HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 8 September 1988

The SPEAKER (Hon. J.P. Trainer) took the Chair at 11 a.m. and read prayers.

MERCHANT SHIPPING FLEET

Mr PETERSON (Semaphore): I move:

That this House supports the retention and expansion of the Australian merchant shipping fleet as a vital component of our future development as an island trading nation.

First, I will outline the reasons why we should retain our merchant shipping fleet. As an island nation, we should be a maritime power. Without shipping, there is no other way that the vast majority of our exports and imports can be handled to and from our shores.

Why should Australia not receive the benefit of the transportation of these goods, or should we, as a country, be happy to see freight payments make some foreign ship owner rich while putting Australians out of work? In 1987 nearly $2 200 million was paid to foreign shipping lines and that was money which could have been retained in Australia. Australia is one of the major suppliers of raw materials to a global market. Australia has the world's fifth largest shipping requirement, yet foreign vessels carry 96 per cent by volume of our overseas trade.

To illustrate the attitude of Australians to their own shipping service, I refer to the July/August 1988 edition of the BHP journal *BHP News Review*. I think that the BHP is called 'the big Australian'. Under the heading 'Bumper year for transport', the article states:

BHP Transport has turned in a record year with overall tonnage handled up 40 per cent and revenue up more than $200 million to close on $800 million, General Manager Peter Laver revealed in his 27 June presentation to press and securities analysts.

But the significant fact about that freight charge is explained in the same article, as follows:

Mr Laver said that at any time an average of 120 foreign flag ships are on charter supplementing the 16 vessel BHP fleet.

So, 16 Australian ships are providing jobs to Australian taxpayers, while 120 foreign flag ships carry our cargo. The article continues:

In total more than 400 ships are employed each year, making BHP Transport one of the biggest ship users in the world.

The majority of them are foreign ships. Many of these ships are what are called flag of convenience ships, which are registered in countries where the standard of the ships and the conditions of operation are much lower than in countries like Australia. I was told a story, which I believe to be true because it was supported by other people, that crews on foreign flag of convenience ships sometimes work for their food and cigarettes per day and that is all they are paid. Those are the conditions under which they work. Anyone who supports the use of these ships also supports those conditions.

It is also significant that most of the major maritime disasters have involved ships which have used the flag of convenience registration. That indicates the quality and safety standards on those ships. An illustration of a flag of convenience registration relates to Vanuatu, which is a small Pacific island with over 100 ships registered to fly its flag. The vast majority of those vessels will never go anywhere near Vanuatu and will have nothing to do with the country. How can a small country like Vanuatu control the operations of those ships?

The Hon. H. Allison: Flags of convenience.

Mr PETERSON: That is exactly what I have said: they are flag of convenience ships, which are registered in Vanuatu and which use crews from the Philippines. The crews are given food and cigarettes as their wage, because these ships are trying to compete. If anyone supports the concept of those ships, they support virtual slavery. Those ships earn the freight incomes out of countries like Australia. That income goes from our shores, so no tax is paid to this country and no revenue is received by the people of this country.

Mr Lewis interjecting:

Mr PETERSON: That is a matter of principle, I suppose. As an indicator of the improvement for Australia if more Australian ships were in service, it has been estimated by the Australian National Maritime Association—a group which by no means could be called radical or socialist; and ship-owners are not noted for their largesse—that there would be an improvement of 18 per cent of foreign exchange earnings if Australian vessels were substituted for one foreign tanker, one liner vessel and one dry bulk carrier. Three ships carrying Australian cargo would result in an 18 per cent improvement as estimated by an organisation which is by no means radical.

The main argument used against the Australian fleet relates to cost. Obviously with conditions as I have described to the House, there will always be a differential in the cost in running flag of convenience ships and those of nations that maintain good quality ships with adequately trained and remunerated competent officers and crews. There are some glaring anomalies in our own country with respect to the treatment of industry and the shipping industry in general. The first example relates to the different approaches used for capital investment. This is a case put by Pat Geraghty, the Federal Secretary of the Seamen's Union of Australia and it deals with two companies which decided on major investment. The article states:

Utah, a multinational, approximately 85 per cent overseas owned, bought from overseas a dragline to allow deeper open-cut mining at a cost of approximately $57 million.

Ampol, approximately 85 per cent Australian owned, decided to buy from overseas a 115 000 tonne tanker at a cost of approximately $19 million.

An investment allowance applied generally in Australia in the following terms: 40 per cent from December 1976 to February 1982; 20 per cent from February 1982 to April 1984; and 18 per cent from April 1984 to June 1985.

Utah was allowed a 40 per cent investment allowance and a five-year depreciation period on the investment. The Federal Government—by way of taxation, depreciation and investment policies—favoured the foreign company which, undoubtedly, repatriated its profits offshore, to the tune of over $18 million (investment allowance $12.3 million, depreciation $6.2 million).

Conversely, Ampol, the Australian outfit, was denied the 40 per cent investment allowance because the vessel *Ampol Sarel* was to engage part of the year in the overseas trade, importing Ampol oil from Indonesia to Brisbane, and had a depreciation period of 14 to 16 years apply to the ship. The company was required to pay a further $380 000 in the form of a 2 per cent import duty to bring the ship into Australia. The Australian outfit, whose profit would have remained within Australia, would have recieved support of only $1.9 million. An horrendous comparison when one considers the *Ampol Sarel* was—

- earning freight rates retained in Australia;
- presumably contributing through insurance of ship and cargoes at least partly remaining in Australia;
- employing Australians who may otherwise be on the dole queue;
- through the chain of employment adding to the tax revenue and local investment in general; and
- favourably assisting the balance of payment as against the adverse impact of the foreign multi-national.

Undoubtedly, that $57 million purchase added to Utah's value in the BHP takeover price and, remember, all of that money went out of Australia to the United States, with further adverse impact on our balance of payments. Ironically, part of that sale was the nation's natural coal resources held on lease by Utah and sold

back to another predominant Australian company, BHP—now if shipping could get a deal like that!

Let us take the discrimination further: For $57 million we could have, at that time, built three large bulk carriers suitable for the coal export trade; they would have generated substantial employment and the benefits earlier referred to.

Operating costs of the vessels through the capital component of the daily charter rate would be substantially reduced by the amount equivalent to the investment allowance and reduced depreciation. Savings on the capital component would equate to as much as $4 000 per day on a five-year charter.

CIF [a type of freight charge] sales would extend the benefit, freight rates, insurance, taxation, including corporate tax on profits and disposable income remaining in Australia. The vessels's written-down value is a lower starting point in renegotiation of further contracts on a commercial basis. The substantial devaluation of the Australian dollar has a further favourable impact on Australian crew costs.

We could, today, have the nucleus of a satisfactory Australian shipping fleet had the same conditions applied to shipping as Governments gave to other industries, including foreign companies. Such ships would have formed a part of a flexible shipping fleet, playing an effective role in assisting Australia's balance of payment.

A major argument that has also been put forward over the years relates to crew costs on Australian vessels. There is a chart available (which I have not as yet had time to get) which shows that the costs of Australian crews are at about 16 on a world comparison. Let us see what the shipowners' representative has to say.

The Hon. J.L. Cashmore interjecting:

Mr PETERSON: I will get the chart for you. In the *Weekend Australian* of 23 January 1988, Mr Lachlan-Payne (who I believe is the former Chief Executive of the ANMA) said:

Crews accounted for only 14 per cent of the average operating costs of Australian ships while more than half the freight rates paid went to paying port authority and stevedoring charges.

He is in the shipowners' pocket; he is employed by them; he represents them; and he says that the cost of crews represents only 14 per cent of operating costs. The article continues:

'Australian shipping has lifted its game almost certainly more in terms of productivity than any other industry in Australia,' he said. Further reductions in crew numbers and better productivity were possible on new ships.

So there we have a representative of the shipowners saying that crew costs represent 14 per cent of operating costs and that further savings are possible. This matter has been drawn to the attention of the Federal Government and in 1985 a committee called the Australian Maritime Industry Mission was set up to study developments in manpower and training of seagoing personnel, again with an idea of rationalising crew numbers, sharing duties and making it more economical. The terms of reference for that committee were as follows:

The mission is to examine the needs of the maritime industry in the 1990s against developments which have taken place, or are intended, in maritime nations with similar standards of living to Australia.

Let us not lose sight of the fact that other nations with at least our living standards or, better, pay their crews more and still have ships on the sea. The terms of reference continue:

. . . to analyse the processes of implementation and to interpret their relevance to Australian circumstances. The group will have particular regard to:

- technological developments in the design and construction of ships as they affect manpower and training, together with equipment and its reliability;

That means better handling of ships, fewer crew, more mechanisation, more computerisation and better cargo handling. The terms of reference continue:

- maintenance and repair practices as they affect manpower and training;
- relationships between shipboard and shore based management;
- allocation of responsibilities and organisation within ships;

Again there is reference to rationalisation of crews, crew duties and functions and interaction. The terms of reference cover:

- Shipboard operational procedures and personnel organisation in operation, maintenance and servicing areas, including safety practices;
- human resource development including, for example, levels of each category envisaged, entrance requirements, single or multistreams, common training, degree of specialisation, career paths opportunities and social integration;

These are all things which are needed and which we can take for granted in general industry. We need this involvement of people—worker participation and interchange of ideas between worker and management. Now we will bring it in in this area.

The terms of reference of the committee refer to maritime training arrangements. The Launceston Maritime College copes with that. The committee also considered the cost benefits of the different directions chosen by countries visited. Developments were studied in Japan, the United States of America, Norway, Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The committee's conclusions and findings were as follows:

1. The Australian shipping industry has been involved in a process of continuous change and the use of innovative technology.

That is certainly happening. Australian ships have converted from coal to gas, using gas turbines. If more ships were built, more technology could be applied. The report continued:

2. Over the years Australian shipping has shown a willingness to adopt and invest in new technology with many of the most recent developments incorporated in the industry's modern vessels.

The more new ships we build, the more modern technology that can be put into them. The committee's findings continued:

3. If Australia wishes, however, to maintain an efficient shipping industry and to further expand into the international trades it will need to adopt the policies of other developed nations which have successfully used the benefits of high technology, together with the employment of better educated and trained crews.

With flag of convenience ships, using old ships, less technology, and with the price of crews down, the cost of running ships is minimised. The report continued:

4. With smaller crews it was found that new training and retraining programs for seafarers become necessary. There are elements of commonality of marine training that can be developed at an early stage giving all seafarers the opportunity to reach a career level that fulfils the ambition of the individual and provides the ability to progress to the most senior levels on board ship.

There are mixed functions on overseas ships where the division between deck and engine room crews has been taken away. Another finding was:

5. Indications are that such a course of action could facilitate the removal of social and operational barriers on board ship. With these crews, a balanced workload and integrated team approach is necessary for effective operations and experience has shown that existing seafarers can be retrained to man the ships of the future.

Crews are being retrained and seamen are going to college for retraining. The report continued:

6. A number of countries visited have taken steps to develop education and training systems specific to ratings in order to operate integrated crews or ship mechanic systems to permit progress to officer rank. In some countries semi-integration of officers has been achieved.

7. In the countries visited, the maintenance of an efficient indigenous industry—

their own ships carrying their own cargo working their own people—

able to take an active part in the nation's commercial life, is seen as a most important principle of the national economy as well as a necessary adjunct to its defence system.

I made that point recently in another speech. In peacetime, we do not think much about that but, in times of crisis, an island nation, particularly, needs its own merchant fleet and its own ships. Another conclusion was:

8. In all cases the shipping industries were facing severe problems in maintaining market share and their Governments provide assistance in a number of forms, both direct and indirect.

Earlier I gave an example of the tax position in this country, where no assistance is given. Road tax must be paid on the fuel used on Australian ships bunkering in Australia although it is not charged on overseas ships bunkering in Australia. Why should a shipowner pay for road tax, full tote odds on his fuel? His ship will not run along the road. No cost at all is involved. The report continued:

9. Governments have recognised the need for cooperation with shipowners and unions in bringing about change, and the employment of a consultative process to work towards the improvement of the industry.

Again, consultation is taking place and this committee was an example of that. Another finding was as follows:

10. In all countries visited, it was recognised that catering is an important part of a ship's operation and the well-being of its crew. Overseas experience confirms that catering in modern vessels needs to be commensurate with the type of ship, and standard of living of the country concerned. Catering standards and training should provide for these principles.

That is a simple principle. People at Moomba are not expected to eat fritz sandwiches at every meal. They are catered for. Why should people at sea be any different? I have seen a flag of convenience ship get a crate of bananas to feed the crew and that was all there was. The captain could not contact the owners of the ship, he had no money and fed the crew on nothing. That was some years ago, but I have seen it happen. I have seen ships so rusted that you could see through the decks because of the rust holes. I have seen the davits fall off ships because of rust. Those are the conditions under which people worked; they would make Dickens' times look like luxury in the focsles of ships. I refer to point 11:

Results of studies into the incidence of stress in vessels operating with reduced manning were either not available, were inconclusive or were not yet complete.

They are studying the changes and their effect upon crews. Point 12 is as follows:

In moving to achieve lower mannings it would be necessary to take into account and monitor any effect on crew health.

That is not unusual, either. That is used in general industry to look at the stress that changing circumstances bring upon workers. Point 13 is as follows:

It is now appropriate to take up the Crawford recommendation that taxation of shipping should be reviewed in the event of changes to the tax system.

Again, that is the point that I made earlier about the taxation system making a differential between types of investment.

Because I know that other people want to speak in this debate, in summary I make the following points. I think that they encapsulate the whole situation. Australian crews accounted for only 14 per cent of average operating costs while more than half the freight rates paid went to paying the port authorities (I said this just the other night), such as our Marine and Harbors Department and stevedoring costs. The Australian Maritime Industry Development Committee system means that ship costs are in line with those of other OECD countries and, in fact, an Australian vessel with 21 men would be less costly than 16 men on a Japanese ship. That is not my quote, it is taken from the *Daily Commercial News* of 1 July 1987. That newspaper researched the matter and made that point.

MIDC manned ships will create crews who work flexibly and eliminate demarcation disputes. Demarcation has always been a problem with mixed complexion crews. They are attempting to move that away. For instance, five years ago there were seven unions at sea; today, with the success of amalgamation and the more recent Seamen's Union and marine stewards amalgamation, we have only three unions on Australian ships, with the real likelihood of two, eventually leading to a single seagoing union. So, there will be no demarcation barriers aboard ships.

Industrial action in the industry has seen a dramatic reduction in ship days lost from 1 593 in 1982 to 14 in 1986. In that respect I refer to the *Weekend Australia* of 23 January 1988. They are not my words; they are theirs. Crew sizes were reduced by one-third between the 1960s and the 1980s, and that trend is continuing. With the modernisation of ships and the integration of crews, most ships will have fewer than 20 crew members by the end of the century.

Australian seamen pay taxes and spend wages in this country, unlike foreign seamen where the money goes out of the country. The reliance on foreign flag vessels to the extent of 96 per cent for our export and import trade has had a disastrous effect on our trade deficit, in 1980 equalling $2 182 million and still growing. Again, that money goes out of the country every year. If Australia had more shipping in Australian hands the trade deficit would be reduced and valuable foreign exchange earned through trade services.

I want to preface the next point by saying that there is talk of deregulating the Australian coastal trade and, if the Australian coastal provisions of the Navigation Act were deregulated to allow cheap foreign shipping to carry coastal cargo, the effect could easily be that 4 000 to 5 000 Australian seamen would lose their jobs and be on the dole. Where do ex-seamen get jobs? We have one in this House, but there are not too many. There would be a loss of $170 million to $200 million in wages and the corresponding tax payments would be lost to the country. A further 500 jobs in related industries, for example, ship repairs, commodoring supplies and all the other ancillary things that go with ships, could be lost. Certainly, some industries in Port Adelaide would go to the wall if we did not have this business.

Using foreign shipping along the Australian coast is no different from importing guest workers to work in Australian factories alongside Australians whose wages are a reflection of the standard of living in this country, not that of a Third World country. What would happen if we imported people to work in the Ansett Gateway? We have waiters and stewards working there, but what would happen if we brought someone from a Third World country to work alongside them serving food and cigarettes? How long would that last? One does not accept it there. Why should we accept it here?

The Australian Government, seagoing unions and employers have developed industry strategies that will meet technological change in the industry on an international scale. That is happening across the world. I referred to the countries that I visited. The pattern there was to rationalise, train, and bring more skills and abilities to the people in the industry; that is happening here. The Australian Government needs to develop the same industry incentives for the shipping industry as it did for the car and steel industries; as this applies also to the coal industry, according to the example that I gave earlier.

Until the Ships (Capital Grants) Act 1986 was introduced coastal shipping received no subsidies at all. The overall recovery of costs for rail is 66 per cent, leaving one-third of the country's system being subsidised. This type of subsidy disadvantages coastal shipping. This is an example of which I am aware, because I was working on the waterfront at the time. In the 1970s three cellular container ships trading competitively between Western Australia and the Eastern States were put out of business by rail subsidisation. Within one week of the closing of the sea service, the railroad rate went up by 30 per cent: just like that, in one week.

Large road freight of the type that competes with rail and shipping has subsidies to the tune of 6 per cent to 27 per cent. Added to the subsidy that is given to the road operator, the ship owner pays the fuel excise for the upkeep of roads that he does not use. The Australian National Line, the nation's carrier and at one time the largest coastal ship operator, has only one coastal vessel left. Anyone who knows shipping can remember back over the years to the River Line which was around for years, and the vast fleets of commercial ships that we had. The ANL needs a capital injection to rebuild an efficient fleet; otherwise, it will become part of the shopping list for the privatisation basket. That is true: we are getting rid of it.

Over the years we have as a nation allowed our Australian merchant ships to stagger and wither; they are almost gone. If we are not careful, we will leave ourselves in the hands of overseas operators. I ask for all members' support for the retention and expansion of the Australian merchant shipping fleet.

Mr LEWIS (Murray-Mallee): I applaud the thoroughness with which the member for Semaphore has done his research and the sincerity with which he has put the information before the House in support of his proposition. However, I cannot agree with his perception that it is a valid case. People fondly and simply think that putting Australian-owned vessels with Australian crews on the Australian coastal shipping service to carry Australian exports and imports into and out of this country will help our balance of payment position. Regrettably, however, market forces would destroy that argument immediately, because the cost of doing so would be so great as to make it impossible for us to export. The destruction to our economy would result in our being unable to meet the costs of imports, so we would cease to trade. This is a deathbed repentance of the shipowners and seamen's unions that have been involved in the destruction of the industry. I seek leave to conclude my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

NORTHFIELD RESEARCH CENTRE

Mr GUNN (Eyre): I move:

That this House strongly opposes the Government's decision to disrupt the research program at Northfield Research Centre without adequate consultation with industry including the PSA and, further, calls on the Government to reconsider its hasty and ill-conceived decision immediately.

The Northfield Research Centre opened in 1964. It is the Department of Agriculture's single greatest concentration of research resources. The centre fills a pivot role in agricultural research across a broad spectrum of disciplines. The Government's decision to transfer the Northfield Research Centre to Roseworthy will seriously jeopardise the Department of Agriculture's research program and the move will fragment South Australia's agricultural research effort. The Government would be wasting taxpayers' funds and endangering its agricultural research capacity if it persisted with its relocation decision. The land should remain open space and a resource for agricultural research. It is not in the long-term interests of urban living to have every hectare of land in Adelaide crammed with housing. The Government has a responsibility to maximise the welfare of the community in every decision it makes.

I will attempt to explain to the House the background of the Northfield Research Centre. The concept of a central agricultural research facility for South Australia's Department of Agriculture first became feasible with the passage of the Wheat Tax Act in 1957. This was followed by an offer in 1958 from the Wheat Research Committee of South Australia to contribute towards the construction of a wheat research laboratory to be used in perpetuity by all South Australian Governments.

The Northfield farm was taken over by the Department of Agriculture in 1963. The laboratory, built at a cost of £157 000, of which the Wheat Industry Research Committee of South Australia contributed £44 500, and the Wheat Research Council £8 000, was occupied in 1964. The major initiative was to undertake more extensive research into the dairy industry. 1966 saw the development of facilities for producing virus-indexed planting material for horticultural crops.

In 1966, breeding of annual medics commenced. This was followed by the erection of appropriate glasshouses and storage shed facilities, partly funded by the Wheat Research Council and the South Australian Wheat Research Committee. This was the start of a major expansion in pasture research involving plant nutrition, lucerne breeding, research into pasture seed production and the development of better pasture establishment techniques. Three more glasshouses were constructed in this phase with money provided by the Wool and Meat Research Funds. Pig research commenced in 1970 and additional facilities were erected in 1982 which provided the Centre for Pig Physiological Research with its capability of 'state of the art' genetic engineering. Another new initiative was made possible in 1974 with the commissioning of the Hector Orchard Glasshouse and Potting Shed Complex, funded partly by the Meat Research Fund, and erected to enable an expansion of weed research.

A research cool store for fruit and vegetable storage research enabled many research activities involved in increasing the value of horticultural produce post-harvest and resulting in the consumer being able to purchase high quality fruit and vegetables in most seasons. The Commonwealth Government funded the construction of four quarantine glasshouses and these, together with a supporting laboratory and service facilities, enabled the expanding demands for servicing imported plant material to be satisfied.

The next major expansion of facilities and scope of work took place following the invasion of the spotted alfalfa aphid in 1977. Six new greenhouses for work involved in breeding aphid parasites and breeding aphid resistant medics and lucernes were constructed, mainly with special State grants for unemployment relief and for aphid control by the Commonwealth Government.

With the success attained in the plant introduction and medic and lucerne breeding programs, Northfield received national recognition and was designated the National Medicago Genetic Resource Centre. This designation allowed Commonwealth money to become available for the erection of temperature-controlled seed storage facilities. These have subsequently been upgraded with a new working seed store

and a low temperature store which will enable seed to remain viable for many decades.

A major new glasshouse services building was erected in 1983. It is used for the production of a large quantity of steam-sterilised soil, and it also produces demineralised water for nutrition work. There has also been a progressive erection of storage sheds to house machinery and trucks which transport to field sites. There has been a considerable upgrading and refurbishing of laboratories to provide better entomological and analytical laboratories or office space for administration staff and rooms for the expanding number of computers required to handle modern research.

Biological control in the Department of Agriculture, until recent years, depended on the CSIRO in Canberra to undertake the initial introduction of parasites through quarantine. The insect quarantine facility now available at Northfield permits direct introduction of parasites into South Australia. This is currently in use to build up stocks of parasites of the black Portuguese millipede. The most recent significant new development has been the recruitment of the ornamental horticultural and supporting staff. This unit is servicing a rapidly developing ornamental horticultural trade, including the export to Japan of the State's flower, the Sturt's desert pea.

The most recent major new facilities have involved the erection of a large modern glasshouse and a major bird-proof enclosure for use for plant breeding, supported by the installation of an extensive underground water system, which will enable a large area to be serviced by irrigation facilities. These developments are catering for the steadily expanding needs of the national medic lucerne and pea breeding programs, and South Australia's oat breeding programs. These developments were made possible by a $750 000 grant for unemployment relief.

South Australia has a high dependence on the rural economy. As to the value of South Australian rural production to the South Australian economy, for the average of the period 1977-87, gross value of agricultural production was $1 382 million. Agriculture gross domestic product as a percentage of goods produced in South Australia was 23.3 per cent.

A large amount of the investment at Northfield has been provided by industry. Industry contributes approximately $2.75 million a year to the Northfield Research Centre. Grants are also made by agricultural firms for specific projects. The Government's decision will severely hamper the Department of Agriculture's ability to attract grants and recruit the best researchers and technical staff.

The Wheat and Barley Research Committees for South Australia provide financial support for field crop research in this State. For the financial year 1988-89, the Wheat Research Committee will provide a total of $1.625 million for research, of which the South Australian Department of Agriculture will receive approximately $825 396, or approximately 50 per cent of the total budget. Of this allocation, approximately $436 000 is for projects supervised and operated from the Northfield Research Centre.

The Barley Research Committee, for the financial year 1988-89, will provide a total of $1.141 million for research, of which the Department of Agriculture will receive $615 000 (54 per cent of the total budget). Approximately $205 000 is for projects supervised and operated from the Northfield Research Centre.

The research committees have a statutory obligation to fund research on a project basis and cannot favour or discriminate between institutions. It is obvious that, if trust-funded staff are disadvantaged during the relocation process, or resign from the department, both committees will have difficulty in continuing to provide financial support for those projects based on merit. This may have implications for the funding of the Department of Agriculture and ramifications for the South Australian economy.

The Government is endangering the entire agricultural research program at Northfield, including the possible loss of vital human capital, which is costly to develop and very difficult to replace. The planned move has already caused enormous morale problems, and the State and its primary industry risk losing valuable senior staff. Any loss of staff would have a severe impact on the team approach to research. The efficiency of these teams is largely dependent on maintaining the necessary levels of skill and expertise. Not only will the Government be faced with the human costs of relocation but also, by necessity, it will be faced with the physical costs of relocating and housing the staff.

A detailed analysis of the team-orientated programs which provide a valuable contribution to the South Australian economy reveals that the costs of relocating to Roseworthy are likely to be far greater than the Government has estimated. The Roseworthy decision may have been based on a lack of precise information concerning the exact nature of the research processes which are undertaken at Northfield.

A detailed examination of the specific research work processes at Northfield yields important insights into the manner in which research is performed, the methods of training and developing essential staff, the crucial reliance of each research team on maintaining a critical mass of skilled staff, the difficulty of short-term replacement of lost staff, and the contributions of this team-orientated research to the South Australian economy.

An appreciation of these factors leads to the unqualified conclusion that the costs to the South Australian economy of the Roseworthy decision, in research terms particularly, will be great and will in all likelihood exceed the expectations of the Government. There is a real danger that the department's research arm will become non-viable, with many programs being terminated completely.

The loss of the research and subsequent loss of industry funding would be disastrous to the rural economy and the South Australian community in general. Individual research programs, including plant breeding activities, would be seriously disrupted by relocation. The medic program employs nine full-time staff, and indications suggest that the team would face fatal staff losses if the program was relocated. At best, the time necessary to restart the work at Roseworthy would be around four years. The contribution that the medic-based pastures make to the South Australian economy is estimated in gross terms to be in excess of $100 million per annum.

The pea program employs four full-time staff and is also likely to face large-scale losses of critical human capital. The project would require at least five years to re-establish itself once the difficult process of finding new staff was achieved. The gross value of the field pea production to South Australia is approximately $30 million per annum. The lucerne and oats breeding programs would likely be curtailed. They support an industry that contributes in excess of $30 million per annum and $20 million per annum respectively to the local economy. The contributions from these programs would also impact on the other States because the units have national status. The program terminations which are likely to follow the relocation would not only result in lost funding to the specific program but may also jeopardise funding from industry to other South Australian Department of Agriculture research projects.

Contributions from non-State agencies towards the building facilities at Northfield have gone towards the dairy research centre, the plant quarantine, plant improvement/virology, the Northfield pig research unit and the laboratories. The estimated replacement value for these alone was $3 091 000 at January 1987. The cost of one large glasshouse in 1971 was $21 000 (plant improvement/virology), and rose to $250 000 (plant quarantine) in 1986.

In demolishing the Northfield buildings and facilities, the Government is then committed to replace all of these facilities at Roseworthy. An estimate of the value is as follows:

1. Field crops research centre plus per cent inflation (five years) $11 million
2. Rehouse all existing Northfield staff $ 6 million
3. Construction of 20 glasshouses at $250 000 each $ 5 million
4. Construction of a glasshouse service building $350 000
5. Construction of the workshop and shed $ 1 million
6. Construction of a quarantine facility $ 2.5 million
7. Construction of irrigation equipment, bird cage, experimental for field sites $ 1.5 million
8. Construction of roads and services $ 1 million

Total: $28 350 000

Hard won research facilities at Northfield will be expensive if replaced at other sites. The facilities at Northfield have been built with the support from rural industry trust funds, and the funds are unlikely to donate money to replace the buildings, leaving the Government to bear the full cost of re-establishment. The following table highlights the importance of industry-based funding to the research program currently undertaken at Northfield. I seek leave to incorporate in *Hansard* a statistical table explaining those facts.

The SPEAKER: Will the honourable member assure me that it is purely statistical?

Mr GUNN: Yes, Mr Speaker.

Leave granted.

NORTHFIELD RESEARCH PROGRAM FUNDING

Section	Trust fund allocation % total	Trust fund staff Research	Trust fund staff Support	State staff Research	State staff Support	Total staff
Genetic resources	20.9	0	16	6	1	23
Plant pathology	19.7	6	9	2	1	18
Entomology	2.5	0	2	5	3	10
Weed science	5.8	1	4	3	1	9
Farming systems	15.3	3	7	5	2	17
Plant nutrition	7.4	2	1	6	5	14
Soil conservation	20.7	12	4	10	2	28
Horticulture	3.6	0	0.6	5	3	8.6
Control authority	3.4	1	1	3	5	10
Travel grants	0.7					
Total	100.0	25	44.6	45	23	137.6

Mr GUNN: A report by the Public Service Association states that nearly $6 million could be saved by the Government if it dropped its plan to move Northfield Research Centre and developed residential land around the existing research facility. The report also states that most of the demolished research facility would have to be rebuilt at Roseworthy and other sites at a replacement cost of at least $23 million. But the parcel of land on which the research centre is now located would realise only $17.8 million it it was released for housing. The proposed relocation seriously threatens the future efficiency of the State's agricultural research capacity, and serious questions have been raised about the financial viability of the Government's decision.

Northfield can be retained on its present site and co-exist with any future residential plans for the area. The operational facilities and sufficient land for research, breeding and laboratory facilities should be retained by the Department of Agriculture at Northfield. It should be kept for a mixture of open space recreation, second-generation parklands and appropriate housing development.

This arrangement would not only prevent the massive dislocation and subsequent resignations of valuable research staff but also save South Australian taxpayers considerable funds. A review of research centres was conducted by a working party of the Research Policy Advisory Committee of the Department of Agriculture in 1983. The departmental charter was as follows:

> To conduct research into the biological, physical, social and economic aspects existing and potential agricultural industries and improve the quality and efficiency of production and marketing.

Consequently, research in Sagric is mainly of an applied nature and is conducted in the laboratory in 'controlled conditions' (such as growth cabinets, glasshouses and animal houses) in simulated field conditions (such as glasshouses, animal houses and small field plots) or in full-scale farm conditions.

Applied agricultural research is typically a progression from experiments with carefully controlled environmental conditions to successively larger experiments which ultimately incorporate the complex environmental conditions encountered in commmercial agriculture. The sites at which these experiments are conducted thus represent a sequence of stages in the application of research results. The working party agreed that a central group of research staff should be located in the divisions of the department, working on specific industry problems across the regions. This need is provided for by the Northfield Research Laboratories.

The research centre at Northfield is the largest Department of Agriculture research facility in the State, and research is carried out on a range of disciplines, including plant breeding, crop nutrition, horticulture and entomology. Some recent research advances made by units proposed to be relocated are as follows:

Plant Breeding:
- Pea varieties, Abna, Wirrega;
- Oat varieties, Echidna, Dolphin, Wallaroo;
- Breeding of an aphid resistant Harbinger medic;
- Release of paraggio barrel medic:
- Lucerne varieties, Springfield, Wakefield, Sheffield, Hunterfield;
- Future release of lucerne varieties with uniquely superior insect and disease resistance;

Discovery of mildew-immune pea line;
Discovery of very high yielding lentil cultivar.
Plant Pathology:
Control of grapevine downy mildew and root rots with phosphorous acid;
Development of annual ryegrass toxicity kits;
Breeding for stem and strip rust resistance in wheat.
Entomology:
Biological control of Portuguese millipedes;
Control strategies for pea weevil in export peas;
Control strategies for white snail in export barley.
Weed science:
New herbicides for controlling brome and sand fescue in cereals;
Strategic herbicides to prevent seed set of Calomba Daisy;
Herbicide screening over crops and pastures.
Soil and Water Conservation:
The findings of the long-term Tarlee and Halbury rotation trials;
Quantification of soil erosion losses on crop yield.
Plant nutrition:
Development of modern plant tests for diagnosing phosphorous deficients, nitrogen, manganese, zinc, copper and potassium deficiencies.
Pig Research:
Cooperative research to develop genetically engineered vaccines.
Horticulture:
Marketing of Sturt desert pea to Japan;
Development and extension of cold storage facilities and conditions;
Nutrition program to maximise yield and storage life of onions and other horticultural products.

The predominant concern is the harm that will be done to work as a result of the move. The Government expects a net profit of between $5 million and $15 million from the sale, depending on the costs of relocating the laboratories at Roseworthy. The decision will negate the asset which the State possesses in Northfield's national and international scientific reputation.

The move to Roseworthy would dislocate the research effort in many ways, with reduced access to biometricians, library facilities and other researchers, particularly in regard to Waite and CSIRO. Attendance at technical services and delivery and repairs to essential equipment would cost more in terms of time and money. We support the upgrading of facilities at Roseworthy Agricultural College and also the continuing arrangements for research and development at the Waite Institute.

The findings of a preliminary evaluation prepared for the Public Service Association by William Mitchell (Flinders University, 1988) was the basis of a Government decision to relocate the Northfield Research Centre at Roseworthy. To redevelop the land at Northfield for residential purposes is not supportable by the publicly available evidence. Their option proposes that the existing research facilities be rationalised and approximately 60 hectares would be sufficient for the Northfield centre to retain its viability and continue to contribute significant benefits to the South Australian economy. At the same time, it would leave 200 hectares free for the Government to develop as residential.

The estimated total land area at Northfield is 261 hectares and would be valued at $78.5 million. The total value of buildings would be approximately $30.5 million. The total value of the land that is retained to maintain ongoing operations at the centre and to develop on site the field crops improvement centre is around $17.5 million and the buildings $23.5 million. The value of the land is less than the value of the buildings which implied the Government would be better off in net terms if it maintained the research centre at Northfield on the location and sold the rest of the land for residential purposes.

It is stated by the Government that a period of five years is expected to elapse before the full residential development is prepared and sales revenue received. In the meantime, the Government would be committed to funding relocation, rebuilding and land improvement expenses. The analysis has assumed that the salvage value of the buildings currently at Northfield is negligible. Linking the future of the South Australian agricultural programs at Northfield with the uncertain future at Roseworthy is likely to have a very detrimental effect on the agricultural research effort of the Government. The Liberal Party supports the upgrading of facilities at Roseworthy and the preferred option is to maintain research programs at the Northfield site. Sufficient land should be retained for operation facilities and for research and breeding, with the existing laboratories and associated facilities maintained.

There is one other matter to which the Minister of Agriculture and the Government should give urgent consideration, that is, the request of the Northfield School Council for an allocation of some of the land to extend the school's agricultural studies courses, and I quote from a letter from the high school council of 7 July 1988:

> Current agriculture activities within the school include, for example, horticulture, animal husbandry, viticulture, poultry and produce production as specific aids to curricular studies. It is anticipated that the additional land of approximately 4.4 hectares would enable the inclusion of broad acre and cereal production studies, at least, within our curriculum as well. In addition, Northfield High School hosts the Australian Sheep Dog Trials each year. While Smithfield, Gawler and Kapunda also provide some agriculture studies, Urrbrae and Northfield High are the only schools within the inner metropolitan area which provide this service. While we realise that our courses will never compare with those of Urrbrae's, we believe we have the potential to do better than we are at present if we can increase our facilities; and indeed perhaps we should do so to provide, on the northern side of the city, an opportunity which is so richly available at Urrbrae on the southern side.

The Liberal Party would secure the title over the land which we believe should remain part of an agricultural research complex so that future Governments with similar vandalistic instincts as the Bannon Government will be unable to sell it. If this Government had any vision for the future, was farsighted or had any sense of vision beyond the next ballot box, it would not have made such a reckless, short-sighted decision, that is, to dispose of all the land at Northfield.

I believe that the community at large greatly appreciates the great foresight of Peter Waite when he dedicated, for all time, the land at the Waite Research Centre. If this Government was at all farsighted, it would entrench for future generations a fuller concept in the northern suburbs. Anyone who drives through the Waite-Urrbrae area is impressed with this beautiful part of Adelaide. People in the northern suburbs—particularly the future generations—are entitled to have a similar facility preserved for their benefit and enjoyment. The Liberal Party will do everything in its power to make sure that that concept is brought into reality. We believe urgent consideration should be given to a special role for the Northfield High School. I commend the motion to the House and look forward to the support of all members.

Mr De LAINE secured the adjournment of the debate.

STATUTORY AUTHORITIES REVIEW BILL

Mr GUNN (Eyre) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to provide for the establishment of a committee of the Legislative Council to be entitled the Statutory Authorities Review Committee; to provide for the review of certain statutory authorities by the committee and for other related purposes. Read a first time.

Mr GUNN: I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

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

Leave granted.

Explanation of Bill

There are approximately 278 statutory authorities operating in this State. In a modern parliamentary democracy it is essential that the Parliament takes an active role in examining the operations of statutory authorities. The only effective and efficient way this can be carried out is by having an appropriate committee system to examine and report to the Parliament, therefore, informing all members of what is taking place in these particular authorities. Many of them have not been examined by the Government or Parliament since they were established. I believe that when they were originally set up, there would have been very good reasons, but some of them may no longer be required and some may be carrying out functions that are now obsolete and may only need their terms of reference altered to be more in tune with today's community.

It is essential in a parliamentary democracy that the members are aware of what is taking place in the Government and the only way this can be achieved is to have a number of committees. The Public Works Committee plays an important role although there is always room for improvement. The same could be said for the Subordinate Legislation Committee. The Public Accounts Committee, for example, has a fine record as it is important for past action to be examined and reported to Parliament.

The design of such reporting should not embarrass or make life difficult for the Government, but make constructive inquiries, examinations and recommendations which will benefit the Government and its citizens. I believe a committee of this nature will be of great assistance to the Government and should not be seen as a committee to annoy, harass or embarrass the Government. From my experience as a member of Parliament, every piece of legislation that has ever been referred to a select committee has been improved.

The Federal Parliament is currently moving towards an improved committee system. I therefore believe members of the South Australian Parliament will be carrying out a most productive and effective role on behalf of the citizens of this State by investing more of their time in a more effective committee system.

Many of these authorities absorb large amounts of money in providing facilities that are expensive in order to conduct effective inquiries which influence the lives of citizens. It is important that Government resources are spent in the most effective and efficient manner and this review will make sure that those sentiments are carried out.

The object of the Bill is to establish a committee of review for statutory authorities, to ensure that Government corporations, commissions and trusts are reassessed by a parliamentary committee requiring them to justify their continued existence and effectiveness. Before deciding on this approach to a statutory authority review process, a detailed investigation of interstate and overseas experience was undertaken; also, it was necessary to clarify what is a statutory authority and what is the extent of their operations.

I am concerned at the apparent large increase in the number of authorities in South Australia in the past 15 years. There are now approximately 278 statutory authorities operating in this State. Because of the autonomous nature of these authorities there did not seem to be adequate parliamentary scrutiny over their borrowings, annual budgets, or overall programs. Increasing indebtedness of statutory authorities and the apparent lack of accountability to Parliament and in some instances the Government itself, clearly indicates that a statutory authorities review committee would play a vital role in examining and evaluating their functions.

During its term in office the Tonkin Government worked on improving the accountability of statutory authorities and reviewing the operations of other authorities. During that time the Government, through the combined efforts of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (Research Branch and Deregulation Unit) and the Public Service Board, with the cooperation of other departments:

1. Compiled a comprehensive list of statutory authorities categorised into those with separate corporate status and those without separate corporate status, and also categorised the authorities by Act of Parliament and responsible ministerial portfolios.

2. Surveyed during early 1980, by way of questionnaire, all authorities to provide information on board membership and fees paid, financial matters, including borrowings enabling legislation, objectives and achievements, and annual reporting.

3. Undertook comprehensive reviews of fees payable to board members with particular reference to public servants serving on boards.

4. Established a semi-governmental borrowings committee to review all requests for borrowings and to consolidate the Government's borrowing program for presentation to Cabinet for smaller authorities.

5. Undertook major reviews of some statutory authorities in accordance with stated Government policy to either wind up or restructure the authority.

The success of that work is clearly demonstrated by the action taken and discussions implemented. Action taken includes:

1. The abolition or restructuring of the following statutory authorities: Monarto Development Commission, South Australian Land Commission, South Australian Meat Corporation, Apprenticeship Commission and Red Scale Committees.

2. Borrowings by statutory authorities under the semi-government borrowing program have been rationalised and geared to meet the needs as they arise. This action has resulted in vastly improved overall financial management, savings in interest charges against revenue budget and less pressures from Government on the capital market in South Australia.

3. Fees paid to board members of authorities have been rationalised and a decision taken to phase out being paid to public servants serving on these boards during working hours.

4. These initiatives, combined with the background work undertaken, as mentioned earlier, have undoubtedly contributed to increased awareness amongst the management of statutory authorities for the need for tighter financial control, cutting red tape and improved accountability to Parliament and Ministers.

While this background work was progressing, a detailed investigation was also undertaken into the alternatives available for a review mechanism for statutory authorities. A study was carried out of overseas experience in the United

States, Canada and the United Kingdom, particularly by the Public Review Committee in Victoria. The alternatives considered were:

1. Sunset clause in Acts creating authorities.
2. Independent review body or commission.
3. Administrative process through Government departments.
4. Auditor-General or special commissioner.
5. Parliamentary committee.

It was decided upon the establishment of a parliamentary committee to review the justification for the continued existence of statutory authorities for the following reasons:

1. A sunset clause for all statutory authorities would overload Parliament with Bills to permit authorities to continue to exist after the sunset date. A five-year review period for example would average 50 Bills per year.

2. Additionally under the sunset clause proposal—

(i) A formal structure or committee would still be required to make recommendations to Parliament, but would find it impossible to review objectively each authority with so many subject to a sunset date review each year.

(ii) Also, by declaring a review date in advance the statutory authority concerned would have several years notice of review and there would be a tendency for authorities to spend considerable time and effort justifying their continued existence.

3. The Government desires greater parliamentary scrutiny of the affairs of authorities and accountability to the Parliament. A parliamentary committee with Government and Opposition members appears the best alternative to achieve this objective.

4. The powers of a parliamentary committee and the requirement to publish its findings will ensure public confidence in the recommendation concerning the future operations of authorities reviewed.

5. A parliamentary committee will be able to utilise the expertise existing in the Public Service from, say, the Auditor-General's Office or Public Service Board as required by arrangement with the Minister concerned. Additionally, subject to budgetary constraints, private consultants could also be utilised by a parliamentary committee.

These are the major reasons for proposing a parliamentary committee to review the need for the continued existence of South Australia's statutory authorities. A sunset clause will still be considered in other legislation where appropriate. The committee will not overlap the work of the Public Accounts Committee but rather complement the work the Public Accounts Committee does in the area of Government departments via the Auditor-General's Report. The Statutory Authorities Review Committee will have specific objectives quite distinct from those of the Public Accounts Committee as detailed in the explanation of the Bill.

Considerable attention has been given to defining which authorities come within the jurisdiction of the committee. Single-person authorities which include some Ministers and Commissioners are excluded as are the Houses of Parliament, the courts and tribunals. To further clarify the situation, authorities subject to review will need to be listed in regulations provided for by the Bill. It should be clearly seen that the committee is an appropriate function for an Upper House. It will give appropriate and proper power to the Upper House to review the functions of statutory authorities.

There is no doubt that statutory authorities should be reviewed by a separate body whose major thrust is looking at the rationale for their continued existence, the way in which they continue to operate and indeed whether they need to operate at all. The committee would comment on and, if necessary, criticise the specific operations of authorities where it was considered their efficiency and effectiveness could be improved. Where the committee recommended the abolition of an existing authority, it would report this to Parliament. Such a committee would result in an increased accountability to Parliament—and, therefore, to the public. The bipartisan nature of the committee would mean more likelihood of parliamentary acceptance of its recommendations.

The Bill provides for the committee to comprise six members of the Legislative Council, of whom three shall be nominated by the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council. The one certain conclusion is that there is a massive amount of Government regulatory legislation which is in need of review and reform.

The Parliamentary Liberal Party believes that this is an essential piece of legislation and in the unfortunate event of the Government not agreeing to this measure, it will be a high priority for an incoming Liberal Government after the next State election.

I commend the Bill to the House and ask all members to give it their careful consideration as I consider it will greatly enhance the standing of the Parliament, provide great opportunity for better administration and the possibility of redirection of scarce public resources.

Clauses 1 and 2 are formal.

Clause 3 is an interpretation provision. The central concept of a 'statutory authority' is defined as a body corporate that is established by an Act and—

(a) has a governing body comprised of or including persons or a person appointed by the Governor, a Minister or an agency or instrumentality of the Crown;

(b) is subject to control or direction by a Minister; or

(c) is financed wholly or partly out of public funds,

but does not include—

(d) a council or other local government authority;

(e) the State Bank of South Australia;

(f) the State Government Insurance Commission;

(g) a body whose principal function is the provision of tertiary education;

(h) a body wholly comprised of members of Parliament;

(i) a court or a judicial or administrative tribunal;

(j) any other body excluded by regulation.

Clause 4 establishes the Statutory Authorities Review Committee. It consists of six Legislative Council members appointed by the Legislative Council, three (and not more than three) from the group (excluding Ministers) led by the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council and at least two from the group led by the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council. Membership is for the life of the Parliament in which the member is appointed.

Clause 5 provides for removal from, and vacancies of, the office of a member of the committee. The Legislative Council may remove a member from office. One of the grounds for an office becoming vacant is if the member becomes a Minister of the Crown.

Clause 6 gives the Remuneration Tribunal jurisdiction to determine the remuneration of members of the committee.

Clause 7 provides that a vacancy in the membership of the committee does not invalidate the acts or proceedings of the committee.

Clause 8 requires the Governor to designate one of the members as the presiding officer of the committee.

Clause 9 deals with the manner in which the committee is to conduct its business. A quorum is three members, one of whom must be a member who was appointed to the committee from the group led by the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council.

Clause 10 provides for the central function of the committee—to review statutory authorities. The committee may carry out a review on its own initiative and must do so at the request of the Governor, the House of Assembly or the Legislative Council.

Clause 11 sets out the purpose of a review of a statutory authority—whether or not, in the opinion of the committee, the statutory authority should continue in existence. In carrying out a review the committee may inquire into—

(a) whether the purposes for which the statutory authority was established are relevant or desirable in the circumstances presently prevailing;

(b) whether the cost to the State of maintaining the statutory authority is warranted;

(c) whether the statutory authority and the functions it performs provide the most effective, efficient and economic system for achieving the purposes for which the statutory authority was established;

(d) whether the structure of the statutory authority is appropriate to the functions it performs;

(e) whether the work or functions of the statutory authority duplicate or overlap in any respect the work or functions of another authority, body or person; and

(f) any other matter it considers relevant.

Clause 12 gives the committee certain powers to ensure that it is able to get information needed to properly carry out a review. A person appearing before the committee need not give answers to questions tending to incriminate him or her. The statutory authority under review and the responsible Minister are entitled to appear personally or by representative before the committee and to make submissions to the committee. The committee must meet in private (unless the committee decides otherwise). It is not bound by the rules of evidence. Persons appearing before the committee may be represented by counsel. The committee may, in its discretion, allow the statutory authority or responsible Minister access to evidence taken. The committee may authorise a member to enter and inspect, at any reasonable time, any land, building or other place.

Clause 13 provides that a review being carried out by a committee which comes to an end when a Parliament lapses may be completed by the committee established during the life of a subsequent Parliament.

Clause 14 compels the committee to prepare a report on the completion of a review, containing its findings, its recommendations as to the continuance or abolition of the statutory authority and its reasons for those recommendations.

In respect of the continuance of a statutory authority, the committee may further recommend—

(a) the time at which the statutory authority ought again to be reviewed;

(b) any changes that ought to be made to the structure, membership or staffing of the statutory authority;

(c) any changes that ought to be made to the powers, functions, duties, responsibilities or procedures of the statutory authority;

(d) any provision that ought to be made for the reporting, or better reporting, of the statutory authority to its Minister and to Parliament;

(e) such other matters as the committee considers relevant.

In respect of the abolition of a statutory authority, the committee may further recommend—

(a) the time at which, and the method by which, the statutory authority ought to be abolished;

(b) the administrative or legislative arrangements for implementing the abolition of the statutory authority, and for dealing with any matters ancillary or incidental to that abolition;

(c) such other matters as the committee considers relevant. A copy of the committee's report must be laid before each House of Parliament.

Clause 15 requires the Minister responsible for a statutory authority to respond to the committee's report on the review of that authority within four months of the committee's report being laid before Parliament. A copy of the response must be laid before each House of Parliament. The response must set out—

(a) which (if any) of the recommendations of the committee will be carried out;

(b) in respect of recommendations that will be carried out, the manner in which they will be carried out;

(c) in respect of recommendations that will not be carried out, the reasons for not carrying them out;

(d) any other response which the Minister considers relevant.

Clause 16 prevents further reviews of a statutory authority for a period of four years, unless such further review was recommended in the committee's report or both Houses of Parliament resolve that the statutory authority should be further reviewed.

Clause 17 provides for staff and other resources of the committee.

Clause 18 provides that the office of a member of the committee is not an office of profit under the Crown.

Clause 19 provides that the money required for the purposes of the measure must be paid out of money appropriated by Parliament for the purpose.

Clause 20 provides that an offence against the measure (see clause 12 (2)) is a summary offence.

Clause 21 gives the Governor general regulation-making power.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD secured the adjournment of the debate.

PRIMARY SCHOOL SPORT

Mr INGERSON (Bragg): I move:

That in view of the concerns of parents, teachers and children, this House calls on the Government to review the application of its equal opportunity policy on children's sports programs at primary schools.

There are two principal reasons for calling for a review, the first relating to the legal interpretation of both the Equal Opportunity Act and the Sex Discrimination Act. It involves the interpretation by the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity, the position taken by the Directors of Education in their joint national decision, and the general Government support for these interpretations. The second reason is the general concern in the community and the rejection by the majority of parents of the direction taken by primary school heads, coupled with the concern of SAPSASA, and the State Association of State School Organisations (SASSO).

The main argument relates to the interpretation of this policy with respect to competitive events involving boys

and girls, principally within the primary schools, but also it affects the same children who play community sport for clubs which are not directly associated with the primary school sporting system. I do agree with the need to have an equal opportunity policy for sport, and so does the Liberal Party. However, we are concerned about the interpretation of that policy, particularly as it relates to competitive sport and, most importantly, as it relates to girls in sport. We believe that there is significant evidence within the community to show that girls have been disadvantaged in sport over many years, but we are concerned that the current interpretation by the Commissioner and the department (and as supported by the Government) is taking this whole need to get more girls participating in sport in the wrong direction.

We support using extra time to develop skill levels and, if that requires special time to be put aside in order that more girls may develop those skills, that ought to occur. We support very strongly the need for boys and girls to have equal opportunity with respect to the use of sporting facilities. Further, we support very strongly the need for the physical education program to be developed in such a way that it does not discriminate against either boys or girls. We also support very strongly the need for girls and boys to play together in the relative sports but, when it comes to competition, there is very clearly a significant difference between boys and girls.

I come from a sporting family and most of the friends with whom I associate have been directly involved in sport, and we know that, as children develop, there is a very significant difference between the abilities of boys and girls in competitive sport.

There is no question that a significant difference develops in children at a very young age in the competitive area. Having been personally involved in many tennis coaching campaigns at schools, I have noticed that very quickly the difference between boys and girls in terms of competition becomes clear. Within my own family, there is a significant difference in the ability of boys and girls to play netball; even though the boys have never learnt the rules, when it comes to competition, the boys of any age dominate. So I and my Party have no problem with the general thrust of equal opportunity but we question this nonsense that has developed in the competitive area. I will provide examples shortly.

First, let me refer to the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity. Over the past 12 to 18 months, the Commissioner has interpreted the Act to the effect that there cannot be parallel competitions for boys and girls in sport. I have spent considerable time looking at the Equal Opportunity Act and at the Sex Discrimination Act, and nowhere in either of those Acts is it stated that there cannot be boys and girls competitions in the same sport. It is absolute nonsense to interpret the Equal Opportunity Act and the Sex Discrimination Act in that way.

By way of example, I cite the attempt to introduce non-parallel sporting competition at the National Athletics Carnival for schools which was held earlier this year in Adelaide. It was interesting that girls events and open events were held; it was also interesting that only boys, no girls, entered the open events. So, girls did not want to enter the open events and there were no boys events. It was absolute nonsense that there was no boys national champion, just an open champion.

The decision of the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity has been questioned by the Federal Human Rights Commissioner, Mr Brian Burdekin. In a letter to the Hon. Dr Terry Metherell, Mr Burdekin states:

> I wish to make it absolutely clear that this commission has advised the Federal Government (most recently in a letter of 29 March 1988 from myself to the Attorney) that, in our view, 'there was no requirement under the legislation to hold open and girls events and that there was no basis upon which separate girls and boys events could not be held'.

Those comments of the Human Rights Commissioner are substantiated by the Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner, so the nonsense peddled by the Equal Opportunity Commissioner has been turned on its head by the Human Rights Commissioner, Mr Burdekin. Further, SAPSASA, the group that would know more about primary school sport and sport played by those under 12, stated:

> SAPSASA supports the spirit and intent of the legislation that provides equal opportunity for all children . . . This is a fundamental human right and forms the basis for any sporting activity promoted and organised by SAPSASA. However, we have grave concerns about certain aspects of the requirements expected of SAPSASA. . . The concerns expressed are basically directed at one specific part of the policy that are causing great problems, namely the implementation stages. SAPSASA has always wanted to hold separate boys and girls competitions (parallel sports) in many of our sports, and this was indicated to the Commissioner [for Equal Opportunity].

So, we have the ridiculous situation where the professionals who train young children in the sporting area have recommended that we have and continue to have parallel sports for boys and girls, yet the Equal Opportunity Commissioner has ruled against that, even though that decision has no validity at law. The Opposition has questioned this position for some time and, as I said earlier, there is no provision in either the Equal Opportunity Act or the Sex Discrimination Act federally to prevent parallel competitions.

The other major problem in this area is that the Directors-General of Education decided some two years ago to support the use of open events and girls events. Brian Burdekin, in a letter to the new Minister for Education in New South Wales, makes a very interesting comment, that is, that the Directors of Education seemed to have snubbed his decision and are not prepared, or appear not to be prepared, to talk to him about it. I think it is tragic when a Commissioner of Human Rights is being snubbed by the education system in this country.

Thirdly, there is the support of the Government, in what can be seen as no more and no less than simply a social engineering exercise. And it is a social engineering exercise, because one of the theories of social engineering is that, if we run boys and girls against each other in any competitive area, given time the boys and girls will be of equivalent ability and equivalent strengths—equivalent everything. That is absolute nonsense, and it will never occur. The major problem with social engineering theories is that, as soon as competition becomes involved, the theories are thrown out the window, because competition proves, every single time, when boys and girls from 9 years to 12 years of age compete against each other, that the boys will win in the majority of instances. That is at the competitive level. If we are talking about playing games, all is well and it is an excellent concept, but the minute that we introduce competition, the theory goes out the window.

Several studies have been undertaken this year by SAPSASA which prove that fact beyond any doubt. The first study was in the tennis area and it was found that, when teams from country areas were graded, the first six gradings comprised boys and the next six comprised girls. Anyone who has played or been involved in competitive tennis or any sport would know that: we do not have to do studies to know that. The study has reinforced what everyone knew. SAPSASA undertook a study of softball and found that, in the major summer carnival, 50 positions out of 250 were taken up by boys. At the previous softball

carnival, no boys were involved. More importantly, where were the boys involved? They were involved in pitching, in the in-field, in all the major areas of the sport which either stopped the competition from progressing or which gave them the advantage; otherwise, they were in the major hitting positions. Again, SAPSASA proved what everyone knew. The tragedy is that in softball, which has traditionally been a girls game, at the State carnival 50 positions were taken up by boys and so 50 girls were disadvantaged.

At the athletics carnival, had the 25 medals been awarded on times, as this policy recommends, only five medals would have been given to girls. Instead of there being an equal number of medals for girls and boys, only 20 per cent were awarded to girls. In a recent cross-country event in the hills, instead of running first, second and third as usually happens, the girls ran 71st, 78th and 106th. That positioning is nonsense. On top of that was the ridiculous situation of the people running the event asking the girl competitors whether they were a girl or a boy because they did not know the difference. That resulted in further embarrassment for the girls. That information comes from SAPSASA, not me. At a basketball carnival, whereas last year girls held 50 per cent of positions, this year they had only 20 per cent of positions from the 250 available. In the finals of the mixed basketball competition, there was only one girl out of 16 competitors.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr INGERSON: The comment from the honourable member is absolutely ridiculous. I have not said in this Chamber or publicly that more girls should not compete because that is what it is all about, and this policy is achieving quite the opposite. It is reducing the opportunity for girls to compete, and it has been demonstrated time and time again. It has been documented by SAPSASA in its reports. Last week I had an interview with the people running SAPSASA, who rang me on Monday advising that I could not use any of the material they had supplied to me. I suggest that the reason for it is that the information is embarrassing to the Government. SAPSASA has been pressured—heavied—by the Government not to let out some of these documents.

I will not refer to some other aspects of SAPSASA's research which clearly show what is happening. That association has the experts but the Government is ignoring them, and it is a tragedy for boys and girls. I will finish with a quote from Ian Wilson, who is Chairman of the South Australian Association of State School Organisations (SAASSO), as follows:

> The theory that children up to the age of 12 are biologically equal may be a useful theory but in practice it is demeaning to girls who, in most instances, instead of receiving just rewards for effort made and the building of self-esteem are subjected to embarrassment and the consciousness of failure when put up against boys.
>
> Clearly this application of 'special measures' as reflected in the five-year plan of the South Australian Primary Schools Amateur Sports Association, developed under advice from the Commissioner of Equal Opportunity, is not working in the way it was intended, and in our view should be revised to ensure boys and girls are given equal access to sports of their own choice, and not forced into unwanted and uncomfortable mixed-team events and thrown into competition against each other with all its undesirable side-effects. Open events should still be held for those who want to compete in them, not because there is no other opportunity.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the member for Newland.

Mr S.G. EVANS: I wish to second the motion and speak to it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I accept that.

Mr S.G. EVANS: This is a topic on which I have grave concerns.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have been advised that the honourable member for Davenport may speak at a later stage if he desires but it has been the tradition of the House to take one speaker from each side and, in that case, the Chair recognises the member for Newland.

Mr S.G. EVANS: I take a point of order on your ruling, Sir, because I believe that, as has happened before, if a member wishes to second a motion, that member can reserve the right to speak later or can speak in seconding the motion. That has happened in my 20 years in this place. What may be a practice is not necessarily a Standing Order and I believe that I have a right to speak to the motion.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I do not accept the point of order. Traditionally, the Chair calls a speaker from each side if a member from the opposite side wishes to speak. I will maintain that tradition, especially in private members' time, given the way it has proceeded. I call the member for Newland.

Ms GAYLER (Newland): I move to amend the motion, as follows:

> Delete all words after 'That' and insert 'this House supports the principle of equal opportunity in sport for schoolchildren and acknowledges that implementation of the South Australian Primary School Amateur Sports Association's interim policy for sporting competition in primary schools is being monitored and is subject to review'.

The original motion by the member for Bragg is completely superfluous; it is also technically inaccurate. The motion is inaccurate when it refers to the Government's policy on children's sport in primary schools. In fact, the policy is SAPSASA's interim policy.

Members interjecting:

Ms GAYLER: I have a copy if the honourable member does not realise that. The South Australian Primary School Amateur Sports Association—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask the member for Newland to please take a seat. I ask the House to conduct this debate fairly. The honourable member for Bragg was able to put the original proposition in relative silence and I am now allowing the honourable member for Newland to reply to that debate and rebut it if necessary. I ask honourable members to observe the silence that they observed for the mover of the proposition.

Ms GAYLER: The interim policy—and I stress the word 'interim'—was prepared by the South Australian Primary School Amateur Sports Association (SAPSASA) executive after 18 months of consultation with various educational and sporting groups. It incorporates submissions from a special sport and equal opportunity conference of representatives from the various SAPSASA sports and was prepared in consultation with the Office of the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity. The member for Bragg's motion is superfluous in that it calls for a review of the application of the policy.

Again, I stress that even the title of this policy acknowledges the consultative processes surrounding its implementation. The title is 'Interim Policy for SAPSASA'. Let me quote the SAPSASA endorsement from the policy document itself:

> We trust the teachers and parents will use this interim policy as a working document to implement SAPSASA programs. The policy will be released at the commencement of the 1989 school year, after 12 months of further consultation.

This endorsement is signed by both the President and the Executive Officer of SAPSASA. I draw members' attention also to the words 'after 12 months of further consultation'. So, this motion from the member for Bragg is superfluous in that the review that it calls for is actually happening as

the program is being trialled. Calls for any changes to the policy are therefore premature.

Let us clear up a few misunderstandings about this interim policy. First, let us clarify who and what this policy applies to. The very first sentence of the introduction to this document says:

> This six year plan will be considered as an interim policy for South Australian Primary Schools Amateur Sports Association to allow it to conduct competitions in 1988.

So, it is an interim policy for a six year plan. It concerns only the competitions that SAPSASA conducts, and it covers those competitions for 1988. The document goes on to say:

> This interim policy will allow time for parent groups, school councils, teachers, principal associations, sporting groups, and SAPSASA groups to be further consulted on the implications of the programs that are trialled. From the responses received, SAPSASA will be able to negotiate any required changes with the appropriate authorities, and gain approval for any changes from the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity.

The document states that the 12 month period 'will enable all persons to be involved in the intensive consultation process, and that reviewing and monitoring will continue throughout the life of the project.' It also states that 'an emphasis has been placed in the document on gradual change with a view to continual monitoring and review of the programs.'

So it is nonsense for the honourable member's motion to call for a review of the policy. The policy is already subject to review and modification in the light of actual practice in primary school sport, and subject to consultation with parents, coaches, and others involved in primary school sports. It is premature to call for change before the consultation process is complete and the facts have been collected and analysed, and irresponsible of the Opposition to try to politicise the discussion about boys and girls gaining equal opportunity in primary school sports in the way it has been doing.

The Opposition has distorted the meaning and intention of this interim policy. SAPSASA's basic belief, as stated in this interim policy, is that every child should be able to participate in the sport of his or her choice. It states SAPSASA's belief that there are no difficulties in complying with the equal opportunity laws providing there is a genuine desire to do so. I wonder whether there is a genuine desire by members of the Liberal party to comply with the spirit of the equal opportunity laws? Perhaps they, if they got the chance, would try to scrap some of the equal opportunity programs like their counterparts in New South Wales have done.

The interim policy aims to give a fair go for boys and girls in sports that have previously been seen as appropriate for only boys or only girls. It does not mean that boys miss out on sport during their primary school years or that girls are not given a fair go to compete. What it does mean is that action is being taken to make sure that both boys and girls get a fair go, and it means that gradual change is necessary to improve primary school sport opportunities and the skills of primary schoolchildren. The interim policy does not have a blanket approach to all sports; each sport with which SAPSASA is concerned is considered separately.

For example, in athletics and swimming, in 1988, the only open competitions are at the school level for 10 year old students. For all other age groups and levels of competition, the competitions are run with boys only and girls only events. Many other open events are widely accepted with the first three male and first three female place-getters being acknowledged; examples of those are diving, golf, gymnastics, orienteering, and cross country events. Members will be quite familiar with this style of organisation for such events, such as the marathons that are held in and around Adelaide.

A quota system applies in some sports. For example, in tennis and hockey the quota system has been run most successfully. The top 14 boys and the top 14 girls are selected, and two teams are selected on merit from that seeded list of 28 children. I also draw members attention to a provision in the interim policy which has been conveniently overlooked by the Opposition in this discussion. The interim policy states:

> Special measures through the SAPSASA program will be invoked according to the needs of each sport. Special measures, as defined in section 47 of the Equal Opportunity Act, will allow programs which redress any recognised imbalance of previously disadvantaged groups. SAPSASA's special measures take the form of specific short term (up in six years) programs for some targeted sports.

Elsewhere, the document details certain special measures in some sports. The special measures take the form of expos and lightning carnivals for boys in the sports of netball and softball, and for girls in the sports of cricket (of which I have some experience), as well as football and soccer. The SAPSASA executive can nominate other sports for special measures if it deems it necessary. The interim policy states that these special measures are designed to protect the traditional base of gender participation.

I wonder if members understand the significance of that part of the interim policy? If a girl wants to play competitively in one of those traditionally male sports, and is reluctant to participate because the team is dominated by boys, then the opportunity exists for her to play in an expo or lightning carnival for girls in that sport. She is not forced to join what may be predominantly a boys team in order to play competitively in her chosen sport. The boys in the team do not have to 'go easy' because of some misguided concept of chivalry or mistaken estimate of female team members' abilities. The same applies to boys who would like to play competitively in a traditionally female sport. I repeat, the interim policy states that these measures 'are designed to protect the traditional base of gender participation'.

While our primary schools are getting on with the job of giving girls and boys a fair go in sport, the Liberals have jumped onto a minority bandwagon to oppose these initiatives. The reality is that school communities are developing programs in a sensitive and responsible manner. Yesterday's letter to the editor of the *Advertiser* by the Principal of Highbury Primary School and the PE/Aussie Sports Coordinator illustrates the successful implementation of such programs. The writers point out that some of the tension over this topic has been generated by the issue of when to introduce children to competitive sport.

The letter describes a highly successful whole school physical education program in which girls participate equally with boys. This program has been extended in years five to seven by implementing the Aussie Sports Program. This program introduces children to a wide range of sports with lessons which are skill-based, highly motivating, and intensely active. The aim is for children to develop social and physical skills and to enhance their self-esteem through sport. The letter ends with a plea to work through the issues and not go backwards because of what the writers call a few teething problems. There is the reality straight from the workplace. There is a school working towards a situation in accord with the aims of the interim policy for competitive sport; a situation where, according to the policy, 'all children will be playing in competitions appropriate to their level of ability regardless of their sex, physical impairment, or race'.

To sum up: this policy is SAPSASA's interim policy; it relates only to competitions organised by SAPSASA; it is

being trialled for a 12 month period; the general principles of the interim policy have been endorsed by sporting, school and community groups; its implementation is being continually monitored; and the policy is subject to review. So, it is nonsense to call for a review now and premature to imply that the interim policy should be changed before a proper analysis has been done. I urge members to support the amendment.

Mr S.G. EVANS (Davenport): I know that other members want to speak to other motions today and so I will say very little now and seek leave to conclude my remarks. It is a sham on the part of the Government to blame SAPSASA for something that is commensurate with its own policy; it is something that it initiated and wanted to happen—a bit of social engineering, with the hope that if it is around for long enough society will live with it. If ever one wanted an example of a Government sham, in relation to support for women's sport, in particular, one has only to look at the way the Government has treated the Women's Memorial Playing Fields, at a time when we are supposed to be giving opportunities to women, and one can also refer to lack of support given in the provision of facilities in general in this State. This shows how sincere the Government is. I seek leave to continue my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

COMPULSORY UNIONISM

Mr S.J. BAKER (Mitcham): I move:

That this House condemns the Government for implementing a compulsory unionism policy in relation to Government contracts and specifically notes that it is discriminatory, breaches international human rights declarations, adds significantly to costs, supports the damaging activities of building industry unions and is in conflict with the development of the State.

The substance of this motion has been canvassed previously in other debates in this House. Members opposite would appreciate that both State and Federal Liberal Oppositions are committed to abolishing all forms of discrimination in favour of unions so as to return some form of balance in the industrial relations system in this country. We will not tolerate compulsory unionism in any shape or form. Our commitment extends to outlawing all closed shop arrangements and preference clauses in awards or agreements.

To date, any submission or entreaty for Premier Bannon to scrap his compulsory unionism policy in respect of Government contracts has been met with silence, rejection or abuse. Members opposite pride themselves on being so-called champions of human rights.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: We are, too.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Let me inform the House about human rights. The first Human Rights Charter was adopted in San Francisco on 26 June 1945, under the auspices of the United Nations Organisation. At the 1968 United Nations Conference in Tehran, the 84 member countries adopted a solemn proclamation, which said that the Universal Declaration constitutes an obligation (and I underline 'obligation') for the members of the international community. The status of the Declaration, as part of international law binding United Nations members, was thus established. Article 1 provides:

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 20, which is the pertinent article, provides:

1. Everyone has the right of freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
2. No-one may be compelled to belong to an association.

The famous *Young, Jones and Webster v United Kingdom* case upheld this principle. There is no doubt that if the Government's compulsory unionism directive was tested in the courts it would be found to be in violation of human rights (and be subject to penalty). The Australian Labor Party's commitment to human rights is minimal. This matter relates to but one example. There are many others, and I would recommend that members research migration statistics. Particularly interesting are the figures in relation to migrants from South America, where there is a huge disparity between the number of people flowing from countries governed by right wing totalitarian regimes and the number from countries governed by left wing totalitarian regimes. With the indulgence of the House, I seek leave to insert in *Hansard* a statistical table on migration.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can the honourable member assure me that the table is purely statistical?

Mr S.J. BAKER: It is indeed, Sir.

Leave granted.

MIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA (PERMANENT SETTLERS) FROM LATIN AMERICA

	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1984 Pop. million	Australian 1987-88 migration/ million pop.
Countries with Right Wing Regimes					
Chile	2 037	2 018	1 965	11.88	165
El Salvador	481	645	1 049	8.71	120
Gautemala	19	3	27	8.17	3
Countries with Left Wing Regimes					
Peru	134	306	294	19.20	15
Nicaragua	92	162	58	5.26	11
Ecuador	35	26	27	9.09	3

Mr S.J. BAKER: The notable feature of our so-called non-discriminatory migration policy saw 6 020 people flow to Australia from Chile and 2 175 from El Salvador over the past three financial years. One would presume they had fled from the tyranny of right wing regimes. Compare this with the 734 persons from Peru and 312 from Nicaragua who were presumably fleeing from the tyranny of left wing totalitarianism. The statistics on migration rates would suggest that people from Chile and El Salvador were 10 times more acceptable than those from Peru and Nicaragua. Well do I remember Prime Minister Hawke's almost tearful performance pleading for bipartisan support for a non-discriminatory migration policy. I leave members to judge that performance!

This is straying from the point that it is a very discriminatory Government. It is quite despicable that Premier Bannon believes non-unionists to be less worthy than unionists. It is blatant discrimination, which prevents employers from tendering for State Government contracts if they do not have a fully unionised work force. Leaving aside the question of discrimination, what are the cost implications? This is best illustrated by a case which has been brought to my attention of a painter in a country town who was told not to submit a tender for school painting unless he had 'signed up' his two employees. When this directive was challenged and the department informed that the cost of painting could double if another team was engaged from Adelaide, the employer was informed that SACON could not vary from the Government's directive. It is condoning a wholesale waste of taxpayers' money!

There is no doubt that this directive by the Premier was motivated by his desire to gain support from the 'looney left' of the ALP. It is the building unions which will be the major beneficiaries of this policy. Despite the damage

wrought on this State by the BLF and BWIU and the stranglehold now being exercised by these unions on major construction activities approaching cartel proportions, Premier Bannon, for reasons of power and expediency, has, in principle, condoned the despicable activities of these unions. He says, 'Join up, or no work!'

But, it goes even further than this. Information is coming to light that would strongly suggest that the unions are vetting confidential tenders to ensure that only compliant contractors receive work allocations. I have explained in my previous motion that role of Premier Bannon in inhibiting the growth of this State. Compulsory unionism is another area of major concern for employers and investors, and indeed employees. Let me assure everyone in this House that this policy retards development of and investment in this State. The policy is discriminatory, in breach of human rights, increases costs borne by the taxpayer and retards State development.

Mr OSWALD secured the adjournment of the debate.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS STAFFING

Mr MEIER (Goyder): I move:

> That this House expresses its concern at the implications for schools and students of the new 'average enrolment' staffing policy and calls on the Government to ensure that the quality of education in our schools is not reduced as a result of its new policy.

Members would be aware of the current proposal to staff secondary schools on the average enrolment taken between April and July of any year whereas previously they have been staffed on the number of students enrolled at the beginning of the year. I think we would all be aware that staff, and parent bodies particularly, are expressing grave concerns about these new proposals. I now turn to the Labor Party's education policy at the time of the 1985 election, and if we went back further we would probably find even more hypocrisy. Page 1 states:

> We have retained teacher numbers in spite of declining enrolments, and will continue to do so.

The statement 'and will continue to do so', with respect to retaining teacher numbers, was clearly spelt out by the Labor Party. It seems that it is now happy to bring in this new method, which I will explain shortly. Page 6 states:

> In the pursuit of excellence, the State Labor Government will continue the program begun in 1983 to reduce class sizes to a maximum of 25 in junior primary and 27 in primary.

Again, I think we will find that that policy will be threatened under the new proposals. Page 6 further states:

> Expand its support for greater senior secondary subject choice at country secondary schools through increased support for distance education, beginning with five extra salaries at an annual cost of $125 000 in 1986.

Page 8 states:

> Initiate an independent study into the causes of teacher stress and ways of reducing it to an acceptable level.

All those statements are coming undone. No wonder the teaching fraternity, parents and students are very upset about the way in which the Government is handling education. This new average enrolment policy will do great harm to our schools. It is not acceptable in its current form. Quite a few letters have been directed to me and I will refer to two that come from my electorate. A letter from the Balaklava High School (which is actually a copy of a letter that was sent to the Minister of Education) states:

> It has come to our attention that the new staffing formula for Balaklava High School may result in less staff being appointed to the school in 1989.
>
> This year we were entitled to 37.3 staff according to the formula based on a total of 444 students at the end of February. However, we were given 37 staff which was based on an enrolment of 438 and were advised that no extra staff would be provided. As a result of this we had to restrict our special education program and increase class sizes in mathematics.
>
> It is of great concern to us that staffing may be based on average enrolments for 1989. Our school provides an excellent year 12 program which this year attracted 84 of our 90 year 11 students to return to school. We would like to be sure that we can provide courses for this situation to continue.
>
> Courses that are provided for year 12s and begin with ten or more students may by mid-year be reduced to 3 or 4 students. However, these students should still have the right to complete their courses. Without staffing based on February enrolments we may not have sufficient staff to cater for senior students.

The letter continues with other matters, but time does not permit me to go into further details. A letter from the Kadina Memorial High School, addressed to me personally, states:

> On behalf of the students, parents and staff at Kadina Memorial High School we wish to express our dismay and concern at the potential consequences of the Government's support for the new approach to staffing South Australian schools.
>
> As a country secondary school of more than 300 we have been targeted as a school that will lose staff as a result of what can only be described as a cost cutting exercise that completely ignores the educational needs of our students. During the past few years the school has worked particularly hard in opening up relevant, meaningful options for senior school students.
>
> The success of what has been done has been recognised by the Secondary Education Curriculum Team which requested a report for distribution to other secondary schools as a model for the process that can be followed. These achievements will be under threat if the staffing levels in February are not such that the appropriate number and variety of courses can be offered to our senior students, many of whom have returned to school only because we do have the kinds of courses that are relevant to them.

Later the letter states:

> Staff at this school are already working on maximum loads and class sizes reflect the needs of our children. To increase class sizes will diminish the quality of education—for the sake of our children we reject this option. If this proposed staffing method is adopted Kadina Memorial High School will commence the 1989 school year with 1.7 fewer staff than 1988.

Then the letter details the effects that will be felt at the school. I received a reply from the Minister of Education in relation to those two letters and the general concern that is being felt. Interestingly, it seems to be a standard reply because I happened to see a reply received by another member of my Party and, other than the name being changed, it was identical. In the second paragraph of the letter the Minister states:

> The Education Department's proposal to staff schools from 1989 on the basis of matching staff numbers more closely with actual student enrolments rather than on projected peak enrolments was an integral part of the second tier wage package registered by the Teachers' Salaries Board and which provided a 4 per cent wage increase for Education Department teachers at a cost of $20.5 million.

That sounds all right. However, I believe that all members of this House would have received a letter from the South Australian Institute of Teachers which puts a very big question mark over the statement from the Minister that I have just read to this House. This letter to members of Parliament is dated 1 August and it states:

> Inititally the Government tried to force teachers to agree to a new average enrolment formula as a trade-off for the wage increase. Teachers refused since they knew that it would mean a cut to schools' staffing levels, and therefore to the quality of education. Eventually the Government dropped its insistence.

That is a slightly different story again, and it shows the type of tactic that the Government is endeavouring to use. At least SAIT was prepared to stand up to the heavy-handed tactics of the Government when it tried, unsuccessfully, to

force teachers to agree to a new average enrolment formula. The letter furthe- states:

In the end, the deal was this: SAIT merely noted the Government's intention but expressed concerns about the effects of the Government's decision.

The letter then states:

We note your intention to staff schools on the basis of projected student enrolments at three points throughout the year. You will be aware from previous correspondence of our concern that such a proposal will impact detrimentally on class size, access, resource levels, duties other than teaching, subject offerings, equity considerations, individual attention, and programs supporting students with special needs.

The letter makes various other points and finally states:

Now the new formula has been announced but it does not protect schools and their programs. We believe this breaches the 4 per cent agreement. The effects on schools, particularly junior primary and secondary students, will be significant and very serious. SAIT and the principals associations are therefore calling on the Government to retain the current formula so that services to students can be maintained.

That letter was signed by David Tonkin, President of SAIT. So, it is an interesting situation where people dispute the facts, but who is correct? From my dealings with the Government, I would lean towards SAIT's view as being the correct one, because it is obvious that the Government is somehow trying to get away from its 1985 policies of committing itself to retaining the number of teachers, of committing itself to reducing class sizes, and of committing itself to greater senior secondary subject choices for school students. It is unsuccessfully trying to get out of its commitments.

It is surprising that the Government should follow such a course in the lead-up year to an election, because the general community is very upset with the direction that the Government is taking. It would not surprise me (and I hope that this occurs) if the Government changed its mind and policy. We have seen that happen in the past week with the removal of TAFE fees. Having announced those fees only a couple of weeks ago, the Government saw that the community's attitude was such that they would not wear it, so it changed its mind. In this respect also, schools are not prepared to wear it.

I think it is interesting to look at the motions adopted by a meeting of principals and school council chairpersons that was held on Monday 8 August 1988. Five motions were moved, but I will refer to only two of those motions. The meeting resolved:

1. This meeting rejects the State Government's proposed new school staffing arrangements on the grounds that they will inevitably cause a reduction in the education services for South Australian students, particularly in relation to continuous admission, vertical grouping and teacher continuity in R-2; subject choice and support programs in secondary; and the provision of teachers in country schools.

2. This meeting calls on the Government to honour its commitment to 'ensure that appropriate staff will be provided to maintain the quality of education in schools', and, for 1989:

(i) to revert to the 1988 formula until a superior formula, which protects school programs, is agreed; and

(ii) to maintain non-formula staff levels (including negotiable staff, languages other than English staff, English as a second language staff, etc.) across the system.

So, members can see that moves have been made, and are continuing to be made, to the Minister and to the Bannon Government to reverse the decision and not to go in willy-nilly with a policy that will do irreparable harm to so many of our schools. We have seen that it has been difficult to get teachers and to maintain a satisfactory number of subject choices in many country schools. The other day I spoke to a parent of a child who attends one of those country schools and they indicated that, because of this Government's policies, a particular school offered less subject choice at a senior year level than had previously been the case. If we move towards this averaging arrangement, schools will continue to be worse off.

One of the interesting things which has come to my attention relates to comments from a Victorian teacher who has taught in both Melbourne and Adelaide. This person feels that he is in a good position to make certain comparisons between the two State systems. He has viewed with alarm the developments in this State. In fact, he says:

After working in the Victorian State system I was shocked to have to teach under the conditions imposed by the South Australian Education Department.

He goes on to detail some of the things that are disturbing him in teaching in this State. He identifies six points, the first of which is as follows:

In my experience, the contact time with students in this State's secondary schools is much greater than in Victoria. In Victoria, 26 lessons out of 40 would be taught—in South Australia 32 out of 40, a 23 per cent higher load. This makes it extremely difficult to communicate with other teachers, to have time to develop new courses or to confer about students.

You see, Mr Deputy Speaker, this Government is not addressing the problem that teachers in this State are teaching up to 23 per cent more than in Victoria with respect to their load, but is determined to increase this percentage, and that will occur if the new averaging arrangements are implemented. Surely it is something that we would not want to see our State progress towards, because I believe that we must look after the education of our young people first and foremost for the future benefits of this State. However, the Government seems to be ignoring that. The second point this gentleman states is as follows:

I was amazed at how teachers could go on year after year with such teaching loads and yet be expected to remain motivated, committed and conscientious.

I can only echo his remarks and say that since I was in the teaching profession, having entered Parliament six years ago, I am surprised that so many teachers have continued to be motivated and committed. At the same time, I know that many teachers have not been able to continue and have had to leave the department due to great problems of stress. This Government, which has been in office ever since I left the teaching profession, has contributed to the increased stress, the lack of conscientiousness in some cases, and the lack of motivation, and it is an indictment on the Government. Thirdly, he states:

Class sizes are often larger than in my experience in Victoria.

So much for the Government's promise that it will continue to reduce class sizes. The Government, obviously realising that it will not be able to fulfil its promise that helped it to win office and retain Government, says, 'So, let us hope that the people forget it come the next election.' I am sure that all members of teaching staffs, parents and so many students (who unfortunately are not able to vote) will not forget it. Fourthly, he says:

Morale was very low due to the threat of displacement and of country service. I fail to see where the logic lies in forcing highly effective, experienced and committed teachers with established lives and families to go to the country or else be left with no option but to resign, perhaps to find employment in the private system. This hardly appears good personnel management and has led to the loss of many top teachers for the State system.

Fifthly, he says:

Principals in this State appear to have little or no say over staffing and are not able to keep contract staff who are performing well. Rather, some central bureaucrat allocates staff with no apparent consideration of job performance. By contrast, in Victoria it was my experience that principals did have some power to choose or to retain good contract staff.

The whole question of staffing is another issue in itself in this State. I will certainly be endeavouring to address that problem during the coming weeks in this Parliament, because

the Government's proposals and the track that it is heading down are a real concern. The sixth point this gentleman makes is as follows:

My experience with the administration of the department has been poor (that is, records lost, incorrectly made, etc.). In Victoria, a more decentralised management system was in place with schools and regions having much more autonomy to manage staffing issues.

I am sorry that time will not permit me to continue detailing more on this subject. I seek leave to continue my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

[*Sitting suspended from 1 to 2 p.m.*]

LAND TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL

His Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended to the House of Assembly the appropriation of such amounts of money as might be required for the purposes mentioned in the Bill.

PAYROLL TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL

His Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended to the House of Assembly the appropriation of such amounts of money as might be required for the purposes mentioned in the Bill.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

The SPEAKER laid on the table a report on the operations of the Auditor-General's Department for 1987-88.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT: GERARD RESERVE YABBIE FARM

The Hon. L.M.F. ARNOLD (Minister of State Development and Technology): I seek leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. L.M.F. ARNOLD: Further to my previous statement in this House on Thursday 12 February 1987, I take this opportunity to inform members that the State Govenment has agreed to release funds for a pilot yabbie farm project at the Gerard Reserve. This will be a significantly scaled down version of the original CEP proposal. Unexpended State funds already committed to the CEP project, totalling $78 169 (including interest), are to be released for completion of the pilot project. Previously, those funds were approved for release to restore the landscape. The Federal Minister for Employment and Education Services (Hon. Peter Duncan) is considering the release of $36 465 in Commonwealth funds for the same purpose.

This funding has been agreed on the basis of a number of conditions which have been agreed to by the Gerard Reserve Council. They are as follows: the finalisation of all financial aspects of the existing CEP project expenditure; an audited certificate of expenditure for previous advances; an audited statement for the construction phase of the pilot project; establishment of a steering committee to oversee the pilot project, with the inclusion of an officer from the Department of Fisheries; and that no further funding will be made available from either CEP or State sources, and the pilot project is not to be considered a new CEP project.

Our decision to release funds to finance a pilot project with the caveats just mentioned is within the spirit of the Auditor-General's recommendation of 1 December 1986 when he said, *inter alia*:

I support the conclusion of my senior auditor that the project should be abandoned, unless a leasing or joint venture arrangement can be put in place with a private operator, whereby the lessee or the joint venturer takes over the complete management and financial responsibility for the on-going operation of the farm.

The Gerard Reserve Council will take over complete responsibility for the project which, as I mentioned, will be much smaller than the original CEP proposal. The balance of the original CEP project will not be proceeded with.

QUESTION TIME

MARIJUANA

Mr OLSEN: Will the Premier initiate an immediate review of the Government's on-the-spot fines for marijuana offences, in view of mounting evidence that they are encouraging many more people to try the drug? The Auditor-General's Report reveals that, in the first full year of operation of on-the-spot fines, 14 410 cannabis expiation notices were issued. This compares with 7 160 cannabis related offences recorded in the Police Commissioner's annual report of 1986-87.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: Just such an investigation is taking place: in fact, that was one of the undertakings given at the time the legislation was introduced. The preliminary reports that we have had indicate that the situation is nowhere near that which the Leader of the Opposition seeks to imply, and it would be better for members opposite and the community to wait until they see a full, reasonable and non-political report on the workings of the system before any judgment is made. I repeat also that we made quite clear that if, indeed, the evidence was that this system was causing problems, we would seek to modify it.

KIMBERLY-CLARK PLANT

Mr FERGUSON: Can the Premier explain to the House the implications for the southern region of the announcement today by Kimberly-Clark Australia of a new factory to be established at Noarlunga?

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: The honourable member has referred to an announcement made today by Kimberly-Clark, which already has a very large presence in this State but all confined to the South-East at the Apcel plant where, in the past two or three years, it has spent many millions of dollars in expansion, which is a very useful adjunct to our forestry industries and in terms of regional development. This same firm, which has demonstrated its commitment in that area of its operations, has now announced that a factory will be built, valued at $23 million, employing 250 people and generating significant economic activity during construction in addition to those permanent jobs.

I need to put on the record a number of interesting aspects to this. First, it is very much a high-tech operation: this will be a state-of-the-art plant in Australia. The long-term benefits are also very significant. One of the key aspects of this decision is where it is being located. It is the first major industry over the hill, as it were, into the southern area. Many members based in that area and the recently formed Southern Areas Economic Development Council have all attempted to see development in that area. Certainly in places such as Lonsdale that has been so, but the location

of this factory at Noarlunga represents a very significant decision.

Secondly, the factory will be producing for the national market. It will be used as a national distribution point and, in deciding on that site, Kimberly-Clark looked at a range of sites all over Australia. It came to South Australia because of the cost advantages, the tax structure, the industrial relations climate here—

Mr Olsen: You've got to be joking!

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: The Opposition says that I must be joking.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the Leader of the Opposition to order. I ask the Premier to pause when the Chair is calling the Leader of the Opposition to order. The honourable Premier.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is extraordinary, because it is not me saying these things. This is the decision that Kimberly-Clark has made. It has recognised that our tax structure in South Australia is one of the most favourable of all the States. If it did not, it would not be locating here. The facts speak for themselves. I believe that a vote of endorsement of this kind coming on top, as it does, of many millions of dollars of investment by that company indicates just what we have going for us in this State, despite the rabid comments we have heard over the past few days. This morning I turned on the radio—

Members interjecting:

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

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: I turned on my radio today and what did I hear—the Leader of the Opposition. I thought, 'Here we go, another negative bleating,' and sure enough, it was. It was his analysis of the latest employment statistics. I might correct that.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Will the Premier resume his seat. I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the second time. The honourable Premier.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: He focuses on the negatives and does not say any positive things about the great growth of employment; that can be dealt with in another context. Let me put this announcement in context. It comes on top of the past 11 days where we have seen confirmed commitment of investment in this State totalling $890 million—the Remm redevelopment, the expansion plant at Mitsubishi, the Adelaide-Brighton cement development, and so on. If that is the sign of an economy going down the chute or being on its knees—or whatever other derisory and derogatory term the Opposition wants to make—then I do not know to whom they are talking. They are not talking to business investors in Australia; they are talking to themselves and they will probably continue to do so in Opposition for a long time to come.

VISITING WARSHIPS

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Will the Minister of Marine confirm the success of an emergency services exercise yesterday at Port Adelaide; will he tell the Trades and Labor Council that the State Government opposes union bans on two naval ships to visit Port Adelaide in the near future—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY:—and will the Government guarantee that the ships can berth and are supplied? I have been informed that yesterday's emergency services exercise, involving a simulated shipboard fire and radiation leak, was a success in demonstrating the adequacy of waterfront firefighting and radiation control procedures.

However, the Opposition also has been told today that members of the Metropolitan Fire Service who participated in the exercise are concerned that, so far, there has been no Government endorsement of its success. Instead, coverage in this morning's *Advertiser* emphasises the complaints of a group which is campaigning against the visit of two naval ships to Port Adelaide.

The United States frigate, the *Brewton*, is due on Saturday and the British destroyer, H.M.S. *Edinburgh*, will berth on 20 October. These visits are also being opposed by the Trades and Labor Council, which says its affiliate unions will not provide labour for the berthing of these ships or supply them while they are in a port. The Government action sought in the question will demonstrate that it endorses the success of yesterday's exercise and that the Government will ensure that any moves to obstruct the visit of these naval ships for the bicentenary are not successful.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: I am only too happy to give the Government's endorsement to that exercise, and I suggest that the best way in which I can do that is by making available to the House a report—which would not at this stage be available to my colleague, although I will see that he gets a copy of it—which comes directly from Mr Bruce, the Chief Officer of the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service. I suggest that this report, endorsed as it is by the Government, should be some sort of indication to the honourable member that we can give the assurance that he seeks. I will very briefly refer to certain parts of the report, the whole of which is available to members if they want it. It states:

Operation Ship Spill II—7 September 1988

1. Further to my report of 2 September . . . I advise the exercise was successfully conducted as scheduled.
2. This exercise which has been developed during the last 18 months was preceded by a discussion exercise on the scenario in March 1988.
3. Prior to and after the exercise it was emphasised to media that the objectives were not designed to test emergency services for a major nuclear accident. A scenario of that magnitude would involve implementation of divisional and State disaster plans and response.
4. The scenario used yesterday simulated a ship fire which resulted in mechanical damage to cargo containing a radioactive source. This was adequate to test SAMF's standard operational procedures and co-ordination and liaison with police, health, St John, SES and harbor authorities.
5. In the event of a nuclear accident, depending on the circumstances, emergency and Government agencies would implement standard procedures and divisional/State disaster plans as part of their endeavours to minimise loss of life and property. However, large scale evacuation and mobilisation within the population would create emotional and economic consequences which would need to be addressed at State and possibly Federal level. In exercise conditions, it is not really practical to physically carry out mass evacuation without great inconvenience to the community.

The Central Exercise Writing Team (representatives of Emergency Services) has prepared and conducted a large number of exercises coordinating the emergency services with a major MFS involvement.

I would regard this exercise as, without doubt, the most successful of this type conducted to date. It ensured that fire service and other emergency services personnel understand the problems in such circumstances and can recognise and incorporate the safety factors, including monitoring for radiation. In this regard, Health Commission, State Emergency Service and Metropolitan Fire Service officers were involved with radiation monitoring equipment.

It was an operational exercise which tested coordination, liaison and general involvement of those organisations that would be

directly involved in a large radiation incident and, as such, can only be beneficial to the community of South Australia.

Mr Bruce concludes:

In summary, it is not possible to conduct an exercise with the unlikely scenario of a nuclear incident to the level that would satisfy the requirements of the organisation known as the Warships Initiative Network (WIN).

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: I simply say in conclusion that WIN wrote to me and asked to be allowed access to the exercise. I agreed to that. Before the exercise started it was criticising it, and I suggest that that gives some indication of the objectivity of that organisation.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the Leader to order for the third time. I call the member for Coles, the member for Murray-Mallee and the Minister of Health to order. If the Chair erroneously included the member for Murray-Mallee when it was his neighbour who was at fault, the Chair apologises.

LABOUR MARKET

Mrs APPLEBY: Can the Minister of Employment and Further Education outline to the House the latest labour market situation in South Australia reflected in the figures announced today?

The Hon. L.M.F. ARNOLD: We have seen that there has been substantial growth in the number of full-time jobs within South Australia over the past 12 month period. It involves a number of extra jobs over the past month, in fact. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate is now the lowest August rate for six years, standing at 8.5 per cent.

Of course, that rate is still far too high, as has been acknowledged by all members on this side but, in terms of full-time job growth, there are more full-time jobs now than there ever have been in the past. In fact, since the beginning—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable Minister will resume his seat. Today some members seem to be determined to carry on in such a way as to reinforce every negative stereotype that people in the community may have about members of Parliament, and I ask members to cease and desist.

Mr S.G. EVANS: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. You have asked Ministers to try to stick to the topic of the question that they are asked and not debate other matters. The Minister was asked a question about land values and the amount of land sold. He is not even giving an answer in that field; he is just making a general comment—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Chair will not uphold that point of order because, among other reasons, the Chair has not been able to hear any more than two or three consecutive words from the Minister among the interjections. The honourable Minister.

The Hon. L.M.F. ARNOLD: To assist the deliberations of the House, I indicate that the member for Hayward asked me about the labour market—not the land market. I suggest that the honourable member listen well to what the facts are with respect to the labour market which I intend to address.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume his seat. I warn the honourable member for Victoria.

Mr S.G. EVANS: Mr Speaker, I would like to apologise. I thought the member said 'land' but she mumbled 'labour'. I apologise.

The SPEAKER: Order! No apology is relevant at this point. The member for Davenport could have risen on a point of order, but that was not one. However, his remarks reinforce what the Chair said a moment ago about the inability to hear the Minister because of the harassment being conducted. The honourable Minister.

The Hon. L.M.F ARNOLD: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Since the beginning of this year we have seen created in South Australia an extra 12 600 jobs, taking the figure for employment in this State to 619 800 jobs. This belies the image of a stagnant economy that has been painted so often by members opposite, including the Leader of the Opposition, who on a number of occasions—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Will the Minister resume his seat. For the second time I call the Deputy Leader to order. The honourable Minister.

The Hon. L.M.F. ARNOLD:—said in his speech the other night that there were no signs of improving employment trends within this State. The facts are that in the period of this Government, from November 1982 to July 1988, there has been a 9.4 per cent growth in employment in this State. In basic figures that means 50 000 extra jobs created by this Government. Those 50 000 extra workers would be sufficient to fill Football Park on grand final day, whereas the Opposition figure would not even fill a country pub. The figure under the Tonkin Administration, from 1979 to 1982, was a paltry 6 000 extra jobs in this economy—a paltry growth rate of 1.1 per cent compared with 9.4 per cent under this Administration. The growth rate of the Tonkin Administration was a very small figure, even compared with the national average.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Deputy Leader. The honourable Minister.

The Hon. L.M.F. ARNOLD: The facts are that to August this year 3 900 extra jobs were created in the marketplace; in other words, 3 900 more people are in employment in this State than in the previous month, and 12 600 more are in jobs than at the beginning of this year. The employment growth rate in South Australia for the past six months has been 3.3 per cent, against a national average of 1.8 per cent; in other words, the growth rate in this State for the past six months has been well in excess of the national average. I seek leave to incorporate in *Hansard* a purely statistical table which details the changes in employment from January 1979 to July 1988 with respect to full-time and part-time employment, and the participation rates.

The SPEAKER: Leave is sought on the assurance that it is purely statistical.

Leave granted.

Changes in Employment, South Australia, Persons, Original Data
January 1979-November 1982 and November 1982-July 1988

Period	Total	Full-time	Part-time	Participation Rate
January 1979	554.3	462.0	92.3	61.6
November 1982	560.5	444.2	116.3	60.2
Change between January 1979 and November 1982 (Per cent)	+1.1	−3.9	+26.0	−1.4 (percentage points)
July 1988	613.4	475.6	137.7	60.8

Changes in Employment, South Australia, Persons, Original Data
January 1979-November 1982 and November 1982-July 1988

Period	Total	Full-time	Part-time	Participation Rate
Change between November 1982 and July 1988 (Per cent)	+9.4	+7.1	+18.4	+.6 (percentage points)

The Hon. L.M.F. ARNOLD: These figures, as members will see, confirm my point that we do not have a stagnant employment growth market but, instead, we have thousands of extra jobs in this State. That is something that all members should be pleased about and should be wanting to talk up and not wanting to talk down.

VISITING WARSHIPS

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: My question is directed to whichever Minister can give a reply.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: That will be the first time ever. This question is supplementary to one I asked earlier. Who will tie up and provision the two visiting warships now that the unions have imposed a ban on these activities?

The SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Labour.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. R.J. GREGORY: I thank the honourable member for his question. The people who will tie up the vessel and provide the services required will be the appropriate people who have done it for warships in the past.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT FINANCING AUTHORITY

Ms GAYLER: Can the Treasurer tell the House whether he is satisfied with the financial gearing of the South Australian Government Financing Authority? It has been put to me that statements made by the Opposition are undermining public confidence in SAFA, which this year contributed $300 million to the State budget.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: I am completely satisfied with the performance of SAFA, as this Parliament and, indeed, the community of South Australia should be. I think that the fairly grubby attempt to undermine it ought to be nipped in the bud at once. SAFA is one of the undoubted success stories of this Government. It is highly regarded by investors throughout the nation and overseas. In fact, it attracts the highest possible credit rating of a financial institution in this country, and its issues overseas in a number of different currencies are highly regarded.

SAFA has attracted lead management from financial institutions, such as Nomura Securities, the largest financial institution in the world, and in all respects it is regarded as an enormous success story. That is why I find it so hard to understand the Opposition's nitpicking criticism. One of the bases for it is its inability to understand the SAFA report and balance sheet. The extraordinary allegations about the 12 per cent reduction in SAFA's equity, which was flourished by the Leader of the Opposition and talked about at great length, sounded very dramatic.

Upon analysis of what he was doing, it was found that he was comparing two completely different categories. He got the tables wrong! He was comparing a set of tables for one year with a completely different set of tables for another year. As a result, he drew conclusions which were erroneous. I think the Leader of the Opposition has been having severe trouble which—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will resume his seat for a moment. I warn the Leader of the Opposition. The honourable Premier.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: —has spread over into other areas of analysis. For instance, the Leader quoted the Commonwealth budget papers and said that they show we have the highest tax revenue increases of any State. He read the wrong table! On exactly the same page was the right table, our own purposes revenue—that is, our tax, the object of this exercise—which showed that at 7.3 per cent we were the second lowest of all States and below the national average. He had another go in terms of growth of the State economy. He ignored the fact that the wrong figures had been used because he said that our economy was in its worst state since the depression. Absolute nonsense! Since 1982-83 we have had growth of 44.8 per cent, compared with the period that the Government of which he was a member was in power, when our State economy declined by 1 per cent.

Mr D.S. BAKER: On a point of order—

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: So, how can one conclude that we are in our worst state since the depression—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Oswald: What about the drought? Don't you remember the drought?

The SPEAKER: Order! Before I take the point of order from the member for Victoria, I warn the honourable member for Morphett for interjecting while I was attempting to receive a point of order from one of his colleagues. The honourable member for Victoria.

Mr D.S. BAKER: The question was quite clearly asked on SAFA, but the Premier is carrying on with something totally irrelevant which has nothing to do with SAFA whatsoever.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Premier to restrict himself to the general thrust of the question.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The figures and balance sheets—and I have already conceded that the member for Victoria has some expertise in this area, and I have invited him to use that expertise—are very relevant to SAFA, very relevant indeed.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I call to order the honourable Minister of Recreation and Sport.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: I conclude by saying that it is most unfortunate that these sort of statements are made because, if given publicity outside South Australia where the Leader of the Opposition and his standing is not known, they may in fact be given some credibility. Indeed, even the Leader himself is a bit concerned about it. In fact, in relation to the employment/unemployment situation I heard him saying today to a bemused press interviewer, 'These are not my figures, they are from the ABS.' This disclaimer had to be introduced because, obviously, if they were his figures they just could not be believed. In fact, he produced the wrong ABS figures also, but that is a side issue. I conclude by saying that I think it is important for the Opposition to understand these issues better. In the case of the Leader, I refer him to page 63 of today's *Financial Review.* There is an advertisment in the bottom right hand corner which I earnestly recommend to him for his serious consideration. If he takes up the opportunity provided in

that advertisement, we might see a better performance after November.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I call to order the honourable Minister of Public Works. The honourable member for Coles.

COMMUNITY WELFARE DEPARTMENT

The Hon. J.L. CASHMORE: Does the Minister of Community Welfare consider that there is any incompatibility between the objectives of the Community Welfare Act and those of the Childrens Protection and Young Offenders Act and, if so, what does she propose to do about it? If not, can she justify the decision by the Department for Community Welfare as reported in today's *Advertiser* to resist the efforts by Mr and Mrs Buchecker to retain custody of their two grandchildren who were orphaned in tragic circumstances 20 months ago?

The Hon. S.M. LENEHAN: I thank the honourable member for her question. She is obviously very concerned, as I am, about the sensitivity with respect to the future of these two children who have undergone a horrendous experience. I have raised this matter with my department. I have asked the Chief Executive Officer to provide me with an urgent report about the matter and I think it quite improper for me to comment publicly until I have that report in my hands. I would be very pleased to provide the member with that report.

ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT

Mr ROBERTSON: As this is National Aborigines Week (NADOC), can the Minister of Employment and Further Education say what the State Government is doing to boost Aboriginal employment in South Australia?

The Hon. L.M.F. ARNOLD: I thank the honourable member for his question. It is appropriate that the Government has been able to announce in this NADOC week a new initiative regarding Aboriginal employment in the Public Service and also to identify increased opportunities, supported by the Government, in the economy generally. My colleague the Minister of Labour and I have announced a new program and the Department of Personnel and Industrial Relations will be employed to achieve an increase in the number of Aborigines employed in the South Australian Public Service. At present, that figure is 600 (that is, 0.6 per cent of the Public Service) and we look to that increasing to over 1 per cent (that is 1 200) in the years ahead.

It is not simply a matter, however, of extra positions being made available on the assumption that they would be taken up by Aborgines, but rather that critical questions need to be addressed. First, there must be training and pre-training before certain people can enter the work force and, secondly, training within the service, so that people already employed can advance higher up the scale of employment to administrative positions.

At present, there is a predominance of employment of Aborigines in those departments dealing with Aboriginal affairs, community welfare, and national parks and wildlife matters, but we wish to see participation in all areas of public sector employment. That requires in-house or in-service training opportunities and this program will address that need. It will also provide cadetships, traineeships and other pre-training opportunities to increase opportunities for those not yet in the employ of the public sector to obtain employment in that sector.

That will require exemptions under the Equal Opportunity Act to enable this form of positive discrimination to take place, and we will seek that exemption, as we did previously as regards all suitably qualified Aboriginal teacher education graduates being given job offers, an initiative founded by this Government in 1983.

I look forward to this new program, which will cost the Government $400 000, alongside the Office of Employment and Training initiative totalling $645 000 this year to assist on issues of Aboriginal employment, increasing the right of Aboriginal people in this State to participate in employment opportunities in both the public sector and the private sector.

MARINELAND

Mr BECKER: Can the Minister of State Development and Technology say what is his Government's attitude to the viability of the proposed Marineland redevelopment and will he initiate action to have union bans on the work lifted to demonstrate that the Government is behind this important and valuable tourist attraction? I have been informed that senior officers of the Minister's department have had discussions over the past three weeks with Tribond Developments Pty Ltd, the proponents of the redevelopment. The company has a $9 million Government guarantee on loans to fund the project but is seeking amendments to its conditions in the light of unforeseen events since the Government approved the guarantee.

In a letter to the Department of State Development and Technology dated 16 August, Tribond also sought the Government's 'urgent assistance' with negotiations with the unions which have stopped all work on the project. However, I understand that the department's view, despite evidence to the contrary provided by the company, is that Tribond faces financial difficulties.

Information provided to me indicates that the department has not taken into sufficient account the impact on Tribond's finances of continuing union bans and that immediate action by the Government to have those bans lifted could help to ensure that this project does proceed.

The Hon. L.M.F. ARNOLD: Officers of the Department of State Development and Technology have been involved in discussions with the parties regarding Marineland and they have been rigorously pursuing the issue of the commercial viability of that project. The question now asked of me by the honourable member seems to imply that we should perhaps affect those discussions in some way that might not be true to true commercial discussions. However, it is not the responsibility, the obligation, or the job of that department to involve itself in industrial relations matters that are more properly the arena of other departments.

We are concerned about the ongoing viability of any project and, if it is being suggested that we are paying insufficient account to commercial questions, I would dispute that. My advice from officers of the Department of State Development and Technology is that they are paying very close account to the key issues of commercial viability and I do not wish that those key pivotal issues be swept under the carpet by an attempt to have us believe that other issues are really the cause of any problem that people may be facing. I am not even sure that, at this stage, there is a ban on that project, but I can say that we are sure that we are following through all the figures that have been provided to us on the ongoing viability or otherwise of that project.

In the past we have offered our support and we will continue to offer our support in those areas in which it is the rightful responsibility of that department to be involved.

ELECTRICITY TRUST

Mr De LAINE: Can the Minister of Mines and Energy say how many people at the Osborne power station are employed in generating electricity and how many are employed for other reasons? Last Tuesday, the Leader of the Opposition claimed that 193 people were employed at the Osborne power station although it generated only .03 per cent of the State's power. The Leader further claimed that this was due to the fact that union officials dictate policy.

The Hon. J.H.C. KLUNDER: I thank the honourable member for his concern because it is quite clear that, last Tuesday, the Leader of the Opposition used figures completely out of context. He hinted at very great inefficiencies in ETSA and further indicated that those inefficiencies were union induced. Both of those claims are completely spurious and need to be refuted. First, I will speak about the indicators of the efficiency in ETSA. Opposition members have been telling us that they have been doing research into ETSA and I assume that they have found the same indicators as I will now produce to the House.

There are two major indicators, one which deals with the number of staff that an authority such as ETSA employs with regard to the number of installed megawatts of power. That gives an indication of the number of people who are working and the amount of electricity supply that can be generated. In this respect, a lean organisation is one that has the fewest number of employees per installed megawatts of power. I will give the House the comparative figures for the Australian mainland States. Victoria has 3.1 employees for every installed megawatt of power; Western Australia has 2.51 employees; New South Wales has 2.34 employees; and Queensland has 2.24 employees.

Members interjecting:

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

The Hon. J.H.C. KLUNDER: I do not mind a bit of braying and yapping, but I agree that it would be better if we did not have it. As I was saying, Queensland has 2.24 employees per installed megawatt and South Australia has 1.98 employees, which makes it considerably leaner and more efficient than the Australian average and any other electricity authority.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the Premier to order and I warn the honourable member for Coles.

The Hon. J.H.C. KLUNDER: The second indicator deals with the ratio between employees and customers of ETSA, so it is not directed at the amount of power generated but at the distribution of that power. With this indicator, the higher the number of customers per employee, the leaner the organisation. New South Wales has 80 customers per employee; Victoria has 89 customers; Western Australia has 97 customers; Queensland has 100 customers; and South Australia has 119 customers. Very clearly, on that scale, ETSA shows up again as a lean and very capable organisation.

Let me now deal with the exact point that the honourable Leader raised last Tuesday; namely, that 193 employees were generating power at the Osborne power station. He is wrong. The number of people is not 193, 150 or 100; it is not even 50—there are 40 people generating electricity at the Osborne power station. What the Leader does not know is that there is an organisation called Osborne Services which employs 139 people in various jobs. Let me give the House some examples of those jobs: there is a building group which consists of bricklayers, carpenters, painters, plumbers and builders labourers who work all over the State for ETSA and who probably would not have the faintest idea how to generate power even if they were asked.

It also comprises a foundry and pattern making organisation which is capable of casting ferrous and non-ferrous metals for places all over the State. There is an electrical service which provides electrical and instrument maintenance for places like Osborne, the mobile diesel plant, Kangaroo Island and the Port Lincoln power plant, as well as any other place in the State where it happens to be required. It contains a mechanical plant, a machine shop and a boiler shop, and there are people at the Osborne power station who do not generate electricity but who do generate steam for the neighbouring ICI plant. The same situation applies to the Thomas Playford plant where over half the staff are actually there for the maintenance of both the Playford and the Northern power station plants.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Notwithstanding the amount of interjection, the Minister has had sufficient time. I ask him to wind up his answer.

The Hon. J.H.C. KLUNDER: Certainly Sir. All I want to say is that we do have a lean, efficient and improving organisation; so lean and efficient that this year it reduced electricity prices in real terms, and this can be compared with the Leader's Government which, on 1 July 1981, raised electricity prices by 19.8 per cent. I do not think that the Leader is into running this State; he is into running the State down.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member for Davenport.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! For the second time I call the Minister of Health to order. The honourable member for Davenport.

NOARLUNGA HOSPITAL

Mr S.G. EVANS: I direct my question to the Minister of Health. Does the Government now have a joint venture partner for the development of the Noarlunga Hospital? If so, who is that partner and, if not, was the Government forced to go it alone because it could not attract a joint venture partner? During the 1985 election the Government promised a joint venture development of this hospital and subsequently announced that Mutual Community would be its partner. However, Mutual Community later pulled out of the negotiations when differences arose over the Government's insistence on its running the operating theatres and private and public patients facilities as one.

Since the withdrawal of Mutual Community, to my knowledge there has been no public announcement that another partner has been found, even though the Minister has been quoted in the press this week as saying that construction work will begin next February and the project will cost $26 million.

If the Government has found a partner, can the Minister also explain who will control the hospital's joint services, such as the operating theatre, intensive care and the provision of food for patients?

The Hon. F.T. BLEVINS: I thank the honourable member for his question. He is quite correct: there has been no

public announcement at this stage. A public announcement will be made when the Government and the joint developers suggest that the time is appropriate. The hospital will go ahead, and money was allocated in the capital works program: it is there for all to see.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. F.T. BLEVINS: Yes, it is there for all to see. I know that this will interest my colleagues who come from the southern areas, and there are a lot of them; in fact, I do not think that any members opposite have any electoral relationship with this area at all. So, I think that that is a very clear indication of who the people in the south prefer to associate with electorally. I am delighted that the member for Davenport has some fond memories of his old area.

Mr S.G. Evans interjecting:

The Hon. F.T. BLEVINS: That may well be. The honourable member says that he could have represented them still, but that was something that the Liberal Party could not achieve. When it is appropriate to name the joint venture partners, they will be named and a public announcement made.

SOUTH ROAD

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: Can the Minister of Transport tell the House whether the plans for the widening of South Road now being implemented in the section between the Glenelg tram line and Emerson overpass include provision of medianisation in that section and further south through to Quinlan Avenue, St Marys? I can understand your interest in this matter, Mr Speaker. An article 'Medianisation of Arterial Roads' by Mr Ron W. Scriven, Principal Traffic Engineer, South Australian Highways Department, in the July issue of *Highway Engineering in Australia* put forward survey results which confirm not only the effectivness of medians as a road safety measure but also show that there is an economic basis for their use.

The Hon. G.F. KENEALLY: I am able to confirm that it is the intention of the Highways Department to install median strips on new widened sections of South Road. The article to which the honourable member refers by the Highways Department engineer, Mr Scriven, clearly states the facts of safety and economy involved in the building of medians. This Government took a decision, which the honourable member was party to about two years ago, to place median strips on major State and urban arterial roads where the width of the roads would accommodate such medians. to provide storage space for vehicles making right-hand turns and to free up traffic flows. That also provides a safe refuge for people seeking to cross the road and, in a real sense, controls movement along traffic lanes. All the survey material shows that the installation of medians reduces road accidents by about 33.3 per cent. It has a beneficial effect from a road safety point of view as well as savings in economic terms.

I would split the program into three sections: first, from Anzac Highway to the Emerson overpass; from the Emerson overpass to Daws Road; and from Daws Road to Quinlan Avenue, Clovelly Park. From Anzac Highway to the Emerson overpass, the median will be installed in conjunction with the widening program. Relocation of services is presently occurring, as the honourable member has pointed out, and road works are expected to start in October 1988—shortly.

From the Emerson overpass to Daws Road, the medians will be part of the widening program and road works are expected to begin early in 1989 and finish late in 1990. From Daws Road to Quinlan Avenue, Clovelly Park, the median is due to be installed in November-December 1988. It will also be tied in with the existing median running to Sturt Road. Medians are an important part of the Government's road safety strategy, and I certainly commend the honourable member for the support he has given the Government in developing such a policy.

MV *TROUBRIDGE*

Mr INGERSON: Does the Minister of Marine's support for a service to Kangaroo Island by the *Troubridge* demonstrate the Government's lack of confidence in the *Island Seaway*? The Government has had discussions with a company which plans to purchase the *Troubridge* to provide a service to a number of South Australian destinations. As well, discussions have occurred with the four unions involved to allow the project to proceed. The proposals put to the Government include a service between Port Adelaide and Kingscote. I have been informed that the Minister has told the company that the Government has no objection to the use of the *Troubridge* for this purpose, despite the Government's repeated assertions that the *Island Seaway* is adequate to meet all the needs of Kangaroo Island.

The Hon. R.J. GREGORY: I thank the honourable member for his question. It is true that representatives of an organisation have approached the Government with respect to the future use of the *Troubridge* and has suggested that we should get out of the road and let them provide a service to Kangaroo Island, Ceduna, Port Pirie, Whyalla, Kingscote and, I think, some islands in Boston Bay. One service would take 63 hours, which would mean a reduction in the service to Kangaroo Island. The State Government has given a guarantee to the people of Kangaroo Island that the *Island Seaway* will be there for a long time to come.

We will be providing this service and we will not withdraw the *Island Seaway*, as was suggested by this person, so that this organisation could have a free go. Advice I have received indicates that at present the service to Kangaroo Island costs passengers about $25 a ticket and, if this organisation were to operate the *Troubridge* at the cost we know it takes to operate that vessel, a ticket would cost each passenger $125. Clearly, that means that ordinary people would not be able to use the service. This House has been advised previously of the high cost of providing the *Troubridge* service and the reduction in cost with the *Island Seaway*. To slightly increase the fare annually to cover the *Island Seaway's* operating costs would still be cheaper than the operating cost of the *Troubridge*.

WORKCOVER

The Hon. R.K. ABBOTT: Will the Minister of Labour tell the House what action WorkCover is taking in relation to employers who have poor safety records?

The Hon. R.J. GREGORY: I thank the honourable member for Spence—

Mr S.J. Baker interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. R.J. GREGORY: WorkCover is successful and has made many crucial industries in this State more competitive. Industries such as manufacturing, forestry, primary production, transport, mining, construction and many others have achieved substantial reductions in premiums under WorkCover. It is a vast improvement on the old workers compensation system. WorkCover provides substantially

lower premiums in many areas. However, those premiums could be even lower if it was not for the appalling performance of a small number of employers who refuse to properly protect their workers from injury. Figures recently supplied on the performance of this small group of employers is very disturbing. WorkCover has identified 40 companies whose total cost of claims in the first nine months was in excess of $6 million. When one considers the fact that WorkCover encompasses more than 50 000 employers and that it collected total levies of $134 million in its first nine months of operation, the impact of this small group of poor performers is quite clear.

The claims cost of the worst companies is generally between 15 per cent and 20 per cent of payroll. When this is considered against a maximum levy rate of 4.5 per cent, it is clear that these employers are being heavily subsidised by those employers who have generally good records. Of this group of the 40 worst employers, two have claims costs of three times their payroll and one has a claims frequency greater than 100 per cent. This means that on average each worker has at least one injury per year. The worst employer in this group has a claims frequency of 300 per cent, which works out to an average of three injuries per employee each year. If employers complain about the rising cost of workers compensation, they need look no further than at some of their fellow employers. It is certainly not the benefit structure, the greedy workers or the alleged bureaucratic inefficiency that is to blame. WorkCover is not prepared to accept such poor performance from a small group of employers.

Mr Lewis interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. R.J. GREGORY: WorkCover has entered into discussions with those 40 employers and has identified that they have serious management problems that need to be quickly remedied. WorkCover has established a pilot program that will attempt to offer these employers practical assistance so that they can help themselves to reduce this unacceptably high rate of injury that is being inflicted on their workers. It is a first in Australia and possibly in the world for an organisation such as WorkCover to meet some of the costs of such a program. If any of these employers fail to respond to this assistance and an effort is not made and real results are not achieved, WorkCover has the power to increase levies and, I am told, it will not hesitate to do so.

COMPUTING SYSTEMS REVIEW

Mr S.J. BAKER: My question is directed to the Premier as the Minister in charge of technology information. Will the Government adopt the recommendation of the Auditor-General and initiate a review of major computing systems being introduced in the public sector? It happens to be his portfolio, by the way.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr S.J. BAKER: The Auditor-General has expressed concern about the escalating cost of these systems—in particular the Justice Information System and the on-line registration and licence system of the Motor Registration Division of the Transport Department. In 1984 the estimated cost of the Justice Information System was $14 million—or $19.6 million currently. However, the Auditor-General has now reported that the final cost could go as high as $50 million, and that is without the courts being involved. The Motor Registration Division's on-line system was costed at $4.5 million in 1985 or $5.7 million in current dollars, but this has now blown out to $11 million. All of this has happened since the Premier took control of this area.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr S.J. BAKER: At the same time, delays in implementing both of these systems is 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 and operating them under control, according to the Auditor-General. The capital and operational cost of these systems now has an annual cost to the budget approaching $50 million. Because of this, the major escalation in the cost of these new systems and plans by the Government Computing Centre to spend $5.3 million this financial year, the Auditor-General has recommended a major independent review.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: Yes, I am certainly aware of all those issues. I might say, incidentally, in terms of ministerial involvement, the Minister of State Development and Technology, with his particular jurisdiction and skills, has a delegated responsibility for this area. Of course, in relation to specific areas, like the Justice Information System, obviously the Attorney-General has a role with my colleague, and I have certainly been involved in the financial implications of some of these systems. However, I do not profess to have a technical knowledge of computer systems—it is a very specialist area. The issues identified by the Auditor-General are certainly of concern to the Government, and indeed a considerable amount of action has been taking place on them.

The Auditor-General identified the Justice Information System and assessments. The estimated expenditure stated in his report is based on certain predictions and conclusions which also take into account the anticipated pay-back period, and so on. We are certainly working in the course of the current intensive investigation into JIS to ensure that those sorts of costs are not incurred. About $14 million has been spent on the system so far. It is just at the stage where the system is in place and will begin to show some very tangible benefits, and that will provide us with an opportunity to look at this. Incidentally, I might say that the JIS project—

Mr S.J. Baker interjecting:

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: Well, the member for Mitcham might be interested in this because he said a minute ago that all this has happened under the current Government. In fact, the JIS concept and system was started under the previous Tonkin Government. It appears that the honourable member is not aware of that fact. This Government proceeded with it because it seemed a sensible thing to do and we still believe that. The Motor Registration Division system is a separate system. It was the subject of a major report from the Public Accounts Committee—its 56th report. The member for Mitcham, I think, has overlooked that fact or is not aware of it, but other members on his side would be aware of it. Aspects of the initial cost benefit and assessment are being examined by the Government Management Board. There have been problems in the system, we concede that, but it was devised not as a new system but one to replace an outdated back system for the processing of registrations and licences. In other words, it has operated in one form or another since the late 1960s, and this is an attempted refinement.

The Government Computing Centre's viability has also been referred to. It is under very intensive surveillance. The Government Management Board has been working with the Department of Services and Supply management to ensure that it is viable. At this time it is financially viable. It does generate sufficient revenue to cover its costs, and that can

be attested by my colleague the Minister of Transport who has that area under his responsibility. As the nature of information technology changes, so one has to keep the role of the GCC under review. That is taking place. At this stage no need is seen for a formal review as proposed by the Auditor-General, but certainly there will have to be a further intensive examination and a response will be made to the Auditor-General on that point.

Finally, regarding the justification of computing projects referred to again, it is true that there is some movement towards justifying computing system development on the basis of its overall benefits and not just because of cost savings, but it is difficult to balance out. Often one goes into this process being told that certain savings in staff will result but they do not seem to materialise. However, on the other hand, there is no question that the benefits, in terms of efficiency of the service, processing and so on, which are felt by the public and the users of the Government services, can be seen readily.

Regarding the use of information technology by Government, a national survey in 1987 showed that on a relative basis as to the size of our public sector we were one of the lowest users of information technology. A number of our computer based systems have been highly acclaimed. I do not know whether the member for Mitcham is aware that the Lands Department's land ownership and tenure system is regarded as a world leader in its area. Devised and developed within our public sector, that system is a high level computer based system. The Engineering and Water Supply Department's revenue system has also been successful. The Totalizator Agency Board's computer system is regarded as the best system for TAB in the country. Again, it is a national leader. It has been reviewed and the system that has been devised here has been picked up in other States. However, the member for Mitcham would not be aware of that and one must put that into the balance. The Marine and Harbors Department's shipping information system, again, is a successful in-house devised computer based system.

So, our overall record is very good indeed. Certainly, this is a difficult area that is highly complex and I do not profess to understand such technical areas, but we have experts who do so. Such systems must be kept under review, because technology changes rapidly indeed. I commend to the member for Mitcham not just the criticisms but also, as the Auditor-General himself points out in his report, the many good things which are happening and which should be seen in the overall picture. My colleague the Minister of State Development and Technology has commented on those on a number of occasions and no doubt he will do so in future.

SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE

Mr DUIGAN: Will the Minister of Community Welfare make strong, urgent and immediate representations to her Federal colleague the Minister for Social Security to ensure that the Adelaide regional office of his department is not closed? I have received numerous requests from organisations based in the city on behalf of people who receive their pension from the Adelaide regional office. These include letters from the Adelaide Volunteer Service, the South Australian Council of Social Services, the Compulsive Neurosis Support Group, and the North Adelaide Women's Shelter. In its letter, the last named organisation says that it services over 500 people a year and that a large percentage of the women using its services get their supporting parent's benefit from that office and that they find the easy access to the office one of its most significant elements. Apart from those organisations, the Australian Public Service Association and a number of individuals who receive pensions from that office have written to me saying that they would be extremely disadvantaged if they could not get their benefits from and use the services of the Adelaide regional office.

The Hon. S.M. LENEHAN: I thank the member for Adelaide for his question. I know that he is concerned about this matter. To give him a direct answer: yes, I will certainly make strong and urgent representations to my Federal colleague the Minister for Social Security on this matter. I, too, have been approached and I am aware of a number of organisations that are vitally concerned about this proposed closure. I am also informed that the office has about 6 000 counter inquiries each fortnight and that about 3 000 clients are registered with it. I am also aware that some of these clients are not just from the immediate Adelaide area but come from as far away as the Adelaide Hills and Kangaroo Island, and they would be expected to use services provided by the offices at Parkside and Torrensville. This would not be convenient to those people as well as to the others.

I am concerned that there would be no Department of Social Security office in the central business district and that the number of transient people who use this centre would therefore be disadvantaged. I believe that access between the Department of Social Security and the Commonwealth Employment Service in the city should be maintained rather than split. The Department of Social Security, as recently as April, highlighted to the House of Representatives Standing Committee its aim of ensuring that all its offices should be well located with easy access to public transport, readily accessible to people with disabilities and, where possible, be colocated with Commonwealth Employment Service offices. A move away from the city by the Department of Social Security office would seem to me to run counter to this objective and I am therefore delighted to tell the honourable member that I will take up this matter urgently and seriously with my Federal counterpart.

PUBLIC WORKS STANDING COMMITTEE

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

That pursuant to section 18 of the Public Works Standing Committee Act 1927, the members of this House appointed to that committee have leave to sit on that committee during the sittings of the House today.

Motion carried.

SITTINGS AND BUSINESS

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

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday 4 October at 2 p.m.

Motion carried.

ADOPTION BILL

The Hon. S.M. LENEHAN (Minister of Community Welfare) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to provide for the adoption of children; to repeal the Adoption of Children Act 1967; to amend the Children's Protection

and Young Offenders Act 1979; and for other purposes. Read a first time.

The Hon. S.M. LENEHAN: I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Adoption is an issue that has touched the lives of thousands of South Australians. There would be few people in our State who do not know someone who has been adopted, who has adopted a child, or who has relinquished a child for adoption. In fact, in the past three years since the Government undertook the first major review of adoption legislation in South Australia in 20 years, the experiences, both positive and negative, of many of these people have been brought to the attention of the public.

What was once a taboo subject has become an area of greater enlightenment in the 1980s, and it is this enlightenment which has highlighted the need for change to legislation that was largely developed amidst a set of social values, beliefs and conditions that are now more than 20 years old. Adoption is about the needs of children to have a secure, loving and nurturing environment in which to grow up, and a family in which they belong for a lifetime. It has achieved this for most of the thousands of children who have been adopted in this State. But adoption can be a highly emotive and sensitive issue which is also about grief and loss, biological and social parent/child relationships and a human need to find one's identity and heritage within both the biological and social contexts. To deal with a range of human needs, emotions and relationships, adoption legislation and practice need to be flexible, responsive and up to date.

Members will recall that in October 1987 a new Adoption Bill was introduced in another place. In the event, the Bill was referred to a select committee, which reported in April of this year. Perhaps, the most sensitive aspect of the proposed changes in the original Bill was the provision for adopted people and birth parents to have access to information about each other upon the adopted persons reaching the age of 18 years. Other areas of particular concern to members of the select committee included provision for single people to adopt children in special circumstances, and for *de facto* marriage relationships to be considered equally with lawful marriage in determining a couple's eligibility to adopt a child. The legislation before members today reflects the deliberations of the select committee. Where the committee's recommendations are not reflected in this Bill, it is because they are more appropriately included in the regulations or in the practice of the department, and not because they have been overlooked.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The Bill retains as its primary consideration the best interests of the child and the development of a modern adoption service that keeps pace with changing social attitudes and circumstances. Subject to this, the interests of all parties in the adoption process have been addressed, and the legislation incorporates changes which affect all groups. Before I address the specific changes inherent in this legislation I will briefly state the principles under which the Government believes a modern adoption service should operate.

1. Children are best cared for in a permanent family environment. Wherever possible, children are entitled to be cared for by their natural parents, with services to assist and support them when necessary. (Although the diminishing number of babies becoming available for adoption presents difficulties for couples wishing to adopt, it is in part a reflection of a society that is better enabling children to grow up in the families into which they are born.)

2. Where natural parents are unable or unwilling to provide this care, or where they choose not to do so, the community has a responsibility to provide a range of alternatives for the care of children. Adoption is one of these alternatives.

3. In all matters relating to the placement of a child outside the care of the child's own parents, the best interests of the child should be paramount. Adoption, therefore, is a service for children, with the aim of finding families who can provide the care and nurturing each individual child needs. Adoption is not a service for couples who are seeking children for their families. It follows then that services for infertile couples, including information and counselling, lie outside the ambit of an adoption service.

4. Categories of children available for adoption have changed. The so-called 'traditional' adoption of healthy newborn Caucasian babies now represents less than 10 per cent of adoptions. The basis for categorising children differently should only be that their needs differ in some way, and that their needs can best be met through the development of discrete categories. (For example, children with special needs are separately categorised, so that specialised recruitment of parents can take place).

5. Since adoption placements intimately and permanently affect the lives of the children and families concerned, they should be arranged and followed up only by properly trained people, with adequate resources made available to them.

6. Adoption is only one of a range of options for the care of children outside their families of origin. Adoption practices should respond to current social attitudes and practices for the care of children, and should ensure before an adoption is finalised that this is the best option available in each individual case for the best interests of the child. Each application for adoption, then, should be assessed on the basis of the interests of each child concerned.

7. The range of adoptive parents should reflect the diversity of families in our society. Selection should include professional assessment and counselling. It should also include methods of education and self-selection, so that parents can make more informed decisions about whether or not to adopt. Final decisions should be based on a professional assessment, and in the interests of the child.

8. It is incumbent upon those who arrange adoptions to ensure the availability of adequate counselling services about all aspects of adoption.

9. A modern adoption service should reflect current social attitudes about the equal rights of individuals to access to information, including information about birth parents and circumstances of adoption. It should recognise that secrecy in adoption is not always in the best interests of the child.

10. The provision of care for children is the responsibility of families and the community. Adoption agencies should make use of the resources of both, and involve both in the development of policies, services and resources.

11. As one option in a range of alternative services for the care of children, adoption services should develop and maintain strong links with other forms of alternative child care, so that the best option can be sought for each child referred.

12. Given that the needs of children in Australian society do not differ markedly from State to State, and given the mobility of the Australian population, States should strive for national uniformity in policy, practice and legislation about adoption wherever possible. Such uniformity is close to occurring for inter-country adoptions.

13. The policies of a modern adoption service should be in line with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination policies and legislation in South Australia. Children's interests

are served by their being raised in an environment of equal opportunity and anti-discrimination.

14. The same principles which apply to a modern adoption service should also apply to other alternatives for the permanent care of children.

This Bill repeals the Adoption of Children Act 1967, although a number of provisions of that Act will be retained. The Government is repealing the Act because of the magnitude of the changes, and to highlight the importance of these changes to the public and professional practitioners. Essential issues only are contained in the legislation, and administrative issues will appear later in the regulations.

I thank all those who have been involved in the lengthy but important process of reviewing our adoption legislation and, in particular, my predecessor the Hon. John Cornwall. This Bill is the result of considerable consultation and research, and I believe it has achieved a good balance between the indisputable rights of adopted people and birth parents to information about their origins or the children they placed and the need to protect the privacy of individuals who may not wish their present lives to be disrupted by their past. More importantly, however, the Bill sets the scene for far more positive and open adoption practices into the future, allowing the flexibility in legislation to deal with the variety of circumstances and need in which children find themselves, hence allowing our community to better care for the children for whom we have responsibility.

The explanation covers a number of issues, including: openness in future adoptions; openness in past adoptions; information about or for adopted minors; adoption of Aboriginal children and stepchildren; consent for adoption; limited consent; eligibility to adopt; single parent adoption; marriage and *de facto* relationships; overseas adoptions; appeal provisions; and adoption terminology. Because of its length, I seek leave to have the remainder of the explanation inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

Remainder of Explanation

OPENNESS IN FUTURE ADOPTIONS

A major thrust of this Bill, in both provision and spirit, is towards more openness in the whole of the adoption process. The Bill promotes the notion that adoption no longer needs to be an entirely secret process, that children can and do understand the concept of adoption, and that birth parents do not just forget about their children when they place them for adoption. Subject then to the need to protect the interests of the child, and to normal confidentially practices, the Bill allows for greater degrees of openness to be negotiated in future adoptions.

Past secrecy in adoption practices has been largely the result of the stigma attached to the illegitimacy of children, and the felt need to protect them from this. As well, there has been a stigma attached to infertility, but as medical science has made us more aware of the variety of causes of this condition, and of its relatively common occurrence (approximately 1 in 7 couples in Australia are infertile), couples have been able to seek support from each other and to openly discuss the grief and pain they feel. Social attitudes to single parenthood have also changed, such that more and more mothers who have relinquished children for adoption in conditions of shame and secrecy are now able to talk about their experiences. Mothers now relinquishing children do so in an environment of greater choice, and with the expectation that they will continue legitimately to care about the well-being of their children.

Hence this Bill provides that, for all adoptions arranged after the proclamation of the new Act, the adopted child will, upon reaching the age of 18 years, have access to his or her original birth certificate and to identifying information about his or her birth parents that was available to the Director-General of Community Welfare at the time of the adoption. Similarly, birth parents will be able to find out the adoptive identity of children they placed when those children reach 18.

However, the Bill further allows that for all children who are adopted, greater degrees of openness will be possible during the child's minor years when all parties agree. Some adoptions recently arranged in South Australia have involved the exchange of information between adoptive and relinquishing parents, or their meeting on a first names basis. While ongoing contact between birth parents and adopted children does occur now in other States and other parts of the world, this is not common yet in South Australia (it has occurred where the child is adopted at an older age and is fully aware of who his or her parents are), and neither is there any intention to subject any parties in the adoption process to any more openness than they are prepared to agree to.

The select committee recommended that the degree of openness in an adoption be negotiated, through an intermediary, at the time of placement or shortly thereafter, that it must have the full agreement of both adoptive and relinquishing parents, must be recorded in writing, and lodged with the Director-General. Further, the committee recommended that willingness to participate in an open adoption not be used as a criterion for the selection of adoptive parents.

The Bill specifically provides for information exchange when all parties agree. Let me assure members, however, that with the exception that adoptive parents are now and will continue to be required to make a commitment to tell their children that they are adopted, any further degree of openness will be by negotiation, through the department as an intermediary, and there will be no pressure on the adoptive parents to comply with the wishes of other parties. Selection of adoptive parents will not be determined by the couple's willingness to disclose or exchange information. The Government recognises that, if a child's interests are to be truly served, adoptive parents need to be free to exercise their parental rights and responsibilities to raise their children without unnecessary disruption.

Having said this, the kinds of openness that will be possible will include:

1. Retaining the child's original birth certificate unchanged, and simply endorsed with the names of adoptive parents. This will overcome the present anomaly that when a step-parent adopts a child whose father has died, the original father's name is removed from the child's birth certificate, even though the child can remember full well who is his or her father was.

2. Exchange of identifying information about the child and/or parents at the time of placement or at a future date when all parties are in agreement.

3. Exchange of non identifying information at the time of placement or at a future date, where parties are willing to provide that information.

4. Exchange of information between adoptive and birth parents regarding the progress of the child, with possible exchange of gifts at significant times.

5. In some cases, the birth parents having access to the child. However, I stress again that this would only be when all parties agree and such action is considered to be in the interests of the child.

These moves represent a considerable step forward for our existing but very outdated legislation, but will in fact bring our new legislation into line with emerging practice and enable the department to better serve the interests of the children who are its primary concern.

OPENNESS IN PAST ADOPTIONS

Sections 27 and 41 of the Bill relate to the conditions under which parties to an adoption may receive information about their origins or the children they relinquished. They have been developed in response to overwhelming numbers of submissions from adopted people, birth parents and adoptive parents regarding the importance to an adoptee of knowing about his or her origins, as well as the recognition that many birth parents still have strong feelings about their children long after the adoption has taken place. There are very few adoptive parents left who would harshly say, 'She gave the child up—she no longer has any rights,' or who would feel threatened by their children's need to search for their origins. In fact the evidence from the UK, Canada, New Zealand and Victoria, where access to information has been allowed, suggests that adoptive parents have nothing to fear. The major impact of receiving information about one's origins or about one's child placed for adoption is usually a satisfied yearning to know and some psychological healing.

However, the select committee also saw the need to protect the privacy of the small numbers of people who had not expected that information would be released about them, and who would not wish it to be released, for whatever reason. The Bill now allows persons adopted before the commencement of the Bill and their birth parents the right to protection of their privacy by placing a veto on the release of information about themselves. It allows them to direct:

1. that no identifying information or birth certificate be released about themselves, or
2. that no current identifying information be released, and/or
3. that no assistance be given to the other party by the department to make contact with them.

Such directions will be received by the Director-General in a manner approved by the Director-General, will be valid for five years, and may be revoked or renewed at any time. Further, it is my intention to move that the implementation of sections 27 and 41 of the Bill, relating to access to information, be delayed for a period of six months to allow sufficient time for publicity to be given to these provisions and veto directions to be lodged with the department if desired.

The select committee heard evidence from the Department of Social Welfare in New Zealand that a veto system exists in that country. The system proposed here is a more flexible extension of that system, which allows for the circumstance in which an adopted person or birth parent may not wish to make contact, but may be happy to have past or current identifying information released about themselves. The evidence from both the New Zealand and Victorian experience suggests that very few birth parents and adopted people do not want identifying information released, and that those who do not want contact with the other party are often happy to provide some information about themselves instead. Hence, there is a clear need for a flexible system which will allow for compromises where the adopted person or birth parent is willing.

The Bill further provides that, in the absence of a specific direction referred to previously, adult adoptees will be entitled to identifying information about their natural parents and, with the authorisation of the Director-General, a copy of the original birth certificate. Natural parents will be entitled to identifying information about the adopted adult. Both parties may seek the assistance of the Director-General to find the other, and both must attend an interview at which the implications of their search for information will be explained and their expectations explored, prior to the release of such information. Whilst this 'interview' is in no way intended to be therapeutic counselling, it is important that adoptees and birth parents have a realistic understanding of their rights to information, and of the kinds of responses they might expect if contacting the other party. This will help to avoid the disappointment experienced by some adoptees, for example, with 'fairy tale' expectations about their birth parents.

The Bill also enables a birth parent to obtain, with the authorisation of the Director-General, a copy of the original birth certificate of the child at any time, as it serves no identifying purpose and contains only information of which that parent is aware anyway, but is an important record of the birth for the parent. At present, relinquishing parents can only have a copy of their children's birth certificates if they have been issued prior to the adoption. Many relinquishing parents have said that their lack of access to this important document serves as further denial that they ever bore a child, and therefore hinders the resolution of their grief. Any birth certificate issued in these circumstances will, of course, need to be suitably endorsed 'for information purposes only', so that it cannot be used for fraudulent purposes.

INFORMATION ABOUT/FOR ADOPTED MINORS

Whilst the Government supports the notion of openness in adoption practices, and believes that children can and do deal quite positively with the knowledge of their adoption, it is important that the interests of the child, and the rights of adoptive parents to parent the child without undue interference need to be protected. The Bill therefore provides, as did the last Bill, and as is the current practice, conditions under which adopted minors can gain identifying and non-identifying information about their natural parents, and allows the Director-General discretion to release information contrary to these conditions only if such a release can be demonstrated to be necessary for the welfare of the child.

Information of any kind will only be released to adopted minors with the consent of their adoptive parents, and of their birth parents in the case of identifying information. Exceptions to this provision would be rare, but may occur in the case of the death of adoptive parents, or the irretrievable breakdown of an adoption, where the Director-General determines that having further information would be in the interests of the child.

Similarly, information will not be released to a birth parent of an adopted minor without the consent of adoptive parents, and of the child if 12 years and over. The Director-General would only have discretion in this situation if the disclosure of information is deemed to be in the interests of the child. Such a circumstance is difficult to imagine, as even quite serious medical information about a birth parent could be passed from birth to adoptive parents through the department without the need to provide identifying information about the child to the birth parent.

I would reiterate, here, however, that almost 50 per cent of the public comment received by the Government has come from adoptive parents, the vast majority of whom are supportive of their children's search for their origins.

ADOPTION OF ABORIGINAL CHILDREN

The provisions of the Bill for the adoption of Aboriginal children have been extended to include the nationally accepted Aboriginal Placement Principles, as well as a def-

inition of Aboriginal. These principles, already adhered to in the practice of the department, acknowledge the importance for Aboriginal children of growing up as a part of an Aboriginal community, with an awareness of their own identity and culture. The Aboriginal placement principle states that an order for the adoption of an Aboriginal child will not be made except in favour of a member of the child's Aboriginal community who has the correct relationship with the child in accordance with Aboriginal customary law, or if no such person seeks to adopt or care for the child, some other Aboriginal person.

Adoption is not consistent with Aboriginal customary law and culture, which requires that children be raised by people who have the correct relationship with them in their extended families, or within the wider Aboriginal community. Hence, when the permanent legal status of an Aboriginal child needs to be established outside of Aboriginal customary law, guardianship is seen as the preferred option—although adoption will remain a final option if it clearly meets a child's individual and special circumstances. Even so, with the Bill's emphasis on openness, the court would need to ensure that the child's identity as an Aboriginal person would not be lost as a consequence of adoption.

The select committee heard evidence from Aboriginal agencies, groups and communities regarding the injustices caused by some past adoptions of Aboriginal children into white families. In many cases free and informed consent was not given for these adoptions. Whilst the 1987 Bill addressed these issues in its provisions, it is also reasonable to spell out the principles behind these provisions, as a means of reassurance to Aboriginal people of the Government's commitment regarding the long-term care of their children.

ADOPTION OF STEP-CHILDREN

The circumstances in which the Children's Court will grant adoption orders in favour of step-parents are also restricted by this Bill, but are unchanged from the 1987 Bill. The restrictions are based on recommendations of the Family Law Council, arising out of extensive work, that adoption is not always the most appropriate means for securing the permanent legal status of these children, particularly when they have ongoing relationships with the relinquishing parent or his or her extended family. Sometimes such adoptions are used as points of negotiation in divorce settlements and maintenance disputes, which is entirely inappropriate and not a child-focussed use of the adoption process.

With this State's reference of powers to the Commonwealth in relation to the guardianship and custody of children, effective from 1 April of this year, families wishing to secure the legal status of their step-children or relatives will now all be referred to the Family Court, and an adoption order will only be granted if the court first determines that guardianship is not in the best interests of the child.

CONSENT FOR ADOPTION

The provisions of the Bill for the giving of consent for the adoption of a child has been reworded to clarify the intention, but is essentially the same as in the 1987 Bill. Members of the Australian Relinquishing Mothers Society have given evidence that in many cases they were not fully informed of the implications of their consent, or were required to give consent when they were not able emotionally to consider all of the options available to them. Hence, the Bill now provides that a mother cannot give consent until at least three days after she has been counselled, and at least 14 days have elapsed since the birth of the child. The court may decide to accept a consent prior to 14 days if it first determines that there are special circumstances warranting it and it determines that the mother of the child is able to exercise rational judgment, but in any event, consent may not be given before five days after the birth of the child.

It is intended that the regulations will provide that the person who witnesses the signing of consent is not the same person who counsels the parent and that the witness must be satisfied that the parent understands the implications of signing consent and the process for revoking.

As in existing legislation, children 12 years of age and over must consent to be adopted, and may under the new provisions revoke their consent at any time prior to the adoption. In fact the magistrate will now be required to ensure that the child does not wish to revoke his or her consent prior to granting the adoption order.

The period during which a parent may revoke an adoption consent has been reduced from 30 to 25 days, so as not to unduly prolong the time before the child is placed with new parents, but in special circumstances can be extended for a further 14 days. This will mean that the average time before a newborn baby placed for adoption reaches the new adoptive home will be 39 days, compared with the current 35.

LIMITED CONSENT

The Bill also allows for a greater range of limited consent to be given—that is, where the relinquishing parent can nominate who will adopt the child. At present limited consent may only be given where the child is to be adopted by a relative of the parent. This Bill allows birth parents to nominate a guardian, step-parent or foster parent of the child to adopt him or her. In practice this occurs now and is clearly desirable.

No child, for example, who has been well settled in a foster family for five years should be moved to a new family because the parents give consent for adoption if the foster family is willing to continue their care or adopt the child themselves.

In addition to the ability to give limited consent, it is intended that birth parents will have much more involvement in the selection of couples on the prospective adopters register, through a process of examining non-identifying documented profiles of applicants.

ELIGIBILITY TO ADOPT

The selection of the right family to provide a child with permanent, secure and loving care is an onerous task, not to be undertaken lightly. I have already reminded honourable members that adoption is a service for children who need families, and not for families who, for whatever unfortunate circumstances, are seeking children. Adoption criteria, then, need to be based on the ability of couples and individuals to meet the needs of children, and not first and foremost on a perceived need to be 'fair' to couples unable to have children and who may have waited for a long time on a list.

However, the Government does concede that, there being no evidence that infertile couples make better or worse parents than fertile couples, preference may be given to infertile couples for the adoption of the small numbers of locally born babies becoming available for adoption. This also helps to reduce the already large number of assessments that departmental staff must carry out, and keeps the already lengthy waiting time down slightly. Whilst long waiting times are in the main an inconvenience to prospective adoptive parents, they also mean that adopted children tend to have parents who are older than those of other children, which may not be highly desirable.

The current waiting time for a healthy, locally born child is in the range of eight to ten years, but is really unpredict-

able, because of the diminishing numbers of children placed (32 in the year to 30 June), and because of the numbers of couples achieving pregnancies through improving reproductive technology.

Most of the criteria for the selection of adoptive parents are presently contained in the regulations rather than the Act, and few changes are anticipated. Changes include a revision of the age requirements, such that there may no longer be an age gap of more than 40 years between parents and the first child placed for adoption; a requirement that adoption applicants attend mandatory pre-application and pre-approval information sessions; and factors which need to be considered in the qualitative assessment of applicants. Health and residency requirements will not be changed, although physical disability will not in itself disqualify any person's application, and a person's medical condition will only be taken into consideration if it will affect his or her ability to raise the child to adulthood.

SINGLE PARENT ADOPTION

Current legislation allows single people to adopt, where special circumstances exist for specific children. This most commonly means that children with disabilities or special needs are able to find families that are most suited to their needs, and provides the department with some flexibility to place children who might not otherwise be accepted into a family. This Bill makes exactly the same provisions for single applicants as does the present legislation—that is, they may be granted an adoption order only if the court is satisfied that special circumstances exist. The spirit and statement of the Bill is that all adoption orders will be made in the best interests of the child, and whilst many children may best be cared for in a two parent family, and indeed that may be the expectation of the parent relinquishing a child, there are already numbers of single adoptive parents in South Australia who are clearly providing the best possible home for the children in their care.

The select committee heard evidence from two such parents—women caring for children with physical and intellectual disabilities of a quite severe nature. I understand committee members were impressed with the commitment of these parents to their children, which has often been at great financial and emotional expense to themselves. The children in their care are clearly experiencing warm and nurturing family life, and their interests have been far better served than if they had been left to live in institutions. Indeed one of the women gave evidence that she did not think she could have provided the same level of care for her disabled children if she had had a husband, as her time and loyalties would have been divided. One of the women was a widow with a grown family of her own, while the other had never married, and both impressed as capable, committed and caring parents.

I would stress again, however, that the Bill's provision for single parent adoption represents no change from the current provision, and has been widely misunderstood. The department's Special Needs Unit is responsible for finding families for children with special needs, and operates quite differently from other adoption programs. The needs of specific children are carefully matched with what applicants can provide, and an approval to adopt is only given for a specific child. Hence there is no waiting list. Applicants are also given intensive training in the care of a child with disabilities, and more intensive follow-up and support is available.

MARRIAGE AND *DE FACTO* RELATIONSHIPS

Current legislation requires that couples have been married for a period of five years before they can apply to adopt a child. This Bill has the same requirement, but has extended the definition of marriage to include a man and a woman who have lived in a stable domestic relationship for a period of five years. We live in a society today that increasingly equates *de facto* relationships with lawful marriage, in aspects of social, economic and legal significance. Provided that all couples applying to adopt children can demonstrate the quality and commitment of relationship required, it makes sense not to exclude couples, and hence opportunities for children, on the basis of a piece of paper alone. With changing attitudes to marriage in our society it is no longer valid to assert that couples who are not lawfully married are not as committed to one another as couples who are. Indeed commitment might better be measured in the length and quality of a relationship, and in a couple's preparedness to undertake the permanent care of a child.

The select committee considered this matter carefully, and whilst their recommendation was not unanimous (the only matter on which it was not), the majority recommendation was to retain the definition of marriage used in this Bill, and to allow men and women living in stable domestic relationships for at least five years to adopt children, provided of course that they meet all the other requirements as well.

OVERSEAS ADOPTIONS

Approximately 90 children come to South Australia each year from overseas countries for the purpose of adoption by South Australian couples. Although most of these children have been legitimately available for adoption in their country of origin in the past, concerns have been expressed by Australian authorities that some couples 'go shopping' for children, and that some exploitation of birth parents and children has occurred. Two years ago the Social Welfare Ministers of each State, together with the Ministers of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs implemented national guidelines relating to the practice of intercountry adoption in Australia. These guidelines have ensured that all children coming to Australia for adoption have the same rights to a professional and ethical service as do Australian born children, and that couples who do not meet the requirements as prospective adoptive parents are unable to bring a child into the country.

The criteria for adoptive parents contained in this Bill, and those proposed in the regulations, are the same as those set out in the national guidelines on intercountry adoption, and the Bill will not hinder their effective operation.

The Bill does, however, provide for adoption orders made overseas to be recognised in Australia, under conditions laid down in the national guidelines. These include some assurance that the overseas adoption order was a *bona fide* one, that the couple had lived in that overseas country for more than one year, and that the adoption order does not represent a denial of natural justice. This section of the original Bill has been amended, however, since last October, in accordance with the recommendation of the select committee to ensure that adoption orders recognised under previous South Australian adoption legislation continue to be so recognised.

APPEAL PROVISIONS

The Bill contemplates the regulations enabling (as they currently do) applicants to an adoption who have been refused appeal to an Adoption Board. The board is to be constituted from the Adoption Panel. No changes have been made to the 1987 Bill provision, which enables the regulations to add to the board's powers the option to refer matters back to the Director-General for further assessment before making a final decision. This will simply enhance the depth and breadth of the decision-making power of the board.

ADOPTION TERMINOLOGY

The select committee had recommended that the term 'birth parent' be used throughout the legislation instead of the term 'natural parent', after comments from adoptive parents who consider the former term implies they are 'unnatural parents'. 'Natural Parent' is a term in current use, most importantly in the Family Relationships Act. The term 'birth parent', apart from having no accepted legal definition, can only refer to the mother of the child.

Clauses 1 and 2 are formal. Clause 3 repeals the Adoption of Children Act, 1967. Clause 4 is an interpretation provision. Attention is drawn tp the following definitions:

'the Court' means the Children's Court of South Australia constituted of a judge or a magistrate and two justices (at least one of the three being a woman and at least one a man.

'marriage relationship' means the relationship between two persons cohabiting as husband and wife or *de facto* husband and wife.

Marriage according to Aboriginal tradition is recognised for the purposes of the measure under subclause (3).

Clauses 5 and 6 relate to the South Australian Adoption Panel. Clause 5 establishes the panel. The following members will be appointed to the panel by the Minister:

(a) a clinical psychologist;
(b) a specialist in gynaecology;
(c) a specialist in paediatrics;
(d) a specialist in psychiatry;
(e) a legal practitioner;
(f) a social worker;
(g) a nominee of the Director-General;
(h) two persons with special interest in the adoption of children.

Clause 6 sets out the functions of the panel, namely:

(a) to make recommendations to the Minister generally on matters relating to the adoption of children;
(b) to keep under review the criteria in accordance with which the Director-General determines who are eligible to be approved as fit and proper persons to adopt children and to recommend to the Minister any changes to those criteria that the panel considers desirable;
(c) to recommend to the Minister procedures for evaluation of, and research into, adoption;
(d) to make recommendations to the Minister on matters referred by the Minister to the panel for advice; and
(e) to undertake such other functions as may be assigned to the panel by regulation.

Before making any recommendation to the Minister to change the eligibility criteria for prospective adoptive parents, the panel must consult persons who have been approved as eligible to adopt and whose approval may be affected by the recommendation, organisations with a special interest in the adoption of children and any other persons who have, in the opinion of the panel, a proper interest in the matter.

Clause 7 provides that the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration in any proceedings under the measure. Clauses 8 to 14 are general provisions relating to the jurisdiction of the court to make adoption orders, the effect of adoption orders and the circumstances in which adoption orders will be made. Clause 8 gives the court power to make adoption orders. The power is exercisable only where the child is in the State and the applicants for the order are resident or domiciled in the State. Clause 9 provides that where an adoption order is made, the adopted child becomes in contemplation of law the child of the adoptive parents and ceases to be the child of any previous natural or adoptive parents. The clause provides that where one of the natural or adoptive parents of a child dies and the child is adopted by a person who cohabits in a marriage relationship with the surviving parent, the adoption does not exclude rights of inheritance from or through the deceased parent.

Clause 10 requires the court to be satisfied, before making an adoption order in favour of a person who is cohabiting with a natural or adoptive parent of the child in a marriage relationship or is a relative of the child, that adoption is clearly preferable to guardianship in the interests of the child. Clause 11 requires the court to be satisfied, before making an order for the adoption of an Aboriginal child, that adoption is clearly preferable to guardianship in the interests of the child. The clause also requires that the order be made in favour of a member of the child's Aboriginal community who has the correct relationship with the child in accordance with Aboriginal customary law or, if there is no such person seeking to adopt the child, some other Aboriginal person. An order may be made in favour of a person who is not an Aboriginal person only if the court is satisfied that there are special circumstances justifying the making of the order and that the child will retain his or her cultural identity with the Aboriginal people.

Clause 12 sets out criteria affecting prospective adoptive parents. Usually an adoption order will only be made in favour of two persons who have been married (lawfully or *de facto*) for at least five years or in favour of one person who has been married (lawfully or *de facto*) to a natural or adoptive parent of the child for at least five years. The court may make an adoption order in favour of persons who have been married for less than five years or one person who is not married if satisfied that there are special circumstances justifying the making of the order.

Clause 13 provides that an adoption order may be made in respect of a person between 18 and 20 years of age if an applicant has brought up, maintained and educated that person and there are special reasons for making the order. Clause 14 empowers the Supreme Court to discharge an adoption order that was obtained by fraud, duress or other improper means. Clauses 15 to 19 deal with consent to adoption. Clause 15 makes the consent of parents or guardians to an adoption a compulsory requirement. The clause provides that the mother of a child cannot consent to the adoption of the child until five days after giving birth to the child. If the mother purports to consent to the adoption of the child more than five but less than 14 days after the birth of the child, the consent will only be valid if the court recognises it to be valid on being satisfied that there were special circumstances justifying the giving of consent less than 14 days after the birth of the child and that the mother was able to exercise a rational judgment on the question of consent.

Consent of a parent or guardian may be general or may be limited to authorising the adoption by a relative or guardian of the child, a person who is cohabiting with a parent of the child in a marriage relationship or a person in whose care the child has been placed by the Director-General. Certain formalities are required for consent, including compulsory counselling three days before the giving of consent. Consent of a parent or guardian may be revoked within 25 days or, with the approval of the Director-General, 39 days. The consent of the father of a child born outside lawful marriage is not required unless his paternity is recognised under the Family Relationships Act 1975. A person who may be able to establish paternity must be given a reasonable opportunity to do so.

The clause also provides that consent of the parents or guardians of the child is not required if the application is supported by the Director-General, the Director-General certifies that the child entered Australia otherwise than in the charge of a parent or adult relative who proposed to care for the child while in Australia, the child has been in the care of the applicant for at least 12 months and the making of the order would be in the best interests of the child.

Clause 16 provides that an adoption order will not be made in relation to a child over 12 years of age unless the child has consented to the adoption and has had 25 days in which to reconsider that consent and the court is satisfied that the child's consent is genuine and that the child does not wish to revoke consent. The court must interview the child in private for that purpose. Certain formalities are required for consent, including compulsory counselling before the giving of consent.

Clause 17 provides that a consent to adoption given according to an interstate law will be regarded as sufficient for the purposes of the Act. Clause 18 sets out the circumstances in which the court may dispense with consent. The consent of a child over 12 years may be dispensed with if the child is intellectually incapable of giving consent. The consent of any other person may be dispensed with if—

- *(a)* that person cannot, after reasonable enquiry, be found or identified;
- *(b)* that person is in such a physical or mental condition as not to be capable of properly considering the question of consent;
- *(c)* that person has abandoned, deserted or persistently neglected or ill-treated the child;
- *(d)* that person has, for a period of not less than one year, failed, without reasonable excuse, to discharge the obligations of a parent or guardian of the child; or
- *(e)* the court is satisfied that there are other circumstances by reason of which the consent may properly be dispensed with.

Clause 19 enables the court to make an order dispensing with or recognising the validity of a consent before an application for an adoption order has been made. Clauses 20 and 21 deal with the recognition of interstate and overseas adoption orders. Clause 20 provides for the recognition of adoption orders made under the law of the Commonwealth or of a State or Territory. Clause 21 provides for the recognition of overseas orders. The order must have been made in accordance with the law of the country and each applicant for the order must have been domiciled in that country or resident there for at least 12 months. The circumstances in which the order was made must, if they had existed in this State, have constituted a sufficient basis for making the order under the measure and there must have been no denial of natural justice or failure to observe the requirements of substantial justice.

The clause provides that where immediately before the commencement of this Act an adoption order made under the law of a country outside Australia was recognised as having the same effect as an adoption order made in this State, the order continues to be so recognised. Clauses 22 to 27 are general provisions relating to adoption orders.

Clause 22 requires the court before making an order to consider any report prepared by the Director-General on the circumstances of the child and suitability of the prospective adoptive parents and their capacity to care adequately for the child. A copy of the report will be given to the prospective adoptive parents unless the court orders otherwise. The court can also prevent disclosure of the report to any person in appropriate cases. The clause also empowers the court to require prospective adoptive parents to submit evidence of their good health.

Clause 23 empowers the court in making an adoption order to declare the name by which the child is to be known. The child's wishes are to be taken into account. If the child is over 12, the court will not change the child's name against his or her wish. Clause 24 provides that adoption proceedings will not be heard in open court and that records of the proceedings will not be open to inspection. Clause 25 constitutes the Director-General interim guardian of a child if each parent or guardian has consented to adoption of the child in general terms or arrangements for the transfer of guardianship from an interstate officer to the Director-General are complete.

Clause 26 enables the Minister to arrange with prospective adoptive parents to contribute to the support of a child who suffers some physical or mental disability or who otherwise requires special care. Clause 27 deals mainly with the disclosure of information by the Director-General. It requires the Director-General to disclose, to an adopted person who has attained the age of 18 years—

- *(a)* the names, dates of birth and occupations of the person's natural parents and any other information that is in the Director-General's possession that relates to those parents but does not, in the opinion of the Director-General, enable them to be traced; and
- *(b)* the names of any persons who are siblings of the adopted person and who were also adopted and who have attained the age of 18 years, the names of the adoptive parents of any such siblings and any other information that is in the Director-General's possession that relates to those siblings but does not, in the opinion of the Director-General, enable them to be traced.

The Director-General must also disclose, to a natural parent of an adopted person who has attained the age of 18 years, the name of the adopted person, the names of the adoptive parents and any other information that relates to the adopted person but does not, in the opinion of the Director-General, enable that person to be traced. The information must, on request, be disclosed to a relative of the adopted person, if the natural parents are dead. The information may be disclosed before the adopted person turns 18 if certain approvals are obtained: in the case of disclosure to an adopted person, the approval of the adoptive parents and the natural parent if that parent's name is to be disclosed; in the case of disclosure to a natural parent, the approval of the adoptive parents and the adopted person if he or she is at least 12.

A person who was adopted before the commencement of this Act or a natural parent of such a person may direct the Director-General not to disclose his or her name or any other information which, in the opinion of the Director-General, would enable the person to be traced. Such a person may also direct the Director-General not to arrange or assist any meeting between the adopted person and the natural parents. Directions remain in force for a period of five years and may be renewed at the end of such a period. If the disclosure of information is necessary in the interests of the welfare of an adopted person, the Director-General may disclose the information without the required approvals or contrary to any relevant direction.

Clauses 28 to 42 provide for various offences and deal with other miscellaneous matters. Clause 28 provides that an agreement providing payment for the consent of a parent or guardian to an adoption is illegal and void. The clause

makes it an offence to be party to such an agreement, the maximum penalty provided being a fine of $8 000 or imprisonment for two years. Clause 29 makes it an offence to conduct negotiations leading to an adoption order unless the negotiations are conducted by a person or organisation approved by the Director-General. The maximum penalty provided is a fine of $8 000 or imprisonment for two years. The Director-General is given power to withdraw approval under the clause in appropriate circumstances. Negotiations conducted, without fee, by a parent, guardian or relative of the child for adoption by a relative or a person who is cohabiting with a parent of the child in a marriage relationship are exempt from the clause.

Clause 30 makes it an offence to take or entice a child away from a person who is entitled to custody of the child under an adoption order. The maximum penalty provided is a fine of $8 000 or imprisonment for one year. Clause 31 makes it an offence to publish in the news media information that may identify a child the subject of adoption proceedings or the parent or guardian of such a child or any party to such proceedings. The maximum penalty provided is a fine of $15 000. The court or the Director-General may, however, authorise such publication. Clause 32 makes it an offence to advertise in the news media a desire to adopt a child or to have a child placed with adoptive parents or guardians. The maximum penalty provided is a fine of $15 000.

Clause 33 makes it an offence to make a false or misleading statement in connection with a proposed adoption. The maximum penalty provided is a fine of $4 000 or imprisonment for one year. Clause 34 makes it an offence to falsely represent oneself to be a person whose consent to an adoption is required. The maximum penalty provided is a fine of $4 000 or imprisonment for one year. Clause 35 makes it an offence to present a consent document in relation to an adoption knowing that is it forged or obtained by fraud, duress or other improper means. The maximum penalty provided is a fine of $4 000 or imprisonment for one year. Clause 36 makes it an offence for a person who is, or has been, engaged in duties related to the administration of the Act to disclose confidential information obtained in the course of those duties. The maximum penalty provided is a fine of $8 000.

Clause 37 provides that offences under the measure not punishable by imprisonment are summary offences and that offences punishable by imprisonment are minor indictable offences. The clause also provides that a prosecution for an offence against the measure can only be commenced with the consent of the Minister. Clause 38 provides that in proceedings under the measure, where there is no certain evidence of age of a person, a court may act on its own estimate of age. Clause 39 entitles the Director-General to intervene in any proceedings under the measure. It also empowers the court to order that any person who has a proper interest in proceedings under the measure be joined as a party to the proceedings. Clause 40 empowers the court in proceedings under the measure to make orders as to costs, subject to the regulations. Clause 41 deals with entries in the register of births relating to children who are subsequently adopted.

The Principal Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages will normally cancel any relevant entry and make a fresh entry giving the date and place of birth of the child and the names of the persons who are in contemplation of law the parents of the child following the adoption. The court may, on the application of the adoptive parents or the Director-General, order that the entry is not to be cancelled but rather that a note of the names of the adopted parents is to be added to the entry. If either or both of the natural parents are alive, before such an order is made the court must be satisfied that the information relating to the natural parents of the child contained in the entry is known to the child or that the natural parents of the child approve of the child having access to that information.

Access to the information contained in a cancelled entry or in an entry relating to a person adopted before the commencement of the measure may only be allowed (except in certain circumstances) on the authorisation of the Director-General. The Director-General cannot give such an authorisation to a person adopted before the commencement of the measure if the natural parent has directed the Director-General not to do so. The circumstances in which access may be allowed without the authorisation of the Director-General are where access is given to a person who was adopted after the commencement of the measure and who has attained at least 18 years of age or to a natural parent of a person adopted after the commencement of the measure.

Clause 42 gives the Governor regulation making powers. In particular, the regulations may prescribe or make provisions for the criteria on which the eligibility of persons for approval by the Director-General as fit and proper persons to adopt children will be determined and for the keeping of registers of persons so approved and may prescribe or make provisions for the review of decisions of the Director-General relating to those persons and for constituting adoption boards to hear and determine those reviews.

Mr S.J. BAKER secured the adjournment of the debate.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Adjourned debate on motion to note grievances:
(Continued from 7 September. Page 687.)

Mr ROBERTSON (Bright): In joining this debate I wish to endorse points that have been made by previous speakers, most notably my colleague the member for Fisher. I wish to turn to some of the specific allocations which are relevant to my own electorate. I welcome particularly the attention given to the new Hallett Cove kindergarten on Zwerner Drive, Hallett Cove, which is due for commencement in October this year, with completion somewhere between February and April 1989. Total funds committed for that project are $300 000.

In the context that it takes more than one to tango, I would like to take this opportunity to pass on credit to the CSO workers who have staffed the mobile kindergarten under fairly difficult conditions whilst the new kindy is being built. I also express appreciation to Bill Wheatland and his parishioners at the Baptist Church for allowing the mobile kindy to use their building as a venue. I also note the work being done currently and in the past by the parent committee of that kindergarten. I pass on my admiration of them and the job that they have done.

I also welcome the allocation of funding for the Brighton High School extensions, which will involve 24 additional classrooms, including a music complex, language laboratory, commerce suite, art room, science complex and computer rooms. The total to be expended in the coming year will be $4.04 million out of a total of $6.7 million. That will provide yet another excellent school facility on the south-western part of the Adelaide Plains, one which will be used by many of the people in my electorate.

Also on the subject of schools, stage III of the Hallett Cove school, formerly known as the R-10, has received an allocation of $2.06 million in this financial year out of a total of $3.04 million. Stage III will be the high school section, which will contain eight classrooms, two art areas, a ceramics area, music and drama areas, and also a joint use gymnasium which will be funded by both the Marion City Council and the Education Department.

Again, with the knowledge that the community has worked hard for that project, I wish to pay tribute to the work done by the interim school council of the Hallett Cove school. A number of people worked very hard for a number of years on this project and, in the subsequent two years in which the school has been operating, the council, with Jeff Simpson and his colleagues, has been supportive and hardworking. It is also worthy of note that the council has received enormous support from Susan Monks and the staff of the Hallett Cove school.

Turning to other matters: in passing I note with approval the allocation of $1.65 million for the metropolitan sand replenishment program, much of which, of course, will be expended on the rebuilding of the West Beach dunes system to restore the beach between Glenelg North and West Beach. It is quite clear from the amount of erosion during recent storms that a dunes system is needed to buffer the region against further ravages by storms in subsequent winters. It is to be hoped that a dunes system will be built which will be the equal of the system successfully being built in the vicinity of Brighton and Seacliff.

To pick another issue from the budget that will be of interest to my constituents and to many people in the south-western suburbs, I instance the Marion Motor Registration Division office which has been a very overcrowded facility for a number of years, and which has now received $450 000 for rebuilding, which will begin in October this year and should be completed by April next year. For those of us who have spent considerable time queueing there while very hardworking staff have attended to our needs under fairly difficult conditions, I think that will be a welcome addition.

I also welcome the decision by the Government and Marion City Council to proceed with the project wherein the present Marion City Council chambers will become the Marion community services central regional outlet. It will be the headquarters for Southern Domiciliary Care, the Royal District Nursing Society, the Southern Hospice Care Association, the Outreach Service from Glenside Psychiatric Hospital and the Southern Community Health Research Unit. In the current financial year that project will receive a welcome allocation of $1.1 million out of a total of $2.09 million, and this will provide an opportunity to centralise a whole range of very useful and well used community services in the south-western suburbs. I take the opportunity to note my approval of this project and to give my thanks to the Marion council for its involvement.

Farther south, the Noarlunga 120-bed hospital will go ahead, with 90 public and 30 private beds. That project will have level I services—in-patient, out-patient and diagnostic services—and will consume out of the current budget only $2.3 million out of a total of $20 million which has been budgeted for its completion between January next year and March 1990. In this context I give credit to my colleague the Hon. Susan Lenehan for her work over the years in promoting the cause of that hospital. I also note in passing—

Mr Lewis: Honourable members should not be addressed by their names.

Mr ROBERTSON: I take the implied point of order from the honourable member: I was referring to the member for Mawson. I also note in passing that the completion of that hospital will make Brian Wreford a very happy man indeed. Brian has been writing to the *Southern Times* for as long as I can remember. He had the grace to give a great deal of credit to my colleague on the occasion of the announcement of this project. The Noarlunga Health Village will receive some alterations and updating between November this year and February next year, and $425 000 has been allocated in the current budget for that purpose.

Turning to roads, I welcome the proposed widening and reconstruction of South Road, which will be of benefit to my constituents and people in the south in general. The sum of $3.4 million has been allocated in the current financial year out of a total of $11.9 million for that widening and reconstruction, and that innovation will be well and truly welcomed.

I note with approval the 1 500 commencements allocated to the Housing Trust and, in particular, the fact that the trust has been budgeted funds to purchase or convert 475 dwellings, bringing to a total of 1 975 the number of rental units available. Added to the 2 500 HOME low interest loans, which will be available this year, that should have the effect of putting some 4 500 South Australians under roofs and into public housing, which will obviously do a great deal to lessen the impact of housing related poverty in our community.

Also, I welcome the funding allocation of $5.4 million to the Kingston College of TAFE for extensions being conducted at O'Halloran Hill. These extensions will include a workshop for heavy machinery, electronics workshops, metal fabrication, library and resource centre. That project is due for completion in February 1990 and will do a great deal to enhance TAFE services in the southern region.

On the issue of transport, I welcome the further allocation of $8.2 million towards the resignalling project. The total cost of that project will be $43 million, but it is worth noting that the Noarlunga line has been completely resignalled and already we have seen the impact of that in that trains are running more regularly, delays are less frequent and the level of services is increasing. In the context of transport, I also welcome the completion of the 3 000 class railcar program which has involved a total of $24.5 million over the year but, in the current year, $400 000 has been allocated for the completion of that program which again has led to a far better level of service on the southern line. Finally, I welcome the $21.9 million allocated towards the Happy Valley Water Filtration Plant distribution and pipeline storage system.

Mr LEWIS (Murray-Mallee): I want to continue with the same theme that I have been addressing in recent days in this House about the new poor in our community and the way that they have been ignored by the present Government, both here in South Australia and in Canberra. It is perhaps fortuitous that the Minister of Agriculture is sitting at the bench because he, in no small part, has something to answer for in this regard. He has failed miserably to make representations to his Cabinet colleagues on behalf of the communities and the industries from which they derive their incomes to ensure their capacity to survive. It is not continued prosperity—it is a matter of survival now. The House ought to know and understand that. The Minister has not in any way been interested in, or responsible for, this. In fact, this year for the first time the Department of Agriculture's budget line contributes $100 000 towards the cost of rural counselling services. For those people who now find themselves in crisis in their lives—

Mr Becker interjecting:

Mr LEWIS: It is $100 000 towards rural counselling services. As the member for Hanson would know, if a person needed to see a social worker or required assistance in the metropolitan area, that person could go to a public hospital and obtain access to a social worker; or the person could go to a Department for Community Welfare office and they could travel there on public transport. None of my constituents have access to such people nor, for that matter, do they have access to public transport. The Minister, his constituents and other members opposite would not have to pay, nor would their communities have to pay, towards the cost of providing those services.

However, I have to make a contribution, along with other business people in the communities that I represent, towards the cost of providing rural counselling services and until now the Department of Agriculture has done nothing in the way of making a contribution towards that. It is inappropriate that the money should come from the department, anyway: it ought to come from other transfer payments or other portfolios in the budget lines. Rural communities do not have public transport to get to or from those facilities to obtain counselling services, and those services are not provided at public expense but through the generosity of institutions like banking companies, stock firms and people like me and other community business people.

The Department of Agriculture now decides that it will weigh in and subsidise the Rural Counselling Service throughout South Australia. It would never have been necessary if it had not been for the stupid policies pursued by successive Labor Governments in this country. Those policies have produced a rural crisis. All one has to do is look at the capacity of those communities to earn income for themselves from what they do best, that is, produce goods and sell them overseas and the way in which, against that, costs of production and Government taxes and charges have escalated as a consequence of irresponsible economic policies and indifference to the plight of the industries that generate that export income for Australia, that prosperity for the rest of us.

The transfer payment mechanism in taxation arrangements in place in this country and in this State is the reason why rural communities are now in poverty and suffering when the rest of the country is in relative prosperity, enjoying the fruits of their labour. I believe I can best illustrate that point in a table which sets out a few relevant details essential to my argument, and I seek leave to have the table inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

The SPEAKER: The member gives the usual assurance regarding its statistical nature.

Mr LEWIS: Yes, Sir.

Leave granted.

AUSTRALIAN SHEEP AND WOOL PRODUCTION

Date	Average Exchange Rate (1)		Sheep (2)	Wool Produced (3)	Gross Value Wool Production (4)		Budget Deficit (6)	Value of Exported Wool (5)		Balance of Payments Deficits (7) (On Current Account)
	$A1.00=	$US1.00=	('000 000)	('000 Tonnes)	$A m.	$US m.	$A m.	$A m.	$US m.	$A m.
1980-81	1.16	0.86	134	638	1 670	1 937	1 080	1 834	2 127	− 5 606
1981-82	1.10	0.91	138	661	1 789	1 968	552	1 837	2 021	− 9 136
1982-83	0.90	1.11	133	642	1 761	1 585	4 448	1 811	1 630	− 6 826
1983-84	0.92	1.09	139	671	2 016	1 855	7 932	1 966	1 809	− 7 314
1984-85	0.74	1.36	150	753	2 434	1 801	6 720	2 423	1 793	−11 053
1985-86	0.72	1.39	156	761	2 693	1 939	5 726	2 808	2 022	−14 681
1986-87	0.67	1.49	158	795	3 334	2 234	2 716	3 496	2 342	−13 190
1987-88	0.71	1.41	n.a.	n.a.	5 461	3 877	2 042	5 217	3 704	−11 900

(1) The average of the October and April exchange rates for that financial year. ABS 1 304.0.
(2) Total of rams, ewes and wethers one year and over, and lambs and hoggets under one year, at 31 March. ABS 7 221.0.
(3) Total sheep and lambs, including crutchings, year ended 31 June. ABS 7 221.0.
(4) Value placed on recorded production at the wholesale prices realised in the market place. ABS 7 501.0 and 7 503.0.
(5) The FOB (free on board) value. ABS 5 403.0 and 5 432.0.
(6) Budget Deficit. Budget Statements 1986-87, 1987-88 Paper No. 1.
(7) Balance of Payments. March quarter 1988. ABS 5 337.0.

Mr LEWIS: I draw the attention of the House to the fact that since 1980-81 the value of the wool cheque obtained from overseas sales has increased from $1.8 billion to $5.2 billion in 1987-88. So, $3.4 billion has come from the wool cheque, but it has not improved the level of prosperity in the households of the people in the electorate that I represent in those demographic circumstances to anything like the same degree that it has contributed towards the measure of prosperity that all Australians enjoy as a consequence of the efforts of those people.

It points out that they have done their bit, and they have tried hard. They have increased our sheep numbers from 134 million in 1980-81 to 158 million in 1986-87—a steady increase in sheep numbers—with a dip in the drought back to 133 million. The table shows that in 1980-81 the Australian dollar was worth $US1.16; in 1981-82, an Australian dollar was worth $US1.10; in 1982-83 we fell below the even-money line and our dollar was worth only 90c American; in 1984-85 it was worth 74c American; in 1985-86 it was worth 72c American; and in 1986-87 it was worth 67c American.

The Federal Treasurer depreciated the value of the Australian dollar against overseas currencies during the course of his dirty float. He kept interest rates up on the debts that people in rural Australia had to service and depleted from their net incomes (net of the cost of production) a huge amount of money on the increasing debt levels they were carrying in the form of interest charges that had to be made to lending institutions during the course of that dirty float, leaving households with further reductions in their disposable incomes. Last year there was a slight increase in the value of the Australian dollar, and it has continued to appreciate from a level of 71c to its current value of 80c American.

That had the effect of making our exports more affordable overseas and made it possible for us to get more yen, marks and American dollars. Indeed, it made our exports cheaper, and increased the demand for them *vis-a-vis* overseas competitors. Tragically, though, it has not had a similar effect on the disposable incomes of the households of the people who produce commodities or on the prosperity levels of the people in those households. As I have said before, disposable income in those households has fallen and, in fact, it

is lower than for any pensioner group in this country, whether you base the comparison on 1986 figures or current figures, and it is continuing to fall. Worse still, on average, there are a greater number of human beings in each of those households in the communities that I represent than there are in the metropolitan area.

A greater number of human beings are depending on less and less money, and this Government does nothing about it whatsoever. What it has done is add insult to injury by closing down the dental clinics. Not one school dental clinic is available to any school south of Murray Bridge anywhere in my electorate. The Government has cut teaching time in country area schools and in child/parent centres attached to those schools. It has increased the rents of teachers and has discouraged their interest in teaching in rural South Australia, and constantly that has been reported in the press.

The Government has allowed petrol prices to increase and has brought in a shonkie scheme to refund some money to the distributors of the petrol and reduce the tax that is payable on it. In fact, that has not been the case because the distributors who, for instance, are located at Murray Bridge within 100 kilometres of Adelaide—the point at which the tax is determined—distribute petrol to the whole of the Murray-Mallee and cannot obtain a reduction in the tax that they have to pay under this shonkie scheme. It is a sleight of hand trick. The Government is downgrading our hospitals and taking away school classrooms as it did at Coonalpyn. Worse still, it is allowing the closure of public telephone services throughout the Murray-Mallee while it spends billions of dollars on extending them into remote parts of Australia. What is more, the Government will not pay to seal a road to a Government institution that does not pay any rates in Murray Bridge.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr De Laine): Order! The honourable member's time has expired. The honourable member for Newland.

Ms GAYLER (Newland): In this debate I will talk about two matters concerning the State's economic development, first, as it relates to the Tea Tree Gully area (part of which I represent) and, secondly, the allocation in the State budget for the completion of the O-Bahn busway. One word sums up the contribution of the north-eastern region of Adelaide to the State's economic development, and that word is 'stunning'. The north-eastern suburbs are undergoing remarkable development and job growth, and have a bright future. In fact, it makes Tea Tree Gully the kingpin in South Australia's residential construction industry. Figures recently released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that the Tea Tree Gully council area tops the list in South Australia, having the highest number of new dwelling approvals in 1987-88.

In fact, the ABS figures show that Tea Tree Gully was first with 1 107 approvals in the residential sector. There has been an increase—in fact, the largest—of 316 approvals on the 1986-87 figure of 791. Of all Adelaide's local government areas, Tea Tree Gully is first in residential dwelling approvals. The contribution of the north-eastern suburbs and the Tea Tree Gully area to the State's economic development is not limited to the housing construction sector. The total value of building work, including residential and non-residential construction shows, that Tea Tree Gully was second only to the City of Adelaide in the value of work approved.

In the period under consideration Adelaide had construction work of $265 million approved and Tea Tree Gully had construction work of $91 million approved. Indeed, the north-east is making a superb contribution to economic development, construction, housing, jobs, and all the other flow-on areas of economic activity in metropolitan Adelaide and South Australia. Since the ABS annual figures were released late in August a number of additional major developments have been announced in my local area. They include, first, plans by Hallett Nubrik to invest $12 million to upgrade its brickworks in the Golden Grove area—a major new development of its existing plant; secondly, a State budget allocation of $9.95 million for the construction of the final stage of the O-Bahn north-east busway from Paradise to Tea Tree Plaza; and, thirdly, a $3 million allocation by the Westfield group for construction of the O-Bahn interchange at the plaza, and this is occurring in conjunction with its own major expansion plans.

Westfield proposes, over a period of several years, to invest a further $50 million in the expansion of its Tea Tree Plaza site. That will incorporate a new element of office development over the transport interchange as well as a major expansion of retail development and an additional mall and small shops development. The State budget also includes the first instalment of funds for the construction of the new Tea Tree Gully TAFE college on a greenfield site adjacent to the O-Bahn interchange and plaza. That will be a $20 million investment in further education and training for young, middle-aged and older people in the north-eastern suburbs.

In addition to all these major investments planned and announced for my electorate, an eight cinema complex is to be developed on the plaza site at a cost in the vicinity of $8 million. That will bring a marvellous new entertainment facility to the fast growing population of the north-eastern suburbs. All these new development opportunities mean investment and work for my area. This is in addition to the $100 million being invested annually in infrastructure development in the Golden Grove area of Tea Tree Gully, and does not include the housing investment that is under way.

It is no wonder that the Minister of State Development and Technology was able to announce today improving employment figures. As he reported to the House, our seasonally adjusted unemployment rate is 8.5 per cent and, although it is still too high, it is nevertheless the lowest August rate in South Australia for the past six years. It is a very marked improvement. That reflects some clear underlying trends of strong employment growth in South Australia in several sectors, including manufacturing and construction.

In August there was an employment growth of 3 900 people compared with the figures for July. Again, it is another favourable trend. In fact, since the beginning of this year, in seasonally adjusted terms, some 12 600 jobs have been created in this State. That is a clear sign that far from the economy being stagnant we are really on the improve. I point out that between November 1982 and July 1988 there has been a 9.4 per cent growth in employment in this State and, as the Minister remarked, that is sufficient in terms of additional employment to fill Football Park on grand final day.

I turn now to the allocation in the State budget for the O-Bahn busway. The allocation this year for completion of the busway is $9.95 million. That will leave a balance of funds for the next budget, for the final payments on contracts, of about $1 million. That will be the final budget allocation for the O-Bahn. That will take the total cost of the whole project to $75 million. If the cost of buses is included, we add another $20 million, taking the total cost of the whole busway project, including buses, to $95 million.

The State budget also included an allocation for expansion of the St Agnes bus depot, which is an integral part of the service. That will allow additional space on adjacent land to cater for the additional buses that will be added to the route when the full service is completed. I look forward very much, as do my constituents, to completion of the service.

Mr BLACKER (Flinders): I wish to take this opportunity to refer to some of the more serious problems within my electorate (other than drought which I have mentioned on previous occasions), one being roads. The roads in my electorate, in the District of Eyre and probably in other remote areas—

Mr Becker interjecting:

Mr BLACKER: —are an absolute disgrace, as the member for Hanson has said. The difficulty we face is that the Government and previous Governments have come to an arrangement for a formula basis of funding which does not take into account, or does not take into account sufficiently, the anomalies that occur because of distances. The formula basis takes into account the length of roads, the number of ratepayers in the district council area, the area involved, and a number of other factors which are supposed to accommodate those inequalities, but it is quite obvious that that formula arrangement is not working. It is certainly not working to the extent that there is any sort of catch-up provision with respect to roads.

With the Federal Government's restricting finances for road works, that problem is further escalating. A number of roads in my district are in dire need of attention, the Lock-Elliston Road being the first and most obvious, and the Cleve to Kimba road, the Cummins to Mount Hope road and the Port Kenny to Wudinna road are others. The list goes on. Regrettably, because of the relevant sparseness of population in those areas, no-one seems to want to know very much about the situation. I was rather interested to see the full page advertisement in the *Port Lincoln Times* of Thursday 1 September placed by the RAA. I believe that the contents of that advertisement sum up the argument quite well. In large block letters it states, 'Canberra says it can't afford to fix your roads. Can't afford!' The advertisement continues:

> The irony is that you pay enough in fuel taxes every few weeks to fix even the worst of them. And they are bad. Besides wasting your petrol and killing off your vehicles years before their time, the roads around here are downright dangerous. In the summer, unsealed roads are dusty and corrugated. You have to fight them to stay in control. Come winter, they turn slippy and rutted. And the fight goes on. Narrow sealed roads with broken edges and soft shoulders aren't much better. Fixing them would not cost all that much in relation to what you spend in petrol taxes.
>
> For instance, sealing the terrible roads between Kimba and Cleve and Elliston and Lock would run roughly $30 million. Which is about what the Federal Government takes from South Australian motorists in just three weeks. Upgrading the Port Kenny-Wudinna road and the Cummins-Mount Hope road would cost about $5 million. Or just three to four days worth of fuel taxes. Reconstructing the White Flat-Koppio road would cost about the same. Yet Canberra has actually cut road funding 30 per cent in real terms over the past four years. If you want your petrol taxes spent where they're really needed, telephone the RAA . . .

And it provides the telephone number. The advertisement concludes:

> Where are the roads our petrol taxes pay for?

I understand that less than 19 per cent of the money collected in fuel taxes is actually redirected back to road works through the various Federal Government channels. If we could obtain a doubling of that to just 40 per cent of the moneys taken in fuel taxes, much could be done to improve the roads throughout the State and the nation. I might add that the figures which I quoted, and the $30 million which was required to fix those roads and which was achievable in just three weeks, related only to South Australia; they were not national figures.

At present funding for the Lock to Elliston and Cleve to Kimba roads is being provided at such a slow rate that it will take 22 years to complete each of those roads, assuming the current rate of funding continues. That means that those of us who can hang around long enough will see those roads sealed in 44 years time. If that is not an impossibility, it is certainly a ludicrous situation that a Government should contemplate a long-term project such as that or, more particularly, be so callous as to leave that section of the community out in the cold. The Government should be criticised severely for that.

Another issue which I raise and about which I had hoped to question the Minister of Labour today is WorkCover. It was drawn to my attention (and this matter was raised at a UF&S meeting in my electorate in the past week or so) that employers in the shearing industry—that is, the farmers and pastoralists—who engage people to shear their sheep are obliged to take out 4.5 per cent WorkCover on the $115 for each 100 sheep shorn. Whilst there has been no real objection to that, the anomaly arises where a claim is made against WorkCover for injuries sustained whilst shearing. I understand that, of the $115 in relation to which the levy is paid, WorkCover now pays back only about $89 per 100 equivalent. I have tried to find out the reason for this, but I get a rather lengthy and distorted answer. I hope that the Government can sort this out, because there is an anomaly which does not make sense and which is certainly not fair play.

If the excuse for paying only $89 per 100 is that $89 is the labour component of the $115 per 100, the going rate for shearing, why does WorkCover charge 4.5 per cent on $115 instead of on the labour component, or the $89? We could say that WorkCover is claiming levies on combs and cutters or the travel that is supposed to be built into the shearers wage structure. If that is not the case, something is drastically wrong. Otherwise, shearers should be paid a rate equivalent to the $115 for which the levy is paid.

I have referred to the figure of $115, but I have just picked up the last *Farmer and Stockowner* issue and I see that shearers fees have increased to $122.39 per 100 for flock sheep, so the problem will further escalate. I ask the Government to clarify that point, because I find it rather ironical that the shearer who is injured is, I believe, being short changed as the farmer has covered him for $115 a day equivalent and WorkCover will pay back only $89 a day. We must bear in mind that for the first week of injury the farmer is obliged to pay the shearer at the full daily wage of $115 a day (and I am working on the basis that the shearer shears 100 sheep a day, only for convenience of this argument), whereas WorkCover pays only $89 a day thereafter.

I now wish to raise another point. There has been much controversy lately about the drought on Eyre Peninsula and it has been suggested that Goyder's Line needs to be shifted. However, I query whether that is a valid argument.

Members interjecting:

Mr BLACKER: If members care to read the *Advertiser* they will find that this suggestion has been made from time to time in letters to the Editor. In this regard, I seek leave to have inserted in *Hansard*, without my reading it, a statistical record based on past production records on Eyre Peninsula.

Leave granted.

Principal Crop Production and Livestock*(a)*, Eyre District Councils

District Council	Year	For grain Wheat tonnes	For grain Barley tonnes	Wool clip tonnes	Sheep and lambs No.	Cattle and calves No.	Pigs No.
Cleve	1985-86	125 643	80 238	1 993	348 248	3 106	2 953
	1986-87	130 543	65 346	1 859	318 689	2 628	3 453
Elliston	1985-86	44 672	32 560	1 376	261 836	2 035	1 386
	1986-87	43 749	29 406	1 305	250 017	1 868	1 361
Franklin Harbour	1985-86	38 626	16 356	614	121 541	333	185
	1986-87	54 548	17 450	636	119 628	352	241
Kimba	1985-86	65 463	20 974	971	172 610	2 264	7 994
	1986-87	131 499	20 244	951	167 687	2 157	7 881
Le Hunte	1985-86	116 687	27 313	1 248	240 728	2 931	9 908
	1986-87	127 328	27 033	1 181	217 120	2 874	11 677
Lower Eyre Peninsula	1985-86	65 501	85 071	3 040	534 743	7 630	5 892
	1986-87	79 614	66 071	3 087	527 351	8 086	6 863
Murat Bay	1985-86	29 097	4 189	552	110 200	2 058	159
	1986-87	111 405	12 648	540	105 085	2 144	269
Streaky Bay	1985-86	63 894	26 342	1 256	243 121	1 631	744
	1986-87	139 448	45 453	1 193	233 128	1 772	755
Tumby Bay	1985-86	87 568	68 455	1 812	326 487	2 398	2 508
	1986-87	92 912	53 415	1 784	320 639	2 199	2 631
Unincorporated	1985-86	7 608	723	569	112 588	399	44
	1986-87	64 254	6 621	757	158 032	667	58

(a) Livestock on establishments at 31 March.

Mr BLACKER: This table, which shows the production figures in each of the district council areas, clearly proves that the two district councils most severely affected this year were, two years ago, among the highest producing district councils on Eyre Pensinsula and possibly within the State. So, it is a matter of cycles and the Government must recognise that and not just work on a year-by-year basis but rather on a five-year rollover average or even a 10-year rollover average as regards some of the more marginal areas and in this way give those areas the support that they justly deserve by bringing in IEDs and such like.

Mr M.J. EVANS (Elizabeth): I should like to discuss several aspects of education policy that concern me at present. One is the international trend towards performance indicators in education. I have previously discussed this subject and, in reply to my recent question, the Premier said that, across the board in the Public Service, the Government was seriously interested in performance indicators for public sector operations. That is partially implemented in the program performance budget documents before us today.

However, one area that has not been canvassed in detail so far is that of performance indicators in the Education Department, more particularly in measuring the success or otherwise of our education system in South Australia. The strong international trend towards this concept is also reflected in Australia. The Government should note that the Victorian Minister for Education (Carolyn Hogg) has recently confirmed that testing will proceed for Victorian 10-year-olds and 14-year-olds in 1988 in reading, writing and numeracy, on criteria reference tests comparable with those conducted in 1976 and 1980 by national testing authorities. This is an interesting decision, because it gives strong local credence to the concept of performance indicators and standardised testing in Australian schools, and I hope that South Australia will not be too far behind.

In this context, I am not considering tests in the traditional exam mould. In many ways they are indeed, as teachers associations and federations have pointed out, somewhat outmoded and irrelevant to 1988, but it is not irrelevant to consider the concept of measuring a base line for the educational achievement levels of our students at various critical ages. That is most important, because it is only by that process that we can assess the trends in those basic abilities of reading, literacy and numeracy. Fundamentally, no matter what qualifications children may eventually pursue and no matter what their socio-economic background, it is critical that they be able to read and write and have numeracy skills consistent with the appropriate age level and with the achievement level that they have attained. It is important that we do not treat that as an individual test.

This is not an argument about individual students and their performance or lack of it, although it is certainly true that a competent teacher would use such tests in a diagnostic way to pick up individual students who are having problems and thereby address those problems. The purpose to which I am addressing myself today is not one of individual testing, but rather one of group testing to see how the system and schools are performing, to find what are our problem areas, to find the areas to which we should devote greater resources, and to devise means of finding out the performance trend in our Education Department.

We need to know the base line and to introduce effective testing so that we have a base line to measure against for future trends, because this performance indicator question is very much about trends, and that aspect has been ignored by the teaching profession to the present. Members of that profession have opposed testing in all its forms on the basis that it is unprofessional and leads to an inadequate and inappropriate response by teachers in the classroom who then teach to the tests. However, that supposes that the tests are relevant to the individuals, whereas they are not. We are about assessing the system as a whole to discover how it is performing and whether it is responding to the needs of the taxpayer, the children, and the community. That is the important part.

Teachers must not forget that they, too, are accountable. Indeed, every profession is accountable, teachers no less so. In many ways the overwhelming importance of their profession to the community indicates that they more than anyone almost need to be accountable to the community for the output which they have for the community. I believe that the sooner they address that, the better. If teachers will cooperate in this inevitable process, they will ensure that it is at a measure that they approve of and they will be able to influence its implementation and development. However, if they oppose it, they will not: it will occur anyway and they will be left with no influence in the process. So, I invite

them to join in, because it will come over the next five years and I hope that the South Australian Government will be at the forefront of that, as the Victorian Government apparently intends to be.

I also wish to emphasise the importance of local influence on education. The Government and the Minister of Education have recently established the Elizabeth-Munno Para Senior Secondary Schools Board and I, as one of the two local members of Parliament, am a member of that board. I am impressed by the way in which the structure is getting off the ground. We have held only two or three meetings to the present, but it is already obvious that the Government's approach on this matter will be successful. This board, I believe, will have a significant influence on educational achievement in the whole northern region and I hope that other regions will follow suit when the success of the experiment there is confirmed.

I also hope that the Government will soon place the schools board on a legislative basis, even if it is only on a temporary legislative basis, in order to ensure that it has full and effective powers to deal with the responsibilities that devolve on it. It is essential that Governments allocate funds on a community basis (and Elizabeth-Munno Para is an appropriate community focus in this case) so that those communities can have a real say in local educational decisions and outcomes. It is important that they work with the teachers and the parents as well as with the whole school community to ensure that it delivers the goods that are required. If we are to address the declining number of students in our public schools as against the rising number of students in our private schools, it is essential that that local control be emphasised.

Local government needs to be brought into the process in terms of the physical management of the assets of the Education Department and local people need to be brought into curriculum development options at the regional level. Parents have certainly been invited, as my colleague the member for Semaphore said last evening, to participate in decision making on a school-by-school basis, and the effectiveness of that has certainly been open to question, because at the school level parents have been unable to influence across the board policy. Those are the areas where they are most concerned in many ways. Parents have always had an effective say in schools, because they are the ones who attend the working bees and carry out the school maintenance by attending to the grounds and planting trees. Indeed, the local school council has always had a significant role.

These days, parents are concerned about more than that: they are concerned about effective curriculums and policies that extend beyond the local school and have a regional or even a State-wide focus. At the regional level they can certainly have a significant and real input, and that is why the Minister's decision to establish an Elizabeth-Munno Para schools board is so important. I hope that will be followed up in other regions so that we will be given a real and effective say over the curriculums and trends in education in our local region. If we do not do that, we will be left behind, but Elizabeth-Munno Para is up front on this issue and, if the Government can follow that through with adequate funding, as has been promised, and with retention of the majority of savings in the local community, it will win further support from parents, students and teachers of the local school system. If we retain centralised control, we will see a continuation of the present trend away from public schools towards private schools, because that is where parents see that they have a real and effective say because of the fees that they pay. We must reverse that trend if public schools are to survive into the 1990s.

Mr MEIER (Goyder): The first issue that I will address this afternoon concerns the continuing inspection of CFS vehicles. Members would be aware that, prior to the end of last year, there was a real furore among many CFS brigades when the various inspecting authorities put their vehicles out of action for the forthcoming fire season. Inspections have continued, and the initial inspections probably did some good because some brigades needed to upgrade their equipment. I have no argument with that. However, I cite a recent example from my own electorate concerning the Warooka CFS.

An inspector from the Central Inspection Authority checked Warooka's main vehicle, which is a Bedford truck. It was taken for a test run, and the inspector driving it felt that the steering was unsatisfactory and indicated that the tie rod ends and steering knuckles were worn and needed to be replaced. As a result, the truck was taken down to the garage under council jurisdiction where it was looked at by one of the area's best mechanics. The vehicle had only done between 50 000 and 60 000 miles and the mechanic said that the tie rods and steering knuckles were in perfect condition and did not need replacing.

One must ask why the inspector decided that those parts needed replacing, and the answer is not difficult. The truck had been sitting for some time and, as many members would be aware, older tyres tend to go flat when the vehicle has been sitting, particularly if it is loaded with a full water tank ready for any emergency. When the inspector took the truck for a run, the flat spot was still there and, as members are probably aware, those flat spots take some miles to wear out.

Mr D.S. Baker: He probably forgot to put air in it and didn't notice.

Mr MEIER: I do not know whether that was the case, but I believe that Warooka would have its equipment up to top standard and that it would have been all okay. This distresses me, because surely any inspector should have taken the trouble to see whether the tie rod ends and steering knuckles were actually loose. The inspector should also have realised that, if the truck had been standing for a long time, sensations similar to poor quality suspension would be felt. Warooka must have that truck reinspected at its own cost, although in my opinion they are completely innocent.

In addition, the inspector said that the radio had to be shifted from the knee area because it could be dangerous if an accident occurred. Apparently questions asking where the radio should be placed were not answered. The Warooka CFS believes guidance or advice should be given on that matter, because it is also relevant to its second vehicle, which is a Ford 350. That vehicle's radio is attached to the lining of the roof at head level and has been in that position since the truck was commissioned. The radio was fitted at Carey Gully Engineering when the truck was built and was inspected by the appropriate inspectors at the time and has always been okay. However, in 1988, an inspector decided that it is dangerous for the radio to be at head level despite the fact that only two people drive in the vehicle and that it is unlikely that a third person would sit in the centre of the cabin where the radio is mounted. In one truck the radio must be shifted because it is too high and in the other truck it must be shifted because it is too low. In both cases no answer was given to questions about where to place them. That is a pretty poor state of affairs.

The Bedford truck was identified as having oil leaks, yet further examination by the local mechanic indicated that the oil leaks were virtually negligible. Why pick on such petty things? Any vehicle on the road today has oil leaks to a greater or lesser extent, and that includes brand new

vehicles. I have yet to be convinced, along with other mechanically minded people, that slight oil traces will do any harm. If inspections genuinely help to ensure that the vehicles are in top roadworthy condition, I would understand the need for such inspections. However, in this case, it seems that someone must be shown to be earning his or her money by identifying some problems. In taking the vehicle for a further inspection, what guarantee is there that the faults will be given the okay, considering that no advice was given about where to put the radio? Furthermore, what guarantee is there that other faults will not be found?

Another matter, which has been mentioned by other speakers in this debate, is the state of our roads. As most members would be aware, the RAA has been running a campaign and in the most recent edition of *SA Motor* (September) a summary of the results of the survey in the July issue of the magazine has been released. Under the heading 'You told us the worst', the findings make interesting reading. I had to smile at one paragraph, which states:

> A member described Cross Road as one of the roughest stretches in the State, rougher than many country roads. 'A small car jumps about like a bucking bronco,' this member said.

Having often travelled on Cross Road and on many country roads, I acknowledge what that RAA member said but I cannot agree that country roads leave Cross Road for dead. Those comments indicate that the trouble lies not only in the country but also in the city, because even city people are starting to feel the effects of poor roads. Quite a few roads in Goyder received a dishonourable mention in the RAA article. One country road mentioned was the Port Wakefield Road. Members would know that, on many occasions, I have advocated that the Minister should install passing lanes as soon as possible to overcome the many accidents on that road. An extra strip of bitumen for a kilometre or two in length on the side of the road would let people pull off and continue at the same speed, allowing others who are piled up behind to pass.

But the Minister continues to say 'No, we see no justification in it'. It is a tragedy because people are continuing to be killed on that road. Another comment was that anybody driving from Mallala to Long Plains and back again ought to be congratulated for arriving safely. I accept those congratulations because I often drive on that road. In fact, I do not see it as being much worse than many other roads. There are a lot of roads that are far worse than Long Plains, but I would agree without any shadow of a doubt that it needs to be upgraded and preferably sealed because a lot of traffic uses that road. I can understand that any stranger to the area would find that road very unpallatable and certainly dangerous.

Further reference is made to two roads between Maitland and Point Pearce, and that both are as bad as each other. I can tell the House that there are some four or five roads leading from Maitland that are very bad. I have asked the Minister to have a look at the Central Yorke Peninsula area and I hope that our roads will improve in the future.

Mr OSWALD (Morphett): In the 10 minutes available to me on this debate I would like to address two subjects: first, the inordinate length of time that it takes to process documents through the Lands Title Office and, secondly, the policy of average enrolment staffing in primary schools and the impact that that is having on the St Leonards Primary School in particular.

Let me first address the amount of time that it takes to get documents through the Lands Title Office. It was reported to me by a constituent only this morning that he lodged a document with the Lands Title Office on 29 July and 42 days later (six weeks) it has still not been processed. At the same time, he told me of a landbroker who advised him that on occasions he has had documents tied up in the Lands Title Office for one reason or another for up to four months. That is quite unacceptable, and I think that most members would have to agree that something has to be looked at here.

If we look at the whole basis of the operations of the Lands Title Office, it is now operating on the Land Ownership and Tenure System (LOTS). In the 1978-79 financial year we saw the implementation of that system at a cost of $1.461 million. I would have thought that if we had a system, whose praises were sung to the highest, and it cost the State $1.461 million—and has since been upgraded—that we would see a service provided in the Lands Title Office that is much quicker than six weeks or up to four months. I understand that certain subdivisions require time to have the subdivision studied and work done on it. Sometimes those subdivisions will take three or four months, but they are the exception rather than the rule. My constituent in Glenelg was not referring to one of those subdivisions, he was referring to a normal transfer, and on this occasion I think that six weeks is an extraordinary imposition.

It is interesting to note that during Question Time today the Premier, when referring to the LOTS system, said that it is a world leader. I certainly question whether it is a world leader if the public has to wait that length of time. I looked up this year's budget estimates and I noticed that under the heading of 'Receipts' in the Lands Department the registration of land sales for 1987-88 was $18.2 million. In 1988-89 receipts for registration of land sales were estimated to be $20.8 million, which means that this year it is going up another $2.6 million.

I would have thought that the basic premise of operating a department is, first, that it has to be self-funding, that it will fund itself and its staff out of that income and any excess will go to the General Revenue Account. I would have thought that, if the State was planning on grossing $20.8 million in revenue from the registration of land sales, something should be able to be done about staffing that department out of its own revenue to avoid this ludicrous situation of people ringing electoral offices and saying that they have lodged documents and waited for six weeks. I hope that the Government will take this matter to task and that the Minister of Lands will address it as a matter of urgency.

Members interjecting:

Mr OSWALD: I was going to respond to that interjection but the honourable member for Bragg has said it all. It is a matter of priorities; it is a matter of how you run your department. If you have $20 million in revenue from the processing of sales over the counter, then you have to run your department out of that $20 million and provide a service that will not mean that the public will have to wait six weeks for those documents to be processed. If it means using some of that money, which is being taken out of the Lands Title Office and spent elsewhere, and taking staff that that money would have been spent in the field in some other program, then that program should be deleted and the money put back. If, say, five staff are employed on a program in another field, that program is ceased and the money spent in the Lands Title Office. So that when the department is running properly and is self-funding, it should be able to create enough staff to make sure that these long waiting lists do not occur.

In my opening remarks I said that over $1 million has been spent on this LOTS computer system. It is no good having a new computer system if the public has to wait weeks and weeks—six weeks in this case—for servicing. I

do not think that members opposite, who are waiting for a break to interject, can really argue against the principle behind what I am trying to say.

As time is creeping on I would like to refer to the St Leonards Primary School, which is an extremely important subject to me. In particular, I refer to the average enrolment staffing policy of the Education Department which is having an impact on the planning of staff for this coming year. Because of time restraints I cannot say as much as I want to, but I will put on record a letter from the Chairman of the school council to the Minister of Education. I will read it to the House because it sets out the position, and I know that if I do not read it it will never see the light of day. It is dated 19 August 1988 and states:

Dear Mr Crafter,

I write on behalf of the St Leonards Primary School Council to express our concern about the proposed changes to staffing formulae in 1989.

St Leonards Primary School has a current school population of 230, comprising 100 junior and 130 senior primary students. After an earlier decline in enrolments, the school is now beginning to experience an increase in junior primary enrolments, which will have a long term impact on the balance and composition of classes in the upper levels of the school.

Like many other primary schools, St Leonards has a program of continuous term intakes for five year old children. To minimise disruption to children just entering the education system, the school has pursued the policy that children will not suffer 'class swaps' during the calendar year.

This policy has been developed over a period of time through close consultation and involvement of parents and community. In practical terms, this has meant that children starting in the third and fourth terms will be placed in a vertical group class for the remainder of the year when there is insufficient anticipated enrolment for employment of an additional full time teacher. Thus, the children are ensured of an uninterrupted educational program and a settled and smooth start to their school life.

Any deviation from this policy which means moving the children from one teacher and class to another during the year, goes in complete contradiction to the wishes of this school community, and has a negative effect on the early educational development of the children.

As our Minister of Education, you have encouraged the involvement of parents in schools and in the development of school policies to reflect the needs of the community.

This school council urges you to retain the current approach to staffing schools, so that schools will be able to maintain and strengthen their educational programmes for the benefits of our children.

I totally support the school council in this matter and urge the Minister to address it as a matter of urgency.

It should be noted that the Bannon Government has been loudly trumpeting the appointments of new school counsellors and other resources for primary schools. While it has been doing that, it has been quietly cutting teacher numbers through this new average enrolment staffing policy. This is to be deplored. On the one hand, the Government puts out this public impression that it is doing something about increasing resources while, on the other hand, at the same time with sleight of hand, the Government is cutting into the school.

This proposed new staffing policy is causing disruption to classes because it necessitates shuffling children around. It is destabilising to children, the families and teachers. I implore the Minister and the Government to reverse this decision because it is not in the interests of the children, the staff and the families, and it is particularly not in the interest of children who in later years will go on to senior primary and high school education. We all know that it is at that early stage that the children get their grounding. If they are shuffled around from teacher to teacher and class to class they will not have sufficient grounding for future education.

Motion carried.

The Hon. M.K. MAYES (Minister of Agriculture): I move:

That the proposed expenditures for the departments and services contained in the Appropriation Bill be referred to Estimates Committees A and B for examination and report by 4 October in accordance with the timetable which has been distributed.

With the indulgence of members I will not read the motion because of its length. It has been distributed to all members.

Mr S.G. EVANS (Davenport): I do not oppose the motion, but I point out that it is totally unacceptable that members receive copies of the documents that give us all the detail to go before the Estimates Committee only today, yet we are expected to start examination next Tuesday. I make the protest that it is unreasonable and unfair, and I believe it is an abuse of the system when the Government does that.

Motion carried.

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

That Estimates Committee A be appointed, consisting of the Hon. B.C. Eastick and Messrs Ferguson, Hamilton, Olsen, Oswald, Rann and Tyler.

Motion carried.

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

That Estimates Committee B be appointed, consisting of the Hon P.B. Arnold, Messrs D.S. Baker and De Laine, Ms Gayler, the Hon. T.M. McRae, Mr Meier, and the Hon. J.W. Slater.

Motion carried.

UNAUTHORISED DOCUMENTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Returned from the Legislative Council with amendments.

ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. M.K. MAYES (Minister of Agriculture): I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr D.S. BAKER (Victoria): I want to read into *Hansard* the *Sunday Mail* editorial headed 'The lemons in Mr Bannon's basket'. I know that a couple of them have been relegated—I do not know whether it is sour grapes or rotten apples—and they are all referred to in the editorial. It jells in pretty well with what the Auditor-General says. The public of South Australia should know what is going on. The editorial states:

It is a basic law of democracy that the public has a right to know. Unfortunately, it is a rule the State Government has an increasing tendency to honor in the breach. The latest examples are the country hospitals dispute, involving the Health Minister, Dr Cornwall; the saga of the *Island Seaway* ferry, the responsibility of the Transport Minister, Mr Keneally—

he is one of the rotten apples going to the backbench, of course—

and the New Zealand timber affair, involving the Forests Minister, Mr Abbott. In each case, we have been treated to exercises in ministerial indignation, complexity, commercial confidentiality and confusion. Surely it is not beyond the ability of any of the Ministers to explain exactly what is going on, and why, in terms simple enough for everyone to understand. After all the Government keeps a whole corps of media advisers and public relations experts for precisely that purpose. They seem to be employed instead, to conceal rather than reveal.

This is the editorial for a well-known paper in this State. It continues:

The public has a right to know exactly how much of its money is at risk with the South Australian Timber Corporation and the New Zealand timber venture. It appears to be as much as $35 million. Yet, the Government has consistently refused to reveal exactly what is happening using the excuse of 'commercial confidentiality'.

There is nothing commercial about it. The editorial continues:

Mr Keneally is using the same excuse not to reveal for independent assessment the design drawings of the *Island Seaway*.

The public has paid more than $16 million for a vessel which is giving the appearance of being little better than a floating lemon. It is not good enough for Mr Keneally to request a report from the firm engaged to operate . . . We have been treated to a bizarre display of arrogance from the Minister and the Health Commission.

That is what the editor of the *Sunday Mail* said about the 'lemons' on the Government frontbench. Yesterday, we were treated to a sensible question asked by the member for Mount Gambier. He asked whether it was correct that according to the Auditor-General's Report the scrimber operation at Mount Gambier had cost $29 million, which is a $7 million (33 per cent) overrun. The Minister then started to answer and tried to parry it a bit and there was an interjection. The Minister stated:

The honourable member needs to be very careful, as do other members opposite who represent electorates in the South-East—

I do not know whether that was directed toward the Hon. Mr Allison and me—

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 the efforts of Government in that part of the State.

What do you think that the Auditor-General has been saying? I am standing up to be counted: sell off the scrimber operation to private enterprise; sell off the South Australian Timber Corporation to private enterprise and just stop losing money on those projects, on projects in which the Government should not be involved.

If we did that and got private enterprise involved, we would stop losing taxpayer's money and they would start to make money, because that is what it is all about. The State has every right to be involved in the growing of timber, but its proven record after that is an absolute disaster and it is costing jobs in the South-East—not saving them—to allow those industries to go on losing taxpayer's money in the way that they are.

Sell it to private enterprise or to the people of the South-East. It would stop losing money and it would employ more people. The former Minister was responsible for this venture while it was losing some $50 million of taxpayers' money. When I, on behalf of my electorate and as a humble backbencher, ask for more hospital beds or—

Members interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr De Laine): Order!

Mr D.S. BAKER: —for more child-care facilities, I am told that there is no money. I compliment the Auditor-General on the way that he has written his report. He follows on from the *Sunday Mail* editorial which refers to the lemons in Mr Bannon's basket. The Auditor-General's opening remarks, which I will again read because they should then start to sink in to members opposite, state:

It is against that background that I again stress the importance of the inclusion of competent people with financial and management accounting qualifications, skills and practical experience as part of the executive management team of agencies.

This is an important feature of most business organisations. When will the Premier make his Ministers accountable? We saw the performance of the Treasurer when, in relation to the budget, he tried to sell the glowing reports, and we know of those 146 people employed to write the glossies. But, when one takes away the glossies one sees that an extra 10.7 per cent in taxes will be dragged out of taxpayers' pockets this financial year. We saw how the Premier will do it, but he has no idea of what it is all about. However, he still tries to sell it to the public. He then allows these Ministers on the front bench to manage their portfolios in a way that loses millions of dollars of taxpayers' money.

When will the Premier drag some of his backbenchers onto the front bench? The member for Hartley has some quite good expertise not only in the legal field but also, they say, he knows how to handle finances. When will the Premier get him down to the front bench and get rid of some of the Ministers who have been losing taxpayers' money? When will taxpayers see some accountability? It all comes back to the *Sunday Mail* editorial.

Members opposite should read the Auditor-General's Report and, if they do not want to read it, we could, after the House rises, have a cup of coffee and go through it with them. The Auditor-General clearly points to the lack of management in this State and the specific areas where this has occurred. Year after year he points this out and year after year the same problems come up, and they are never addressed. And that is the problem: it is hard to address these problems if no-one has the expertise to do it. That is why the member for Hartley has to come to the front bench as soon as he can, to start to get a bit of financial management into it.

The former Minister who is now sitting up on the backbench was responsible for plenty of waste, too. I am sure that he helped the Minister of Forests with the *Island Seaway* drawings, because that is another lemon. If it ever gets out of port again I am sure that the people of Kangaroo Island will be pleased! The Auditor-General keeps repeating that it is all about management. This comes out all through his report, but this Government has not shown any sign of managing the financial affairs of this State. What it has shown is that it can increase taxes.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's time has expired. The honourable member for Albert Park.

Mr HAMILTON (Albert Park): In the past month, I have been inundated with correspondence from people in the West Lakes area and that area, over the past eight or nine years since I have been a member—

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr HAMILTON: It certainly has in terms of political support. But I have taken a lot of time in handling the multiplicity of problems that have arisen from that particular development.

The issue of the *Foxy's Lady*, a vessel to ply the waters of that waterway, is no exception. Members will recall that on 9 August (page 55 of *Hansard*) I asked the Minister for Environment and Planning, the Hon. Don Hopgood, a question about third party rights of appeal provisions for people living in the West Lakes area and covered by the West Lakes Indenture. The Minister's response is in *Hansard* for all to see. That same night in the adjournment debate (page 89 of *Hansard*) I indicated once again the concern of residents in the West Lakes area who are affected by the *Foxy's Lady* project.

I have received correspondence from a Mr Lyall Wilson who is well known to many people in the West Lakes area and in sporting circles in South Australia. I understand that he is the person who has applied for a licence through the Corporation of the City of Woodville to use this vessel for tours around that lake. From correspondence received from Mr Wilson (who has kindly kept me informed), I understand that this vessel is about 69 ft long and that the project is well supported by about 1 000 residents and lakefront dwellers. In his latest correspondence to me dated 6 September 1988, a copy of which was sent to the Premier, Mr

Wilson solicited support for this project. On 9 August (on page 89 of *Hansard*) I said:

> As I indicated previously, I do not intend to reflect or to try to impose my will upon the council [the Corporation of the City of Woodville].
>
> It would be improper for me to do so, but I believe that, until such time as the matters raised in the correspondence by the Hon. Clyde Cameron and by Dr Walter Woods have been resolved, no final decision should be made on the matter by the council.

I understand that these matters have been looked at by the Government and at this stage I am not in a position to indicate the decision of the Premier, the Minister of Local Government or Cabinet, if that matter is to be addressed by Cabinet. I personally have no objection to this project, provided that all the objections of local residents, the Corporation of the City of Woodville, business houses and any other person in that area who has a legitimate right to be involved are met and resolved.

I remind the House once again of my recorded comments on this matter. I believe that it would be most improper for the State Government to intervene in the decision-making processes of the Woodville council. Quite clearly and properly, I reiterate, the decision on this matter lies within the control of that local government organisation. However, I am not unsympathetic to the concern of Mr Lyall Wilson in regard to this project, because I understand that he was granted a licence by the Corporation of the City of Woodville.

I further understand that he had applied for a liquor licence for this vessel. A great deal of heat, for want of a better word, has been generated on this matter. Many statements have been made to me, either in writing or verbally, about whether or not the State Government will support the *Foxy's Lady* project. Given that there were no problems with the granting of this licence, I would say that my previous statements on this matter, going back many years, in terms of support for tourism projects of this nature, the associated amounts of money and the part-time and full-time work generated in that area, are consistent with what I believe is necessary. I am not having two bob each way on this issue. I want to place on record my belief that this matter should properly be decided by the Corporation of the City of Woodville.

In terms of third party rights of appeal provisions, I understand that the Minister of Local Government may be seeking a Crown Law opinion. I raise this matter because I have received correspondence from Dr Walter Woods of 10 Sunlake Place, Tennyson, dated 31 August. In relation to this matter, he states in part:

> In particular I request that you urgently seek variation of the West Lakes regulations regarding appeal to the Planning Appeal Tribunal to bring the regulations into line with the provisions of the Planning Act 1982.

He goes on to say—and because of the time factor, I cannot incorporate all of his comments in *Hansard*:

> In the meantime, it is important that the Parliament restrains the City of Woodville from granting planning consents under the West Lakes regulations, in particular in the highly contentious matter of *Foxy's Lady*.

I reiterate, because I know many people will be very interested in what I have said and what is recorded in *Hansard*, that this is a matter that clearly lies within the jurisdiction of the Corporation of the City of Woodville, and a decision is to be made next Monday night at its council meeting.

My understanding is that it will take a considerable time for a decision to be made on the third party right of appeal. I further understand that that is subject to Crown Law opinion. Therefore, it would be improper for me, as the local member, to give any undertaking one way or another as to whether or not I support this project, given the sensitivity and delicacy of this matter at this point in time. I do not know what may or may not happen in the future or how the Government will handle these requests.

Mr MEIER (Goyder): Earlier this year a draft policy document on rural services was issued by the Children's Services Office. One of the effects of this draft document is to reduce services in approximately 56 kindergartens throughout the State. Certainly, on the other side of the ledger there are proposals to introduce new services and to adjust existing services, but the negative effects of the proposals seem to outweigh any positive effects. I wish to cite several examples of the effects that the new proposals will have in some areas.

One of the biggest effects I see is that small rural communities will have the amount of time that is allocated to their kindergarten director reduced. I give the example of Ardrossan, where the kindergarten director would come down from her current .6 position to a .4 position. There are also the examples of Bute, where the kindergarten director would come down from .3 to .2 and Snowtown, where she would come down from .4 of a position to .2.

One can imagine an advertisement in the local paper advertising a full-time position of kindergarten director of a particular place stating the time per week as .2 of a position per week full time or, perhaps, .4 of a position. What sort of people would apply for that position? Does anyone think that the highly qualified ex-kindergarten director or person who has qualifications as a kindergarten director would apply when it involves .2 of a position? If people were looking simply to serve their communities in a voluntary capacity, then I can understand their accepting it. However, I believe that the type of person for whom they would be looking would be someone who wanted a half-time or nearer full-time position and who would not accept .2 of a position. That person would much rather work in some other area which gave her the satisfaction of working most days a week or, possibly, providing much more of an economic return than she would currently be receiving.

This must be seen as a retrograde step in that situation only. Additionally, many of us with younger children would remember the time when we were able to put our children into kindergarten at the age of three. My two lads are now aged 12 and 10, and I well remember that they both started kindergarten when they were three years old. My daughter, who is now four, was allowed to go for a few weeks before she turned four but, basically, a three year old start for kindergarten just was not on. The services being provided for kindy kids have decreased, in my estimation. No longer does one have the freedom of choice that one used to have when some country and metropolitan kindergartens could take children from the age of three.

Many children at that young age are ready for pre-school education. They are looking for it, and the parents encourage them to go along, but it is no longer possible. The same thing applies to the number of sessions that are offered by kindergartens. Five sessions were allowed, depending on how the kindergarten arranged its affairs. That has now been limited to four sessions and the flexibility has gone. Why should this be so? It is another clear indication of how the Bannon Government is giving less consideration to our education and, in this respect, to preschool education.

Additionally, a very major point of concern is that kindergartens are to be staffed on average attendance figures. This was referred to in an earlier debate today when I was speaking on another motion before the House concerning primary and secondary education. This will apply at pre-school level as well. The use of attendance figures will

seriously disadvantage many of our kindergartens in the country, and quite probably many city kindergartens as well.

I think we are all well enough informed to know that young children do not necessarily attend kindergarten on a regular basis. Parents might be in a situation where they cannot send their children at all times throughout the year. Also, often in rural communities during harvest time, during excessively wet periods, or at shearing time it might not be possible to send children to school. The Children's Services Office is specifying that there will be times when it will look at the enrolments and then assess staffing on those enrolment figures. As has been pointed out to me by several kindergarten directors, it is quite possible that the Children's Services Office could pick a week where for one reason or another student numbers were down. However, there will be no appeal and it will be too bad; staff will be allocated accordingly.

It is becoming more and more a socialist policy, a policy that is concerned merely with student numbers and teacher numbers, with the view that we should not worry about whether there is a probable mould of the two or whether a proper service is being given. The idea is that, as long as one divides into the other and the answer is within the limits of what is considered to be acceptable, we will go ahead with it.

This proposal will have a serious effect on our preschool officers. I am appealing to the Government to give further thought to this matter before implementing any of these changes. I know that meetings have been held, but the information that has come back to me suggests that very little consideration has been given to the concerns expressed by many parents and people involved in the kindergarten arena. Come on, Government, wake up and see the light of day! It has been floundering around in the education area for far too long. It has not made any positive moves and it is time that an appropriate change was made.

I now refer to a matter of concern that relates to community libraries. Certainly, it has been a marvellous advance for many communities to have the community libraries established, as distinct from the old public libraries or the school libraries. However, I have received certain information from more than one school in relation to this matter, and I have that with me now. Helen Colliver, the Secretary of the Central Yorke Peninsula Community Library, which is based at the Maitland Area School, wrote to me as follows:

> When the library was first situated in the Maitland Area School we were assured that we would receive the greatest possible support from Government and local government. However, the Bannon Government has now decided it need not honour its promises.

Details of borrowing figures are then given, and she then goes on to say:

> With these heavy borrowings, increasing annually, and visitors on holiday and during school holidays also utilising this service, we cannot maintain free services without support.

I have taken up this matter with the Minister of Local Government, and so has the Central Yorke Peninsula Community Library. It has made the following point in its letter to the Minister:

> We are, however, unable to continue to provide these excellent facilities without the support and commitment from your department which was promised during our establishment. It is most disheartening that these promises are now being dishonoured.

This is a further reflection on the Government. It is not performing as it should be. It is allowing services to wind down. It is high time that the Government addressed these problems. I will be interested to see whether answers to these matters are forthcoming during the Estimates Committees or whether there will simply be more fobbing off and skirting around the issue. It is not good enough, and people in the community generally are recognising that the Government is not honouring its promises, that it simply sought to get into office through false promises and then lead people according to its own whim.

Motion carried.

At 5.5 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday 4 October at 2 p.m.