have enough staff to support the large numbers we should be supporting? How many times do those who work amongst them, certainly including Ted when he was well, have to have their hearts broken as the coffin leaves the Chapel and another child is taken to the crematorium with an overdose?

I am writing this from my heart because I am tired of seeing our people work among these beautiful children with no support and, on top of the work, having to beg for funds for their work to continue. I am tired of irrationality in Government departments whether by stupidity or design. Can we expect those who present themselves to us as candidates, those whom we elect to represent all of us, to stand up for the unwanted children between the ages of nine and 16 years?

The letter goes on to say a little more. In those terms, I refer to the information that was given to the House this evening by my colleague the Leader of the Opposition when he spoke about and identified the wanton waste of this

Government. The letter that I have just read comes from another State but the problem exists here and, whilst we allow this wanton expenditure of funds to continue in those areas when the sort of support we need for so many people in our constituencies is not provided, we are not paying the proper price of being members of Parliament. This is an important issue which needs consideration.

Mr FERGUSON (Henley Beach): I have now had the opportunity to hear six budget speeches and six replies from the Leader of the Opposition in the course of my parliamentary career. Having had the chance to look back over those particular speeches in reply to the Appropriation Bill, I have been amazed at how repetitive they are and how wrong the predictions have been. In last year's debate on the Appropriation Bill, the Leader of the Opposition, as he has always done, painted a particularly bleak picture of South Australia's economic future caused by a Government which he depicted as ever growing and which he accused of overspending, over borrowing and overtaxing, and of financial mismanagement. He trotted out the same tired old rhetoric, as he has done every year and this year, always critical without offering any real or tangible alternatives, except vague allusions to privatisation and control of public sector growth.

Once again, the gloomy predictions that he forecast have failed to eventuate. His accusations of a Government bankrupt in economic direction and credibility have proved wrong. We need only to look at recent developments to see that this prediction is inaccurate. Last year, the Leader of the Opposition criticised what he claimed to be falling levels of private investment in South Australia. In the past week, a number of announcements have been made of significant investment initiatives. These include the \$25 million expansion and joint venture by SA Brewing Holdings in conjunction with Carlton United Breweries and the confirmation by the Remm group of the \$500 million redevelopment of the Myer site in Rundle Mall. The whitegoods manufacturer Email has announced that it has decided to concentrate the manufacture of cooking appliances in South Australia, which will entail the creation of 150 new jobs at the Dudley Park factory. Adelaide Brighton Cement has announced the final work on its feasibility study to spend \$50 million on expansion of its production capacity at Birkenhead. Such initiatives indicate a high level of confidence and a commitment to the South Australian economy.

The Opposition Leader also accused the Government of being the highest taxing Government in South Australia's history. He neglected to mention that, in comparison with other States, South Australian taxation levels are relatively low. Per capita taxes, fees and fines in South Australia, based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics 1987-88 preliminary figures, were \$295 lower than those in New South Wales, \$258 lower than those in Victoria, \$109 lower than those in Western Australia and \$66 lower than those in Tasmania.

This year, despite a substantial reduction in Commonwealth funding, the Government will not increase taxation rates and, further, has decided to offer major concessions in relation to land tax and payroll tax. Considering this reduced funding, the Government is, contrary to this criticism, showing considerable restraint in taxation.

The Opposition Leader was also extremely critical of the role of SAFA, particularly in regard to what he perceived to be a poor rate of return. Despite his criticisms, SAFA has continued to operate on a financially sound basis, achieving a surplus of \$279 million in 1987-88. This represents a strong growth compared to the \$220 million

achieved in the previous year. SAFA plays a vital role in revenue generation in the State. Its contributions to the State's revenue are expected to increase from \$205 million in 1987-88 to \$300 million in 1988-89.

The Opposition Leader also accused the Government of extravagant expenditure, claiming that public sector expenditure had been expanding at an unchecked rate. Such a claim is fallacious. In order to improve efficiency and production in the private sector, Government departments have been required to show savings in respect to the 1988-89 budget, increasing the further savings on the 3 per cent cut which applied last year. Savings of \$33 million have been made while no policy change has taken place and a further \$1 million saving has been made by restricting the number of administrative and executive officers employed by agencies.

Contrary to the Opposition's accusations, the Government has shown considerable restraint in containing the growth of the Public Service work force. Over the past five years to June 1987 the public sector work force has only grown by 3.6 per cent. This figure includes the whole of the public sector, including statutory bodies such as the Health Commission and the State Bank. In fact only 1.2 per cent represents the growth in the departmental work force, with most of this occurring in areas of education and law and order agencies. Surely it should not be suggested that cuts should be made in the number of police and prison officers. The implication of such a reduction would be disastrous.

The freeze on Public Service employment has also been retained and considerable savings have been made in retraining and workers compensation costs. Government expenditure has also been restrained in the areas of interest payments. Interest payments from the Consolidated Account, including those to SAFA and other statutory authorities, have been reduced by 9.7 per cent in real terms. Such figures indicate a much tougher picture than that painted by the Opposition Leader last year. Last year the Leader of the Opposition claimed that the Government alleged big borrowing strategies that cost the South Australian taxpayer dearly, but this Government is making considerable inroads into paying off the public debt. The overall State indebtedness in 1988-89 is not expected to rise and every effort will be made to reduce the public sector debt.

The Opposition Leader also predicted that the State's growing interest bill would limit its ability to allocate sufficient resources to areas such as health, education and community welfare. Yet, in this year's budget the Government was able to provide \$20 million in funding for social justice initiatives which, together with Commonwealth funds, will amount to \$25 million.

Much of the expenditure on the social justice strategy will be used in the vital areas of health, education and community welfare. The State Government is maintaining its commitment to the disadvantaged people of this State. It was claimed that the Government was failing to contain inflation levels. In the 1987-88 financial year Adelaide had a significantly below average inflation rate. The consumer price index for Adelaide rose by 6.7 per cent between 1986-87 and 1987-88, and that was down from 9.2 per cent on the previous financial year and below the national average of 7.3 per cent.

The Leader of the Opposition also predicted that the Government's alleged mismanagement of the capital works program would lead to a downturn in housing and construction in South Australia. Instead, South Australian private sector approvals have progressively shown an upturn since the beginning of 1988, with the June seasonally adjusted level being the highest since January 1986. The value of

private non-residential approvals rose by 30 per cent in 1987-88 to \$543 million, while public approvals rose 24 per cent. Included in this increase was a 141 per cent rise in factory approvals, an increase of 93 per cent in hotel approvals and a 13 per cent increase in approvals for shops. The Leader of the Opposition was also critical of the outflow of people from South Australia. Over the past year the annual rate of population growth has picked up significantly.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Duigan): Order! The honourable member's time has expired. The honourable member for Davenport.

Mr S.G. EVANS (Davenport): In this grievance debate I wish to refer to the contents of some letters relating to a piece of land known as Craighurn in the Mitcham Hills adjoining the electorate of Fisher and contained substantially in that electorate, partly in Davenport, and adjoining the seat of Mitchell. I refer first to a letter headed 'Comment on the Metropolitan Open Space System (MOSS) that was sent to the Hon. Dr Hopgood, the Minister for Environment and Planning. That letter states:

We read recently in the *Messenger Press* that the owners of Craighurn, Minda Inc., are proposing to subdivide the northern area of their property for residential purposes. We feel that this will mean a considerable loss of open space (350ha) for the City of Adelaide, and is contrary to the best interests of the residents of Coromandel Valley. On previous occasions it has been pointed out that Craighurn is important as part of a green belt and for future recreational needs for the City of Adelaide.

This land currently forms part of the Southern Adelaide Hills buffer zone—comprising the linear corridor between Belair Recreation Park, through the Sturt River Valley corridor and hills face zone areas of Coromandel Valley to Craighurn, the Sturt Gorge Recreation Park, Happy Valley reservoir, Glenlithorne, and the hills face zone land above Marino. In a recent community survey, Coromandel Valley residents expressed the need to maintain the rural atmosphere of the Craighurn area and its environs for all time for the sake of future generations.

We therefore feel that the granting of subdivision rights for Craighurn will have the following adverse effects on the environment:

1. The future needs for open recreational space and outer parklands for Adelaide will be compromised.
2. Coromandel Valley's rural environment will be considerably impaired.
3. The present dairy herd at Craighurn is the last one representative of a family dairy farm so near the metropolitan area, and it could disappear forever from our rural scene. Remember we have already lost the dairy herd from the Department of Agriculture's Northfield Centre which has been moved to Flaxley.
4. Present traffic problems through the Coromandel Valley corridor and all the traffic accidents associated with it will be exacerbated.

I wrote to the Minister on 14 January and pointed out that there were comments in the community about the farm being subdivided, and asked him for an up-to-date report. In that letter I said:

I know of no written agreement, but I would appreciate receiving from you details of any agreements or commitments that were given to you or any other Government department re keeping all of this area as open space.

I was referring to Minda Incorporated giving that commitment. The Minister eventually wrote me a long letter on 29 March, in which he said:

In 1978 agreement was reached between the State Government and Minda Incorporated to allow land division on the south side of the Sturt River on the clear understanding that the land to the north of the river would not be divided but retained as open space. There have been attempts by Mitcham Council to re-zone the land which would explicitly preclude land division but eventually by agreement between the parties this rezoning has not occurred.

A working party brought forward recommendations about the present and future use and zoning of the farm land. The State Government particularly, and Minda Incorporated as well, had difficulty in accepting the recommendations. I confirmed this view following a meeting with Minda Incorporated representa-

tives on 14 November 1985. On that occasion I also suggested the status quo be maintained, or that a 'no action' position be adopted by all parties. I further indicated that at an appropriate time the State Government could negotiate to purchase land for it to form an integral component of the second generation park-land system.

Minda Incorporated did indicate it would like this latter position clarified rather than leave the land purchase question in abeyance. This question is not an easy one to answer due to the inter-relationship between State Government financial support for Minda Incorporated and other constraints on State Government expenditure.

He went on to say that he wanted the *status quo* to remain. In the latter part of his letter the Minister stated:

Minda Homes Incorporated has recently lodged extensive subdivision plans over the land challenging the rural A zoning. In order to protect this land from premature subdivision the Governor—

I emphasise that point because that is a shonky statement. The Government will make the decision and the Governor just carries out its instructions. The Government tries to put the blame unfairly on the Governor. The Minister went on to state:

... the Governor has declared the land to be subject to section 50 of the Planning Act.

Under whose instructions? The letter continues:

The declaration of section 50 is intended to prevent development of the land unless the consent of the Governor—

That is another load of sham, putting the blame on the Governor. The Government made the decision. The letter continues:

... unless the consent of the Governor is obtained—

That is how the Government dodges and weaves and will not front up to its responsibility, as was the case in Unley with the Minister of Recreation and Sport. The letter continues:

In the absence of any change of heart on the part of the Government, that must remain my strategy, and I have to say that the Government would use whatever mechanisms available to it to forestall a subdivision.

On 6 April 1988 I wrote to Minda Incorporated and said this:

Please find enclosed copy of a letter ... I would be interested in receiving your board's version of the Minister's response, as I have many people pressing me for the exact position on this matter at the moment.

However, I do not intend making a copy of the Minister's letter available to them, unless I find that your board's opinions in the issue are something similar to that of the Minister's.

I wrote that because I smelt a rat. Minda wrote to me on 11 April stating:

The letter you have received from the Minister ... sets out some of the facts concerning the rezoning issue; however, there are some matters which Minda needs to clarify with the Minister before making any further comment.

A meeting with the Minister and representatives of Minda is scheduled for 19 April ... and after this meeting I should be in a much better position to advise you of Minda's current thinking in respect to the issue and to clarify certain matters contained in the Minister's letter of 29 March ...

It is obvious that the Minda board could not tell me what it had in mind because I knew that the Minister was not giving all the facts, and it did not want to get into an argument with the Minister. On 27 April I wrote back to Mr Wren, stating:

The reason I directed a copy of the Minister's letter to you was because my memory was such that I thought some aspects of the Minister's letter were quite inaccurate. Therefore, the exercise you are undertaking pleases me, as at least we may end up having documented facts on this matter.

Then on 22 June I received a letter from Minda Incorporated stating:

I think the best way to respond to the issue is to advise you of the most current status of this most important matter.

In other words, it did not want to get into conflict with the Minister. I know he was not stating the facts in his letter, but Minda did not want to get into that argument. He wrote:

The original working party made certain recommendations to the Minister which, it was hoped, would resolve the matter to all concerned, at least to some degree.

I understand that Cabinet did not agree to the proposal; however, Minda did indicate its agreement in principle.

Yet the Minister indicated that Minda had difficulty in agreeing, but it agreed in principle. The letter continues:

More recently the Minister and Minda agreed to establish a new working party with the object of reviewing the original recommendations and to present to the Minister and Cabinet a range of options. This working party has a strict time limit of eight weeks starting 22 June 1988.

To my knowledge it still has not reported. The public has not been told of it and the Minister has not made it available, yet it is long past those eight weeks. The letter goes on to say:

In the meantime, and so as to protect Minda's interest and legal position, a planning application has been lodged which prompted the Minister to place a section 50 declaration over the land. With the Minister's knowledge we have challenged the section 50 in the Supreme Court. However, it has been agreed that we will not proceed with this matter pending the outcome of the working party's results.

It is quite obvious what has happened. It is quite clear that the Government is holding a gun at Minda's head. It has not bought the land that it said it would buy, maintaining that it does not have the money. I wrote back to Minda Incorporated on 23 June. I thanked the Director for his letter, and said:

Personally, I am of the view that, because of the role that Minda Incorporated plays within our community, it should not suffer any financial loss of any asset that it owns. If the Government's decision is that they want all, or a part of, the area left for open space (likewise, that may be some of the community's desire), then the Government should pick up the tab on behalf of the total community, thereby protecting the assets for service to those who are mentally and/or physically impaired living under the umbrella of Minda Incorporated, now and in the future.

I make a plea to the Minister for Environment and Planning to come clean on the matter and to tell us that the Government will buy it. Let Minda be free of it, and then the Government can decide whether it wants to subdivide some of the land or do something else with it. But at least the Government should tell us when the report will be brought down, and it should be made available to the public.

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

Mr TYLER (Fisher): With an electorate that has 12 kindergartens, 12 primary schools, and two high schools, I want to use this time in this debate to talk about the Bannon Government's commitment to education and children's services. In particular, I want to dwell on the matter of the education budget for 1988-89. I would also compare the commitment to education in this budget with that of the Greiner Liberal Government in New South Wales. This year, an average \$4 100 will be spent on each student in South Australian State schools. In real terms, this is an extra \$60 for each student, compared to last year, and represents a 17 per cent increase from 1982-83.

The projected decline of 3 000 students in 1989 will free up to 180 teacher positions, every one of which will be retained to further improve the quality of education and a student-teacher ratio that is already the best in Australia. This will cost \$6 million, and it will bring to 830 the number of teacher positions to be kept in the State system, in the six years to 1989, despite a fall of some 23 000 students.

To complement this, an extra 100 ancillary staff positions will be allocated to schools in 1989 at a cost of \$1.7 million. Since 1982-83, an extra 390 full-time equivalent ancillary staff have been provided to schools representing an increase of 17 per cent, despite the decline in the number of students in that period. This is in stark contrast to the extraordinary claim in the *Advertiser* of Monday 5 September, where the Opposition spokesman on education was quoted as saying that the Government had cut 600 teaching jobs. The Hon. Mr Lucas ought to get his own education policy in order. The Opposition should get its own act together before criticising this Government, as it continually does, and claiming that the Government has increased public sector employment.

Members will recall that last year the Leader of the Opposition criticised the Government for an increase of some 10 000 public servants. In fact, earlier today we heard the member for Hanson use that figure again. Of course, what they do not say is that many of these people are involved in part-time employment and that many of them are employed in the State Government Insurance Commission and the State Bank. However, the Leader of the Opposition has said that he stands for small government. I understand that the Leader of the Opposition and members opposite are still claiming that they stand for small government.

However, my constituents are well aware of the fact that the Opposition is once again being hypocritical. Small government means fewer teachers, fewer police, less child care, and fewer doctors and nurses. In fact, it means reduced Government services—vital services that help families and the quality of family life. Once again, the Opposition is trying to have its cake and eat it too. I suppose that is one of the luxuries of being in Opposition. With policies like that we can be sure that members opposite will be enjoying that luxury for some time to come.

The Opposition has also criticised the Government for the decline in student numbers in our schools. Members should note that this decline is the result of demographic factors. It has not been caused by dissatisfaction with our schools or with our teachers, as some members on the Opposition benches would have us believe.

If we compare this teacher retention policy and student/teacher ratio with the situation that currently exists in New South Wales, we will see a stark difference. In just a few months of Liberal Government 2 700 teaching jobs have been cut. The number of relieving teachers has also been cut, putting pressure on teachers to take extra classes. Another important aspect of the Bannon Government's education strategy is the back to schools policy aiming to redirect more resources to the priorities for education that the community have identified. These priorities include english, mathematics, science and technology, languages, behaviour management and professional development for school staff. For instance, language programs in primary schools have been further strengthened, bringing the total in this key area to about 110 full-time teachers. Also, a \$250 000 'computer loan partnership' scheme will again help hundreds of students to gain computer skills.

Importantly, in the area of behaviour management in classrooms, education, health and community welfare will provide an extra \$1 million to develop positive strategies to ensure that children maximise their learning in a stable classroom environment. This social justice initiative builds on the establishment of 17 'behaviour management' primary focus schools established earlier this year. In comparison, the Liberal Government in New South Wales has approached the important and sensitive issue of school discipline by threatening to gaol naughty children in that State and by

demanding that every school institute a compulsory saluting of the flag each day. What a farce! What we need to instil in our children is a pride in our country, but not by threatening and compelling children, which will lead only to rebellion. So much for that Liberal philosophy that we hear espoused daily by members opposite of 'individual freedom and choice'!

A third aspect of this year's education budget is its emphasis on social justice. Grants to State schools for Government assisted scholars will increase by 10 per cent to \$77.50 for each eligible student. This further increase builds on the extra \$915 000 announced during 1988 to support the cost of books and school activities for those students. More than 40 000 students throughout the State will benefit from this initiative. In comparison, the Greiner Liberal Government in New South Wales has abolished the disadvantaged schools program under which schools in poor areas received extra funding and staffing. So much for social justice in the Liberal platform! Members opposite might like to scream and shout and say that that is what is happening in New South Wales and it is not relevant to South Australia, but it is.

The education policy put forward by the Leader of the Opposition is frightening for those of us who are concerned about the future for our children. And I am not the only person to say this. In the *News* of 30 August 1988 the President of the South Australian Institute of Teachers, Mr David Tonkin, said:

The Liberal education policy is fairly vague and glib and full of trite statements. If these statements represent a commitment to maintaining a comprehensive education in all schools, SAIT would support it. But there is a danger the policy could result in some elitist schools and others for second class citizens who only deserve vocational training. We are disgusted by his constant attempts to generate a lack of confidence in our State schools.

David Tonkin and SAIT have demanded an unequivocal statement from the Leader of the Opposition that there will be no repeat of the onslaught on education being mounted by his NSW counterparts. But what we have seen so far from the Leader of the Opposition is absolute silence on this important aspect of education; instead, we have had to endure plenty of his verbose rhetoric. In the area of children's services, which includes preschool education and child care at various levels, the State Government has again showed its commitment with an increased budget.

Preschool staffing levels will be maintained following the substantial increase in staff during 1987-88. There will be an emphasis on redistributing resources to areas of greatest need and to activities that increase the range and quality of service. Staffing levels for multicultural, integration and Aboriginal services have been increased. Capital funds also allow for the completion of four new preschool facilities, as well as some upgrading. Since 1983 there has been a vast increase in the number of child-care places available in my electorate, with two child-care centres having been built in Fisher during that time and another on the western boundary at Hallett Cove, serving residents of Sheidow Park and Trott Park. We also have two after school care programs and an expanded family day care service. We still need more, and more has been provided in this year's budget. The 1988-89 budget has an extra \$217 000 to provide expanded vacation and out-of-school hours care. I urge the Minister to ensure that the needs of my electorate are taken into account when allocating these places.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen): Tonight I want to raise an issue that I have previously raised on numerous occasions, that is, the Mount Barker Road between Crafers and Glen Osmond. I regret that the Minister of Transport

is not in the Chamber to hear this, but I am glad that the shadow Minister is. Members opposite will be aware that it is a major concern to me and to many of my constituents. I seek clarification from the Minister of Transport so that I can try to determine the situation in relation to that notorious stretch of road.

For some time we have been hearing of the need for a new highway. Some time ago the Government announced that plans would be drawn up and that an environmental impact assessment would be carried out in relation to those plans. That has all occurred, and it was a very expensive and extravagant operation. People have been notified about what is expected in relation to the purchase of properties, and there has been a general expectation that in the near future we will see major works carried out on the new freeway. It was suggested that \$100 million would be required for this new stretch of road, and questions I have asked of the Minister of Transport have brought varying replies. First, I was told that the Minister was seeking support from the Federal Government and that an application had gone through. We then heard that some of the money was to be provided by the State and some of the money, hopefully, was to come from the Federal Government. However, in the past six months or so it has all gone very quiet, and at present we are not sure where we are.

Considerable work has been carried out on the existing road, but we continue to hear that it is only interim work. I am not sure what these bandaid measures have cost, but I would not be surprised if it amounted to \$8 million to \$10 million. A lot of interim work has been done, and the lighting, although not complete, is nearly complete on the stretch of road between Cross Road and Crafers, which links up with the South-Eastern Freeway. In some areas the road has been resurfaced. Alterations have been made to the Devil's Elbow. Some people believe that that has improved it, while others believe that it has done little to help the situation.

The amount of time that it has taken for some of this work to be carried out has concerned me. I received a copy of a letter that was sent to the Editor of the *SA Motor*, the Royal Automobile Association's publication, and I am sure that the writer will not mind my reading it to the House. The author of this letter is Mr J.A. Crowhurst of Stirling who has corresponded with me on a number of occasions on this issue. The letter states:

As a 'Hills dweller' I am delighted to witness the improvements being made to the Mount Barker Road (National Highway 1) between Glen Osmond and Crafers. Whilst the lighting and improved surface and other works are welcomed, I am sure I speak for many RAA members when I say I am sceptical of the spending of all this money on these short-term improvements when a much needed new road is 'just around the corner'—or is it?

It seems to me that, as the new highway has been approved, would it not be more appropriate for the Government to spend these funds on the planned new route? The rate of increase of traffic on this road warrants the construction of the new highway as soon as possible and, as funds for road works seem to be in short supply, surely the authorities should get their priorities right.

Are the current works another example of a 'band-aid' measure prior to the next State election? Will the current expenditure extend or delay the program to construct the new highway? Will all the lighting fixtures have to be moved when the new widened road is constructed, or will the stobie poles simply be closer to the kerb? Why are collapsible poles being installed on one side of the road and stobie poles on the other?

These questions are being asked by my constituents. People who use that road regularly have varying reactions to it. Some believe that the expenditure of about \$100 million is not warranted and there is some opposition to that type of expenditure. However, others believe that the new road should be constructed immediately. I travel on that road

almost every day and I do not think that there is any doubt at all that, if a new aligned road is not necessary now, it will be very soon. As my correspondent has said, there has been a significant increase in the amount of traffic using that road and there is no way that, within 10 years, and probably even sooner, that road, in its current condition, even with the recent improvements, will be able to carry that traffic safely.

I think it is important that the Minister clarifies that situation and that he tells us what he has in mind, whether he has been successful with the representation that he made to the Federal Government, whether that is still in progress, or just what the situation is. The writer of that letter went on to mention the need for consideration to be given to the installation of centrally controlled hazard signs at Glen Osmond. I am pleased that only last week the Minister announced in this House that those controlled hazard signs are to be installed, not perhaps as envisaged by Mr Crowhurst, but at least they will help in accident situations, or where there are obstructions on that stretch of road.

I am pleased that all those improvements have been implemented, because over three years ago I was part of a deputation which met with the Minister of Transport. We put a number of these suggestions to him, for example, the lighting, the need for the signs to which I have just referred, the need for new surfaces, and the need for a realignment of Devil's Elbow.

So, I have to express my gratitude to the Minister that that work has been done. I do not want it to be just a situation in which the Government is now prepared to sit on the matter for some time and, perhaps as Mr Crowhurst says, because of a forthcoming election, the Minister and the Government will be prepared to say, 'We have done our bit; we have done all that is required to make the road safer, and that is as far as we will go.' I suggest that it is extremely important that the Minister clarifies the situation, that he indicates quite clearly whether or not the Government intends, either with Federal or State funding, to proceed with that section of the road, which is very much needed.

Mr GUNN (Eyre): I received a letter this afternoon from the Secretary, Murrayville/Pinnaroo Pig Producers Association, Pinnaroo, a constituent of the member for Murray-Mallee. It is a copy of a letter addressed to the Minister. It is of particular significance to other pig producers in South Australia and other producers involved in intensive farming. It is appropriate that I read it to the House. It states:

I wish to draw your attention to a miscarriage of justice from the viewpoint of all intensive meat producers. To best illustrate this point we will quote to the best of our knowledge an actual case history.

Early this year a pig producer from the Murray Bridge area was found to have high levels of chemical residue contamination in his slaughtered stock. As a result of this his herd was slaughtered out 'on farm' and disposed of at his expense. The source of the contamination was grain purchased as stock feed from the Victorian Mallee area. We believe that the Victorian Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs was then notified of the contamination and did tests which proved positive. Four months after the completion of the tests, on making inquiries into this matter, we were informed that there were no legal procedures that the department could take against the grain producer even to the point of not being able to quarantine contaminated grain still on the property at that time.

This meant that other unsuspecting intensive meat producers could be placed at the same risk as the producer from Murray Bridge. We feel that in this age of equal opportunity the grain producers should be subjected to the same penalties as the intensive meat producers. We believe that the best way to overcome the temptation to chemically contaminate grain is to impose extremely harsh financial penalties on any persons found to have done so.

As we understand the situation, there is no compensation or protection for persons wishing to purchase stock feed on farm, this seems to be grossly unfair when processors are protected from financial loss from contaminated carcasses by the Department of Primary Industry.

We are deeply concerned regarding the implications that this could have on our grain and meat export markets. We strongly suggest that this matter requires your most urgent attention.

We look forward with anticipation to your reply.

It is signed by the President and Secretary of that organisation. I sincerely hope that the Minister and his officers thoroughly investigate the matter, confer with the Victorian department, and raise the matter with the Agriculture Council meeting with a view to having some uniform proposals drawn up to resolve what is obviously a grave miscarriage of justice and a real problem to the innocent person who purchased the grain.

Mr Lewis: He had a real problem: he went broke.

Mr GUNN: He has been put out of business through no fault of his own. I raise this matter because I am concerned that there be no repeat exercises. Some time ago I raised in the House the problems caused by the Government's decision to sell the Samcor stockyards at Gepps Cross. As I understand the situation, there was no need to dispose of those stockyards. There is sufficient land available to build yards on alternative sites. As I understand it, a feasibility study was conducted into the proposal to build new yards, but the exercise was doomed to failure before it started because one of the conditions was that they use some of the old buildings. They were proposing three-storey sheep yards. Have you ever heard anything so ridiculous in your life? The costs came out at about \$7 million which was beyond the financial resources of any of the producers.

It has been put to me that this matter can be resolved by making the land available: people are prepared to construct stockyards and I would like to refer the Minister to an article which appeared in the *Stock Journal* of 11 August headed 'Stockyard closure to hit farms'. The article states:

A leading South Australian stock agent has bitterly attacked the move to scrap livestock selling at Gepps Cross when the saleyard's State Government lease expires in 1990.

Independent livestock agent Don Lindner, manager of House of Lindner at Gepps Cross, said it looked as though 'the primary producer will have to paddle his own canoe while the rest of the community goes yachting'.

I understand that the Minister, at a deputation, gave Mr Lindner and others a lecture on urban development. They were not particularly impressed with the Minister's lack of knowledge on the subject, or the matters that he was attempting to bring to their attention. They were interested in maintaining a viable market for the producers of South Australia. Their concern was that this would be the first step to closing down Samcor. The Government gets rid of the stockyards and then proceeds to develop and sell off the whole area, because this Government has a philosophy of looking towards the next ballot box and nothing else. Therefore, I would say to the House that grave concern has been expressed to me.

The matter then proceeds a little further. My colleague the member for Light has provided me with an article from the *Bunyip* of Wednesday 24 August headed 'Mallala may get saleyard'. It states:

The Department of Agriculture is investigating the possible relocation of the Gepps Cross saleyards to the Mallala district council area. The Samcor yards at Gepps Cross are being closed down and are to be cleared by 1990. A meeting is to be held today (Wednesday) between representatives of Mallala district council, United Farmers & Stockowners and the department.

At the most recent meeting of Mallala council it was decided to form a subcommittee as the council delegation at the meeting to discuss the proposed relocation.

The District Clerk . . . planning inspector . . . and five councillors will form the delegation. [The clerk] told council the Mallala

council area was being considered for an alternative site because of its convenient location and the ready availability of railway line facilities.

I wonder what the people in the southern part of the State will think when they have to transport their stock up there. My concern is that there is sufficient land available at Gepps Cross to provide for adequate stockyards. We are now talking about sheep yards. What will happen to the cattle yards up there? Will they be the next to go? I understand that the old sheep yards could easily be converted to an area for the sale of sheep and pigs and private funds are available for the conversion. What will happen to the billions of dollars that have been poured into the Samcor operation? I therefore sincerely hope that the Minister will respond to the matters I am raising because it is important.

In conclusion, I would like to refer to a matter about which I spoke last night, and that is the difficulty facing rural producers on Upper Eyre Peninsula and one or two other parts of the State. Unless it rains within the next week, there will be a calamity; there is no other way to describe the situation. No matter how good the farmer's management is, both his financial control and the management of his farm, if it does not rain there is nothing he can do to avoid this calamity. The responses of the Government so far have been quite inadequate and unreasonable, and I call upon the Minister to take stock of the situation and to save these people from this disaster because, if the existing landholders are pushed off their farms, what will happen to the land? Will it stand idly by while a few wheelers and dealers and large entrepreneurs buy up the land? They will not make a better go of it. They will not have three or four generations of experience in managing it. Or will it stand idle? They are the alternatives. The financial institutions at this stage have no hope of getting their money back. The best thing to do is to allow the existing producers to remain on the farms and operate them, and eventually they will trade their way out of trouble if there is a bit of commonsense and goodwill on behalf of the financial institutions, the Government and the department.

A number of circumstances have made life difficult for them, including low commodity prices, high interest rates, changes in taxation arrangements and the effects of the Vegetation Clearance Authority. Some people have had their development rights stolen from them and they have been treated in the most disgraceful fashion by that unrepresentative, unfair and biased group. I call on the Minister for Environment and Planning to remove them and replace them with people who have a bit of compassion, understanding and commonsense. By getting rid of Lange and Black, for a start, responsible conservationists can be placed on the authority and someone who has practical knowledge and understanding can be appointed as chairman. As a primary producer, I am sick of endeavouring to make representations on behalf of people who are hard-working, decent, honest and good Australians and who have been harassed by bureaucracy, red tape and ill-informed fools. I therefore call on the Minister to use a bit of commonsense.

Mr ROBERTSON secured the adjournment of the debate.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION: MEMBER FOR SPENCE

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

Leave granted.

Mr OLSEN: In a personal explanation to the House on 16 August, the honourable member for Spence asked that I

retract certain comments that I made in this House recently. This arises from a speech I made on that same day (16 August) in which I said *inter alia*—

Mr Tyler interjecting:

Mr OLSEN: I will get to that. In that speech I said that the honourable member was shown to have required his ministerial driver to leave the scene of an accident in which his ministerial car badly damaged a private vehicle. In a press statement summarising that speech, the section was inadvertently paraphrased to read that the Minister had instructed his driver in that matter. In his personal explanation, the honourable member sought a retraction of the words 'required' and 'instructed'. The basis of this section of my speech was a statutory declaration that was sworn on 25 May this year by Neil James Arnold of Hicks Hill Road, Cherry Gardens. Mr Arnold declared:

I told Mr Abbott that I thought it was disgusting that a Minister of the Government did not make his driver stop after an accident. Mr Abbott said words to the effect that, 'It wasn't my fault. I wasn't driving.' I said, 'I didn't say you were. You should have made your driver stop.' Mr Abbott then said that his driver had wanted to get Mr Abbott to an appointment and that Mr Abbott had been running late.

In the circumstances, and at the request of the honourable member for Spence, I withdraw those words and apologise to the honourable member for their use.

ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. F.T. BLEVINS (Minister of Health): I move: That the House do now adjourn.

Mr ROBERTSON (Bright): I take this opportunity to select a number of facts and figures from the budget statement and to concentrate particularly on this Government's record in education. It is a marvellous record and is probably unparalleled at present in this State and country, given the Australian economy. People who have perused the budget documents will have noted that a record \$816 million has been expended on the education budget despite the fact that, in the past five years, student numbers in this State have decreased by 20 000. It is expected that in 1989 student numbers will fall by a further 3 000. That means, had the Government maintained the teaching ratios of five years ago, a total of 830 teaching positions could have been dispensed with and it is notable that they have not been. It is also notable that the cost of maintaining those extra 830 positions is of the order of \$28 million a year to South Australian revenues.

It is a fact that teachers recently achieved a 4 per cent second tier pay rise and I, for one, do not begrudge them that. However, it is my understanding that a condition agreed to by the Institute of Teachers in the Industrial Commission at that time was that the Education Department could restructure staffing and organisational arrangements within schools. It seems that these 830 'surplus' teachers could, and in fact will, lead to an immeasurable improvement if the resources that we currently have are reallocated in a proper way. In this budget alone I contend that that is being done, in the sense that we have 20 more primary school language teachers, bringing the total to 110, at a cost this year of \$700 000 to State revenue. It is interesting to note that the program of languages in primary schools has trebled the number of children taught languages other than English in the past five years. I suggest that it will obviously increase even further.

The reallocation of resources has also enabled a further \$1 million to create 17 primary schools with a focus on

behavioural management of students who have difficulties in adopting, and adapting to, normal social norms. In addition, there will be an increase of 10 per cent in assistance by this Government to Government assisted students within our school system. That is in addition to the \$915 000 being spent this year on the existing 40 000 Government assisted students.

The reallocation of resources will also enable a boost in the computer loans scheme which is successfully operating in South Australian schools, particularly primary schools. Finance for the computer loan scheme will be boosted from \$150 000 in the past financial year to \$250 000, bringing to \$1.3 million the total value of computers installed in South Australian schools in the past three years.

Reallocation will also enable \$5.1 million worth of resources to be put into schools in the current financial year on the basis of shared school community facilities. One example of that which is near and dear to my heart is the gymnasium at the new Hallett Cove school. Reallocation of those resources will also enable 100 extra ancillaries to be employed in the system this year at a cost of \$1.7 million. That brings to 300 the total of additional ancillaries employed by the department in the past three years, and bring to 390 the overall total over the six years of the two Bannon Governments.

Also, an additional \$400 000 has been put into this year's budget to mainstream into the State school system children with intellectual disabilities. That is done by a combination of special education teachers, by workshopping the classroom teachers into whose classes those children fit and by providing out-of-classroom learning experiences for those children.

South Australia has produced overall the best student/teacher ratio in Australia. Currently we have a student/teacher ratio of 12.9, and that compares with the Australian average of 14.7. I suppose that we could with some justification, had we followed leads that have been set elsewhere, have fired those 830 teachers. I suppose we could have avoided employing the 390 ancillaries that have been employed in the past six years. We could have followed the example set by the new Fuhrer in New South Wales, Nick Greiner, and fired 2 000 teachers, as he has done.

We could have chosen, as the Greiner Government has done, to charge country children for travel on our school buses of the order of \$2 a day, at a cost of some \$500 per year to country families, many of whom, as members opposite would contend, are in great difficulties. This is an impost that people in the country can do without—an impost that people in country areas of New South Wales will have to face as a result of the policies of the Greiner Government. We could have done all those things, but instead we chose to pour our resources into improving education. We chose to place the resources that we gained by the sale, re-use and reallocation of school properties into education to improve student/teacher ratios.

The problem, however, is that we are not necessarily improving the system in the way in which some people within the Institute of Teachers would like. We are, in fact, restructuring an archaic system in ways which make some people uncomfortable. Instead of allowing teachers to have classes of one or two students in senior high school, as has been the norm in this State for the past 20 years in areas such as Latin and other esoteric areas, we are forcing schools to become better managers of their resources so that those particular excesses no longer exist. Instead of having primary schools with only four, 14, 24 or 34 enrolments, we have been able to redirect those resources into areas of need.

Those areas of need are basically those which I have covered. We have put huge resources into computing, into the languages other than English program, into extending the English as a second language program in our schools, into mainstreaming children with intellectual disabilities, and into producing shared departmental and community facilities. In fact, this has had the effect of opening up schools to parents and the community in general. We have provided books and excursions in increasing numbers for children who are financially disadvantaged.

That may prove to be uncomfortable for teachers who are established in a nice, comfortable routine and a nice, comfortable rut because it means change, but it also means new opportunities for children. It means fairness and equity for children who are poor or intellectually or otherwise disabled, and it means that resources are used in a way which does not quarantine them within the school community but opens them to the wider community. That may, in fact, cause some pain to some elements of SAIT. As I have said earlier, I have no quarrel at all with the 4 per cent, but in restructuring in the way we have it has to be recorded that SAIT has conceded that the department had the right to make structural changes. SAIT, in my view, should be very wary of opposing any changes which will benefit the children of South Australia simply because they happen to make certain teachers within the system feel uncomfortable.

Mr LEWIS (Murray-Mallee): During the course of the remarks I made yesterday I drew attention to a problem which exists in the electorate that I represent and in other country areas very similar in demographic terms and which has been ignored by the Government of the day. I now wish to continue to explain the phenomenon to which I first drew attention yesterday. In the course of the intervening period between when I made those remarks and now, arguments have been put to me as to why that problem exists, and I wish to debunk those arguments now.

The first one put to me was that there are more old people living in rural communities of the kind to which I have referred and that these old people, in fact, have lower incomes and accordingly would cause the average income of all persons to fall and give some explanation of the phenomenon to which I referred. To debunk that theory, I now seek leave to incorporate in *Hansard* a table which will clearly illustrate the truth of this situation, showing the numbers of people below the age of 16 and above the age of 60 as percentages of those communities and, indeed, as numbers in the total population. I assure you that the table is purely statistical.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member gives the usual assurances that the material is statistical?

Mr LEWIS: Yes.

Leave granted.

ANNUAL INCOMES OF ALL PERSONS

District Council	Average			Lowest 85%	
	Average	Median	Average	≤16 (%)	≥60 (%)
(Rural)	\$	\$	\$		
Brown's Well	7 196.08	5 255.90	4 673.10	35.7	8.1
Coonalpyn Downs	8 560.33	8 020.89	4 619.40	31.6	10.0
Karoonda-East Murray	8 177.34	5 667.66	5 223.54	29.9	13.4
Lameroo	9 608.21	7 863.07	6 497.12	27.6	13.8
Meningie	9 468.98	7 601.00	6 588.76	29.8	13.4
Murray Bridge	10 493.00	8 050.17	7 117.23	28.5	15.9
Peake	8 182.66	5 651.00	5 078.85	34.5	8.8
Pinnaroo	8 875.58	7 744.24	6 770.70	27.9	17.3
Ridley	8 715.04	6 747.58	6 027.07	26.9	16.5
Tatiara	10 263.91	8 620.20	7 965.77	29.5	13.1

District Council	Average			Lowest 85%	
	Average	Median	Average	≤16 (%)	≥60 (%)
(Suburban)					
Burnside	14 867.82	12 116.16	8 715.60	19.8	26.3
Henley and Grange	12 387.60	10 188.38	8 748.66	18.3	22.1
Marion	11 515.91	9 830.29	8 457.96	21.6	20.1
Noarlunga	11 105.66	10 244.69	8 294.98	32.6	10.2
Prospect	12 219.94	10 302.01	7 548.74	18.3	22.6
St. Peters	12 239.70	10 273.12	8 980.30	18.9	20.5
Tea Tree Gully	12 813.10	12 148.79	7 082.38	31.2	7.4
Unley	13 616.01	11 735.09	9 664.52	18.4	23.2
Walkerville	14 931.15	12 285.29	10 394.60	18.2	26.2

**Note the 'Not Stated' category was deducted from total number for persons before the average was calculated.

Mr LEWIS: From that table it can be seen that not only are there just a few district council areas with very small percentages of people in the pension income (to whom I have referred as old age pension recipients) in relation to the suburban areas I have used for comparison, but there are also a far greater number of young people who do not earn an income. For instance, in Brown's Well 35.7 per cent of people are below the age of 16.

There are only 8.1 per cent of people above the age of 60. If we were to look, for instance, at Henley and Grange we find that 18.3 per cent—about half the number in Brown's Well—are under 16, and that there are 22.1 per cent above the age of 60. That is at least 2.5 times greater than the number in Brown's Well. Looking at another council such as Peake, we find that the numbers are about the same in country areas. Pinnaroo has 17.3 per cent over 60. The highest proportions of people over the age of 60 in any metropolitan council that I have used in this table are 26.3 in Burnside and 26.2 in Walkerville.

The lowest number in the age group over 60 is in Tea Tree Gully, which is lower than any of the district councils to which I have referred, that is, 7.4 per cent. Under the age of 16, Tea Tree Gully has a number similar to the highest of the district councils to which I have referred—32.6 per cent. It stands out as an exception quite alone from the rest. The average income in Tea Tree Gully is \$12 813.10; the median is \$12 148; and the 85 per cent average, \$7 000. Compare that with Brown's Well, where the average is \$7 196, the median is \$5 255 and the average of the 85 per cent is \$4 600—compared with \$7 082 which is nearly double in Tea Tree Gully.

The answer to the phenomenon to which I referred is not contained there. The truth of the matter is that, if we were to look at the age pension, a single person now gets \$6 242.60 a year, which is actually higher than many rural family incomes. Indeed, if there were more old people in these rural areas it would lift the average annual income of people in those communities. The same applies to supporting parents: if we had more supporting parents or any other pensioners in those district councils to which I have referred, their annual incomes would be higher than the average annual incomes I have detailed. Indeed, they would be higher than the lowest 85 per cent.

That means that young families living in rural South Australia in the areas represented by me and the members for Flinders, Custance (in part) and Eyre are actually receiving less income than pensioners. Families comprising a husband, wife and one or two children get less than a single mother with one child living on the pension. Indeed, if there were more single mothers with one child living on the pension in those localities to which I have referred, the actual average income in those communities would increase as a consequence.

The other matter that I believe further testifies to the truth of what I have been saying is that those communities

have a greater number of young people dependent on household incomes for their sustenance, that is, young people under the age of 16. Both the present Federal Government and Governments in office since the beginning of the 1980s have pursued policies that have further eroded the income positions of those families. For the sake of the record and so that there can be no argument about it, let me point out to the House that a single supporting parent with two children under the age of 13 would be getting \$8 010 a year; with three children, \$9 154; and with one child \$6 866.60.

What a pity it is that we hear the Government bleating about what it calls equity and justice and about spending money on the programs, which it claims to have detailed, to redress the scales of justice in that respect, whereas in fact it is ignoring the plight of those people who are indeed worse off.

This is the kind of thing that the Government needs to bear in mind when it hears members like me claim in this place—those of us who represent people in this situation—that we have a very real crisis in the communities that we represent. The crisis does not find expression in high rates of crime, high rates of drug dependency, high rates of truancy in schools or high rates of dropouts from schools for any other reason—especially in relation to the dropout figures—than that families simply cannot afford to buy the clothes for older children and send them to school. If we do have a higher dropout rate of children at age 15 and 16 compared to the metropolitan area, it is because families cannot afford to send those children to school.

I ask members to bear in mind that the massive success which Paul Keating claims for his successive budgets has in fact been as a consequence not of his budgeting at all but of the increase in the value of wool produced in the rural communities over the past few years and sold overseas. Due to that factor, those communities have not only supported the rest of Australia and redressed the balance of payments problem but they have also borne the brunt of Government bloody-mindedness and indifference to their plight, and this has particularly disadvantaged children who live in those areas.

Mr DUGAN (Adelaide): In recent weeks a major South Australian institution has reached a landmark in its history and development in this city. I want to pay a tribute tonight to that organisation and to its many volunteers who, over the past 25 years, have ensured that many South Australians have been able to benefit from its service: I refer to the twenty-fifth anniversary of Lifeline, the telephone counselling service which, for the past 25 years, has been conducted by the Adelaide Central Mission. In those 25 years, that is, for some 9 200-odd days, that organisation has provided a listening ear for those people who have been in crisis of one sort or another.

At the moment Lifeline is staffed by only four salaried officers but they are ably assisted in their task by another 200 trained volunteers. Each year they take over 30 000 telephone calls from distressed, lonely and worried people and as well they conduct some 4 000 face-to-face interviews. This is indeed a remarkable achievement. It is an achievement that is matched by Lifeline organisations in many other centres around Australia.

The first telephone counselling service run by the mission in fact began in Sydney and was run by the Wesley Central Mission. It was only some three or four months later that a similar service was begun in Adelaide. As I have said, the Lifeline service has now operated in Adelaide for 25 continuous years. It has done so with the support not only of the mission and paid staff but also of volunteers, and indeed

with financial support from the State Government. The work of those volunteers has made somewhat more bearable the lives of those who have wanted to contact the listeners and counsellors on the other end of the telephone at night in times of crisis. Those people have been helped through their periods of crisis, by both the mission itself and other non-government organisations, and by the counsellors being able to refer those people to agencies of Government. They have been able to obtain help, whether they were in financial crisis or suffering from loneliness, or indeed in any other type of crisis situation.

The mission is an agency committed to providing a way out—it is not just offering a handout to South Australians who need help. This allows people to improve their lives in ways that enhance their dignity and self-regard whilst reducing their dependency on welfare services. That comes from the 25th annual report of Lifeline in South Australia. The mission recognises that some community needs can best be served by the special contribution of volunteers who serve the agency and the community as an expression of their concern for their fellow human beings. Lifeline is a mission volunteer service which acknowledges the value, rights and dignity of people who have been assisted by ensuring that help is given for love and not for money.

The mission is a community of people dedicated to helping their fellow man. It is involved not just in the counselling service but in a number of accommodation projects for aged and other people who face particular accommodation needs. They are also involved in an extensive range of financial counselling services, and the Government's contribution to the work of the mission in the past financial year amounted to in excess of \$450 000. That is but one of the non-government organisations that the Government is pleased to support in providing a range of community services.

There is indeed now a partnership between Government and non-government organisations in the delivery of services. Both Government and non-government organisations share a common view about social justice that a civilised society must be caring and compassionate. Indeed, sentiments similar to those expressed in the mission's annual report, and the report on the 25 years of Lifeline, could be found, I suggest, in the social justice strategy released as part of the Government's current budget. In that budget the Premier notes that South Australians deservedly pride themselves on a long tradition of stable humanitarian government, historically at the forefront of social reform. It indicates that the social justice strategy is intended to complement and build on the State's economic development to create an environment within which everyone is able to participate and contribute to the wealth of society.

That social justice strategy—which is long overdue, and which in various stages will redirect substantial amounts of Government revenue to those people most in need—is a statement very much welcomed by people in the non-government welfare sector as indicating in a very unequivocal and straightforward way both the philosophical commitment of the Government to fairness and equity in the distribution of services as well as a financial commitment to the carrying through of those philosophical objectives. More particularly, it demonstrates an ongoing commitment to ensure that money is allocated in subsequent stages over the years to meet the social needs jointly and collectively identified by the Government and non-government sectors.

However, I return to the nature of the work undertaken by Lifeline. From July 1986 to June 1987 the Lifeline telephone service received an average of 2 000 calls a month.

Not unexpectedly, most calls are taken in the evening; in fact, 60 per cent of calls are received between 6 p.m. and 9 a.m. The statistics provided by the service also make very interesting reading. The principal source of income for most of the people who become involved with the service is fixed and is based on a social security benefit, and most are between the ages of 20 to 40 years.

The reasons for calling are even more instructive. Those people with marriage problems and those who are isolated and lonely make up 35 per cent of calls to Lifeline; and those people in an emotional crisis (that is, those who are depressed or who have very low self-esteem often brought about through a lack of work) constitute another 12 per cent. Nearly half of the number we are talking about have,

as their principal cause for reaching out to the person on the other end of the phone, loneliness, a lack of self-esteem brought about by a low income, a lack of work, and difficulty in establishing a home base within which they can feel secure. Similar statistics relate to the number of people who walk into Lifeline for face-to-face counselling. In the time remaining to me, I note the support of the volunteers who, in a non-government organisation—

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

Motion carried.

At 10.12 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday 8 September at 11 a.m.