

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 15 August 1991

The **SPEAKER (Hon. N.T. Peterson)** took the Chair at 11 a.m. and read prayers.

## ADDRESS IN REPLY

Adjourned debate on motion for adoption.  
(Continued from 14 August. Page 201.)

**The Hon. T.H. HEMMINGS (Napier):** It gives me much pleasure to support the motion and to add my congratulations to Her Excellency Dame Roma Mitchell on her opening of the third session of the forty-seventh Parliament. I sincerely hope that the throat infection from which you were suffering last week is getting better, Mr Speaker, so that you can continue to provide good stewardship in this House during the coming session. My contribution to the debate will encompass my views on the way that Parliament is running and I will leave the more serious aspects of the financial situation that we not only in this State but also throughout the country find ourselves in until the budget debate, which I believe is the more appropriate time to place such views before the House. First, I would like to give some advice to my friend and colleague the member for Custance. This is not gratuitous advice to him but it is friendly advice concerning how he sees things.

Yesterday, the member for Custance gave a rather spirited contribution on the plight of the rural economy. No-one has any argument with what the member for Custance was saying and I certainly congratulate him for the way that he represents his rural constituents in this place. However, my advice to the member for Custance concerns the 10 minutes he spent taking the Premier to task for lecturing him about asking questions in this House during Question Time.

I believe that the member for Custance took the Premier's advice the wrong way. The Premier was saying—and I am sure that most of my colleagues on this side would endorse it—that the member for Custance is an able rural member who argues the case for the rural community very well. But what the Premier said and what I am now saying is that the member for Custance is really being played for a bunny—and I say that kindly—in being fed these questions. What the Premier said, and what I am saying to the member for Custance now, is that if he has problems with his rural constituents, he should stand up with all his vigour and enthusiasm to ask questions concerning the rural community and not get dragged down by the swag of SGIC oriented questions. That is the advice that the Premier was giving and the member for Custance should take that advice wisely.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member for Napier is directing his remarks directly to the member for Custance and is not directing them through the Chair.

**The SPEAKER:** That is definitely against Standing Orders. I must admit that I did not catch it, as I was talking to another member. I ask the member for Napier to direct his remarks through the Chair.

**The Hon. T.H. HEMMINGS:** I apologise, Sir. It is unfortunate that three minutes into my speech I should have drawn out a stupid point of order like that. I will get back to the substance of my speech. I think that the member for Custance will take my advice very kindly.

I have no idea whether Her Excellency reads the Address in Reply. If she does, I sincerely hope that she will show the compassion for which she is renowned in coming to any conclusions on the contributions by members opposite. So far we have had most of their heavies stand up and give us the benefit of their deliberations. It has not been the best in any way whatsoever; it has not shown anything that is worthy of being used down the track as a contribution by the Liberal Party that will end up in posterity, and I am sure that the standards will deteriorate even further.

Like my colleague the member for Henley Beach, I should like to refer briefly to the Opposition's fixation on the supposed attitude of Labor members in relation to royalty. Last Thursday, on opening day, we had the ridiculous situation of every Opposition member, after the Clerk had read the proclamation summoning members to the Chamber, saying in unison, 'God save the Queen.' Imagine it, Mr Speaker: for weeks prior to the opening in their Party room they have all been practising and saying together, 'God save the Queen.' The member for Heysen would have had problems remembering who he was trying to save, but we all understand about that. They had so many issues before them: the strategy that they had to plan on how to attack the Government on SGIC, Scrimber and WorkCover and how they could still ask questions about the State Bank despite the fact that there is a royal commission. But what do we have? They are all practising together until, after the Clerk has read the proclamation, they can say, 'God save the Queen.'

The Opposition members wonder why, only three days into this session, all political commentators—even their friends on the *Advertiser*—are questioning whether they have the credibility to be an alternative Government. I am a very kind and fair person. Up to date, I will give the Opposition 10 out of 10 for saying in unison, 'God save the Queen,' and one out of 10 for credibility. I think that is fairly charitable.

On the subject of allegiance to the Queen, I think it is fair to say that our record on this side of the House is impeccable. We will always bear allegiance to the Queen of Australia, and we will continue to do so until there is such a change in our Constitution that says otherwise. Speaking as a person who came from the Old Dart—and I am sure that the member for Mount Gambier will share the sentiments that I am about to express—the Queen will always have a place in my heart. Looking at Opposition members, I do not see any RSL badges. I stand to be corrected, but I would say that I am the only—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. T.H. HEMMINGS:** There are two standing up. However, I am the only member in this House who has taken up arms on behalf of the Sovereign. I faced gunfire; I drew the line in the desert protecting the Sovereign's interests. Also, at the tender age of 18, I was protecting the rights of Australia, because that is the way that I see it. We all belong to this great Commonwealth of nations. At that time I was prepared to lay down my life, and I will continue to do so, for our Queen as long as she is the Queen of Australia. It would be better if the Opposition would shut up the hapless member for Fisher who continually denigrates the royal family by insisting that some Australian blood should be generated into the royal line.

That is an insult, and I have never felt more deeply about anything, yet the member for Fisher continually stands up and prattles on that we should inject some Australian blood into the Royal Family. Perhaps that is the only thing that the member for Fisher sees as being important in respect

of protecting our great sovereign lady. Well, I totally disagree with that particular line.

Last year I said in this House that the Leader of the Opposition had spent some \$60 000 of his own money on personal staff. I said then that, on performance up to then, it had been money wasted and it was money that had gone down the gurgler. Unfortunately, one year on, I am forced to say the same thing. One often hears from members opposite that there are public servants who are obtaining money under false pretences or that there are public servants who, if I can put it perhaps crudely, have their snouts in the trough and are living at the expense of the taxpayer. I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to seriously question whether he is getting value for money. He certainly is not. If he has \$60 000 per year of his own money to spend on personal staff, I would suggest that perhaps he uses that \$60 000 to get Michael Edgley to produce something that would give him a bit more charisma, because he does not have it.

I do not get any particular pleasure out of seeing the Leader of the Opposition go down in the opinion polls. He is not doing very well, but can we blame him? He seems to have been stifled by his advisors. There was one time during the no-confidence debate when he threw away the script and gave us a spirited 3½ minutes delivery that he thought of himself. That was the highlight of his contribution. As I say, he is original and he is boring but, if he is allowed to do his own thing, I am sure he will do a lot better in the opinion polls. That is not just my opinion—it is the opinion of those out in the community.

Let me illustrate how ineffectual the Leader is seen by those in the community. On 8 August I received in my electorate office a letter from a constituent requesting me to vote against the Government on the no-confidence motion. I will share the letter with the House, as follows:

Dear Terry, my family want you to represent us in Parliament this week. We want you as our member of Parliament to vote yes to any vote of no-confidence in the Bannon Government. We cannot put up with the cost of this Government. The people of this State are not happy with the way this State is being run. 1. State Bank. 2. SGIC. 3. Law and order. 4. WorkCover. 5. The money lost in timber investment.

My family is placing our trust in you and hope you can lead the way. Yours faithfully.

I have obviously deleted the name and address of this particular constituent to protect their interests. I rang my constituent immediately and said that what they were requesting was just not on. I did not go into the reasons why I could not accede to his request, but suggested that he come down to Parliament on opening day and listen to the debate on the motion of no confidence and then tell me whether or not he thought I was doing the right thing. Well, on Monday of this week, my office received a telephone call from that person and the words used were, 'Thank God Mr Hemmings did not do as I asked, and tell him I can understand him dozing off.' That, Sir, says it all!

I refer now to the member for Murray-Mallee's outrageous suggestion to establish Nazi-style forced labour camps in national parks. Both the Minister of Employment and Further Education, and the Minister for Environment and Planning have, I think, quite adequately dealt with that bizarre proposition. However, what surprises me is that some sections of the media and some people out there in the community have perhaps not thought it out properly, and seem to think that there is some merit in it. In fact, when the Minister of Employment and Further Education castigated the member for Murray-Mallee for such an outrageous suggestion, about four members opposite actually stood up and defended the proposition. In fact, they castigated my colleague.

My colleague on the front bench is well able to defend himself, but it just goes to show that that germ of an idea which was put forward by the member for Murray-Mallee is actually receiving some support from his own Party ranks. I will not name those people; the gentle readers of *Hansard* who pour over these debates will be able to identify who supported the member for Murray-Mallee. However, I am worried that some sections of the media are saying, 'Well, this is not the normal way that the member for Murray-Mallee carries on. It is just a unique once-off rush of blood to the head, and he should be forgiven.' Well, I can tell the House that that is not so: Nazi-style forced labour camps in the national parks is just one of the many propositions that the member for Murray-Mallee has put forward over the years to the public of South Australia.

Let me share with the House, as my colleague the Minister for Environment and Planning would say, a press release put out by the member for Murray-Mallee on 22 February 1988. It is headed 'Pop Star "Stud" Racket Now Banned in S.A.' The press release states:

'Did you know that medical science has now provided the technology which makes it possible for male "Pop" stars and leading athletes to "give" a vial of deep frozen semen to any woman to artificially inseminate herself with it and have a child by that person?' Peter Lewis, member for Murray-Mallee, put the question in a public statement today. 'Imagine the huge second generation problem if any such practice got under way. There could be thousands of half-brothers and half-sisters who could have children. They would be particularly at risk of being deaf and dumb and may also be blind and intellectually retarded, as well. We have known this in the past as the "Hillbilly Syndrome".'

It is actually technically feasible now for a man to be the genetic father (using his semen) of a child of which he is the biological mother! After collecting his own semen, it's now possible for him to take a course of hormone treatment which would enable him to carry an embryo—a baby—in his receptive abdominal cavity and have it born by Caesarean section', Peter said. 'I think it's now important that other States of Australia and other parts of the world, with advanced medical technology facilities available, should follow our lead and pass laws to ban the possibility of such events and practices taking place', Mr Lewis said in conclusion.

When I read that it crossed my mind that, if the member for Murray-Mallee had gone down that path, he would have named his son Terry but, obviously, reading the final part of the press release I realised that the member for Murray-Mallee was dead against it.

The mind boggles at the kind of utterances that come from the member for Murray-Mallee. If ever there was a member of Parliament who gives credibility to those people out there who complain about the size of our salaries and the standard of our representation, it is the member for Murray-Mallee. I rest my case.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** In the opinion of the Chair, the honourable member has come very close to reflecting upon the member for Murray-Mallee. I ask the honourable member to be very careful of the words that he uses.

**The Hon. T.H. HEMMINGS:** The last thing I would do is reflect on any member in this House. I was just sharing the press release of 22 February 1988 and saying that some people in the community might get the wrong idea. It would give credence to their continually saying that we in this House get far too much salary. I am sure you, Mr Speaker, and I have received equally as many complaints about what we receive for what we do in this House. That is the point I was making. It was in no way a reflection: it was a bit of friendly advice for the member for Murray-Mallee to calm down when he is making press releases.

I recall that, about six months ago, when you, Mr Speaker, were in the Chair, I was castigated by members opposite for making a comment about a straightjacket when trying

to highlight a point to the member for Murray-Mallee. I was forced to withdraw that comment—which I did. Mr Speaker, I apologise to you for saying that.

I refer now to the new stationery ordering scheme, which started on 1 July this year. I congratulate you, Mr Speaker, for this innovation. It puts the onus fairly and squarely on individual members in this Parliament to work within dollar guidelines and to ensure that this office works efficiently and serves the public. Mr Speaker, I congratulate you for bringing the system into the twentieth century. I would also like to congratulate State Print for its involvement in the new scheme.

I was quite impressed by the catalogues that were supplied to all members. I was also impressed by the way that State Print dealt rapidly with our individual orders. That gives us more flexibility so that those of us who use more than the old four reams of Reflex paper can now work within the dollar terms to satisfy our own desires and to promote the cause of the South Australian community. Mr Speaker, I would also like to place on record your firm advice to us that we must not use these facilities for political purposes: they are available for us to serve the community. I think it was valid that you stated that in the letter to individual members.

There is another area in which State Print deserves our praise. State Print has vastly improved its game over the past few years in the publishing of parliamentary reports. Parliamentary reports are vital to the working of this House. I know, as Chairperson of the Public Works Standing Committee, that we can deliver a deliberation and, within 24 hours, that report, after I have signed it, can be tabled and printed. The Government can then get on with the business of carrying out that project. If one looks at those reports, one sees that they are all clear and concise, and that they place on record for eternity exactly what the matter is all about.

I draw the attention of members to one particular report which dealt with a major project of which we are all very proud. Mr Speaker, it is somewhere near your electorate, and I am sure that you will use it in the years to come. Unfortunately, that project did not receive the unanimous support of the members of the committee. I read all these reports, and it was interesting to see that the report on this project clearly showed that, for the first time in 64 years—and that is how long the Public Works Standing Committee has been going—three people voted against a project, in this case the Entertainment Centre. They all sit on the other side, and they are the Hon. Ted Chapman, MP, the Hon. David C. Wotton, MP and the Hon. H.P.K. Dunn, MLC. I found that sad, because it really shows, for ever and a day, that, despite what people say in this House about what they supposedly did, they did not do it. Thanks to the work done by State Print, the report will always show what happened. I will leave it at that, because I see that you, Mr Speaker, are looking at the same report.

Finally, I refer to the consumption tax. Not only has my colleague the member for Playford a motion before the House about the evils of the consumption tax, which will be debated next week, but also he covered the topic, I thought quite adequately, in his speech yesterday. As an individual, I recognise that each of us may have our own view. The Leader of the Opposition has fully endorsed the consumption tax. In fact, I would say he has slavishly endorsed the consumption tax. As an individual, he has every right to do so, and I fully understand that in the wealth stakes members opposite are far wealthier than members on this side of the House. Most members opposite have other businesses; they have inherited money from their

father and from their grandfather. For them to pay extra for school shoes, jumpers and food is nothing. I understand that. I drive a GL Falcon, and I still owe something like \$11 000 on it.

**Mr Ferguson:** You haven't got a Mercedes Benz?

**The Hon. T.H. HEMMINGS:** No. My colleague the member for Henley Beach refers to a Mercedes Benz. I do not know what kind of car the Leader of the Opposition currently drives, I have only seen him in the big white limo that the taxpayers pay for. However, if he were to buy a Mercedes Benz 200E four-door sedan, which currently attracts a 30 per cent sales tax, it would cost him \$99 600.

Mr Speaker, that is almost more than you and I will get when we eventually retire from this great and august Chamber. Under the Liberal Party's proposition put forward by Dr Hewson and his colleagues in Canberra—and our colleague the member for Playford told us yesterday that they are not faltering but are going full bore—the price of that Mercedes Benz 200E four-door sedan would drop to \$62 500. Words escape me. That is just awful. There are other stronger words I could use—

**An honourable member:** Appalling.

**The Hon. T.H. HEMMINGS:** Yes, that is appalling. Obviously, the Leader of the Opposition, who drives a Mercedes Benz, will be laughing all the way to the bank. He will be saving nearly \$37 000. What about the poor pensioner? What about the unemployed? What about the disadvantaged who, when they go down to buy a bottle of spaghetti sauce weighing 500 grams, currently pay \$1.95? Under the consumption tax put forward by Dr Hewson, that price will go up to \$2.24. A one kilogram container of margarine currently costs \$2.95, and it will go up to \$3.95. And that is working only with a 15 per cent tax. The Liberal Party has not come clean and we do not know what the final percentage may be.

When I was in the UK, I was not conned by the metropolitan police as was the member for Bright; I was not going around being told that London was graffiti-clean. That is a big joke. He ought to write to my auntie in Wandsworth and hear her views. He ought to write to my brother who lives in North London and ascertain his views about graffiti in that great metropolis. I was going out talking to the real people and asking them how their VAT (value added tax, read 'consumption tax') is affecting them. They would not say that a consumption tax was good. Theirs started off at a very low figure, but they are now looking at a percentage in the twenties and, when they go into the European community, they will pay another 8 per cent on a consumption tax.

Sure, a consumption tax is good for the wealthy. When I retire and, even now, the consumption tax would be better for me than for those constituents whom I represent. All I can say is that we will continue to attack this vicious tax and expose the Liberal Party for exactly what it is. It is promoting it from self interest and in the interest of those people whom it represents.

**The SPEAKER:** The honourable member's time has expired.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON (Mount Gambier):** I rise to support the motion. First, I express congratulations to Her Excellency the Governor on the competence that she brings to the role, and the dignified manner in which she presented her first sessional speech to the joint Houses. The speech itself, which represents or reflects the Government's intentions, really offers members on both sides of the House, as one can obviously witness from the content and calibre of the previous speaker's address, very little upon which to

comment. Otherwise, I am quite sure the honourable member would have spent far more time elucidating the aims and ambitions of his colleagues, rather than doing what is becoming increasingly obvious to members of the Opposition and the public, namely, resorting to ridicule.

Let us look at the content of the early part of the honourable member's speech. He spent some time saying that we should not be calling 'God Save the Queen' after the pronouncements made in Parliament by the Clerk. The honourable member's comments were really as shallow as a summer puddle. Really, I believe that you have the right attitude, Mr Speaker, when each day as you enter the House and you take your place, you look at the Government benches and then you invoke us all to pray for the state of the nation. It reflects upon the calibre of the member for Napier's speech, most assuredly. If he, the member for Walsh and the Minister who is in the House (the member for Briggs) care to look at things they have said in the House or the press releases they have put out recently, they will see that they have very little to offer the people of South Australia by way of solutions to the massive problems that they have induced over this tenure of almost a decade of stewardship. Instead, they are looking around for things to ridicule and to denigrate.

The public will not fall for that and I suggest that, if the member for Briggs, the member for Walsh, the member for Napier and his colleagues are looking around and hoping that, somewhere out of this sea of political turmoil and their ridicule and denigration, some lifebelt will slip by, they should look at the name of the lifebelt before they slip into it. I am sure it will read 'Titanic'. That is all the sound advice I can give to those members, because they are in a parlous position, along with the rest of us. The depth to which the Government is sinking has been reflected twice in the past two days, once from no less a figure than the Premier himself. One can understand the tenor of remarks made in the Address in Reply by lesser beings such as the member for Napier.

However, during Question Time yesterday—and the member for Custance was ridiculed again today by the member for Napier—when the member for Custance had the temerity, according to the Premier, to ask a question with regard to the parlous state of affairs, which the SGIC, along with other Government institutions, is in, what did the Premier do? He implied to all members of the House that the member for Custance had absolutely no right to ask such a question. He again resorted to ridicule of the meanest kind. The Premier, the leading figure in Parliament, belittled one of the most recent newcomers to Parliament, implying that that member had absolutely no interest in putting such a question to such a mighty figure as the Premier.

The true position is that everyone on this side of politics, and I am quite sure everyone in the public outside of Parliament—I hate the expression 'everyone out there' because I am one of those people out there, Mr Speaker, and you are one of those people out there—is suffering. We are all out there. We all have bank accounts, and we all have incomes of one kind or another, whether it be a pension, income from business or a regular salary, such as most politicians on this side of the House. I have no other source of income than my parliamentary salary, I assure the member for Napier. We are all suffering under this heavy burden of taxation, to which I will refer in more detail in a few moments.

If the member for Custance cannot ask a responsible question regarding the fiscal state of South Australia, something is radically wrong. The Premier's response had a smell

of fear about it, and I am sure it is running around the benches. It reflects the feeling on the other side of the House that the Government does not have any answers. It has put us into this situation and does not know how to get out of it. The Premier did not think his way through a response; in fact, he did not give a response to the member for Custance. Read the Premier's reply: the question was completely unanswered. Instead of having a think about it and saying to the member for Custance, 'I appreciate the problems that your people are having in your electorate', he implied that people who live around the Rocky River district are nothing more than country bumpkins who do not deserve an answer.

What sort of a response, what sort of an attitude, is that from the Premier of this State, which has a very large rural component, which actually contributes a tremendous amount of wealth to the whole of this State. Without the rural people in South Australia, I assure members that metropolitan Adelaide would be in far greater dire straits than it is now.

When he asked that question, the member for Custance knew very well that farmers are in dire straits, not only in his electorate but in mine and on the Eyre Peninsula where their problems have been evident for two or three years because of drought. Banks, such as the State Bank in earlier days, are foreclosing on these farmers. These small towns in country South Australia have shops, banks and local commerce. Let us face it, they are almost all small towns. We have Whyalla with a population of over 30 000 and Mount Gambier with about 25 000, which are larger towns or cities, but according to world standards they are towns.

The tradespeople, every single person within our rural community, are feeling the impact of what the Premier and his Government have done to this State. They claim that they are managing. Well, if they are managing I say that they should stop resorting to petty ridicule, to trying to denigrate the member for Murray-Mallee when the Minister really does not want the unemployed in her parks. I do not think she wants anyone in her parks; she wants to keep them in pristine condition. They are petty point-scoring activities which the Government is carrying on, and I feel very sad for the State of South Australia that this is the Government's only reaction to an absolute crisis.

In case anyone believes that I am making this up just for the show of the Address in Reply, I have some figures. In my own electorate, there has been a 75 per cent rise in the region's jobless. The member for Barker (Ian McLachlan), a concerned politician, said that unemployment in the South-East, and in the Mount Gambier area in particular, has grown by more than 75 per cent in the past year.

It seems that 2 492 individuals registered for unemployment, an increase of 1 083 since July 1990, and that is not the end of the story. A few of our largest companies in the Mount are actually on four-fifths time. Rather than have closures and dismissals, the workers have agreed to work for four days instead of five. We can add another 20 per cent of the complement of those companies to the unemployment list. It is a 20 per cent reduction in the income circulating within the Mount Gambier community.

The Federal member for Barker shares my personal concerns when looking at the fact that, in 1982, when the Liberal Party lost office, unemployment in Mount Gambier stood at around 990, according to the Government's own ABS statistics. The increase has largely been under the stewardship of this Government. However much the Government might try to say that the figures in 1982 were worse, in fact it was the 1983 figures, when the Government had been in office for more than 12 months, that were the worst in the past decade. That is another little furphy that

it pleases the Premier to float around—the figures were bad when he took over. They were not; they were bad 12 months after the Government took over.

Between 1982 and 1986, the Government borrowed as if borrowing were going out of fashion. Money was readily available from banks, from the Federal Government, from all lending agencies. It was circulating freely. Rather than maintain South Australia's equilibrium in borrowings, the Premier and his Cabinet borrowed \$1 billion, a figure which I promulgated during the 1985 election campaign and which has never been denied because it cannot be denied. The figure stands clearly in the Auditor-General's Report and the Government's own financial statement for the 1985 budget.

The Government borrowed \$1 billion but we did not see \$1 billion worth of improvements in roads and other amenities in South Australia, as the public accounts asset replacement documents, which are acknowledged worldwide as being responsible and informative documents, indicate. They did not show a great deal of improvement around the State. A lot of that money was put into banking institutions such as the South Australian Financing Authority. A good idea. The Liberal Party promulgated the idea of having SAFA as the Government's major financial arm, and that idea was carried out by the current Government. However, we never envisaged borrowing \$1 billion in two or three years.

Look what has happened to the massive accumulation of wealth within the Treasury. It has been frittered away to the extent that we now have to pay interest on the borrowings, and that is shown in the State's annual accounts for everyone to read. The amount of interest repayable is increasing like a millstone around the neck of current and future taxpayers, including members of this House and our children. Massive financial losses have accumulated over the past few years. For a strange reason, the Premier and Cabinet say that it is a hands-off Government, that it is not responsible. You cannot have it two ways: either you are responsible or you are not responsible. Is it hands-off and not responsible to the extent of a \$1.5 billion loss by the State Bank, which could rise to \$3 billion depending on the state of the economy?

Look at SGIC, WorkCover, SATCO, Scrimber, IPL New Zealand and SAMCOR—the tale goes on and on. The Liberal Party paid off \$23 million of SAMCOR's debts in 1979. The first thing that the then Minister of Agriculture did was to clear the books, and yet it is still accumulating debts. We had to discharge a debt incurred during the stewardship of the previous Labor Government. If the Government claims that it is not responsible for these debts, I would say that there is a degree of irresponsibility because it should have detected the way the economy was going between 1982 and 1991, it should have sniffed the air. It has not listened to the comments that have come repeatedly year after year from all members of the Opposition at Question Time and during the Estimates Committees on, for instance, the well-being of the South Australian Superannuation Fund Investment Trust, which is such small beer that it has not hit the front bench yet.

There is so much to probe. However, \$12.5 million was written off to Christopher Skase. They said, 'It's only \$12.5 million, only about 2 per cent of our total investment portfolio. It's not really worth worrying about.' There is some sort of general malaise that pervades Government departments, from the Cabinet downwards, because they know that it is a hands-off Government—or do they—and if it is a hands-off Government, we do not need to worry. Real stewardship is in probing, prying and questioning the managing. Management is really the key to getting us out

of this problem, and mismanagement has been the way in which we entered this dilemma.

Let us have no more nonsense from the Government benches. If they are proud of the contents of the Governor's speech, let them come out and say so, and point out all the good things. I have been looking for them, but cannot find them. The points that the Government has made are shallow. If you look at the vaudeville that has taken place on the opposite side in the past two or three days, you might think that we have an entertainment bound recovery.

We have an Entertainment Centre, with which I have no problem, although I saw one in Britain for a city with a population of 600 000, costing £52 million, which is the largest in Europe and which has full bookings and will accommodate about four times the number that the South Australian Entertainment Centre accommodates. I understand that the South Australian one is already being bypassed by leading groups who feel that it is not big enough. They are going off.

But that is just by the way. It seems to me that it is an entertainment led recovery, and we are still riding on the backs of the Ayrton Sennas and the Nigel Mansells of the world, who are wonderful in their own right but who do not live here; they come here for only a day or two in the course of a year, and are really no substitute at all for the 2 500 unemployed, crying people in the Mount Gambier electorate.

And they are not people of wealth in the South-East, generally. Mount Gambier is a working class electorate, which was always held by a Labor member of Parliament. It had never been held by the Liberals prior to my stewardship, and I do not like references being made to imply that country people have wealth running out their ears. They have farms on which they have massive mortgages and on which banks are foreclosing, yet we have all the illogicality peddled by the Labor Party.

Mine is very much a working class electorate, and my constituents need more help than the Government is offering at the moment. The various follies of the Government have been mentioned by almost every member on this side, and are in the press every day. Out of deference to the Royal Commissioner, I will make no reference to the State Bank which, in itself, is South Australia's biggest disaster. Words fail me. I simply add that the Liberal Party has been totally vindicated despite, once again, the ridicule of the member for Napier, in inquiring into the SGIC, the State Bank, Beneficial Finance, Scrimber, SATCO—you name it. The Government has been led like an unwilling bride—and this is another sad reflection on the manner in which it has carried out its stewardship—to the altar of the royal commission.

The Premier said that he initiated the inquiry, but it was debate on this side of the House and public opinion that forced the Government to hold that royal commission and to hold inquiries into a host of other Government managed organisations, institutions and semi-government authorities. It did not do it at the proper time, several years ago, when the first signs of trouble were emerging and when we on this side were drawing the Government's attention to them.

We forced the issues into the open, whatever credit the Government may take for saying, 'We took the action to launch this inquiry.' It comes as a very thinly veiled excuse for incompetence, to my way of thinking. I am sure that the general public of South Australia will see it that way.

There is, of course, a direct correlation, a sad correlation, between what we have in South Australia—an economy in distress—and the ensuing socioeconomic problems. We have Government debt and Government departments and sta-

tutory authorities bankrupt, needing to be bailed out, not by the Government of the day but by the people of South Australia who are paying the taxes. It is a taxpayers' bailout. From wherever the Government gets its money, it is certainly not from itself—it has no money of its own. It has a small royalty income from Roxby Downs, which was originally nothing more than a 'mirage in the desert' but which is now a reality, and the Premier and his men are only too happy to hang on to it—at least it is a source of income. However, the rest of it—the mass of funds for these bailouts—comes from the taxpayers of South Australia and we will be paying for a long while.

Moreover, there are the huge debts and high interest rates maintained by about high rates charged by the Federal Government (again a Labor Government), the general increase in poverty in South Australia, the higher incidence of theft and crime at the adult level and the massive increase in juvenile crime. One wonders what triggers off juveniles into an increased spate of crime: they must be feeling all sorts of things at home when they see fathers unable to find work, mothers worried because they cannot cope and children not getting food and clothing and not being able to stand proudly alongside other slightly more fortunate youngsters at school. Maybe juvenile crime is increasing because of this malaise at home as well as in the wider State. Suicide rates among young people have been a worry for some time, and this downward spiral is affecting everyone in South Australia. While the Government can joke and laugh and turn Parliament into a sort of vaudeville at Question Time and during Address in Reply debates, it still

has this huge problem which it has to address in order to restore confidence in South Australia. We have been thoroughly vindicated in our lines of questioning. The facts speak for themselves.

On 1 July 1991 the Institute of Public Affairs (in volume 39 No. 4) ran an article headed 'Unemployed at near record levels'. 'Near record' does not mean since 1982; it means since the Great Depression of the 1930s. I will not ask for all the figures to be placed in *Hansard*, but I will refer to a table showing farm earnings for Australia. This is certainly relevant to the question asked by the member for Custance yesterday. It relates to Australian economic trend figures issued by Lumleys Insurance, which all of us read with some interest as it is up-to-date factual material. The July 1991 publication shows that farmers' terms of trade fell 15 per cent in 1990-91, with a forecast further fall of 8 per cent in 1991-92. Net farm cash income fell 35 per cent in 1991 and is forecast to fall a further 26 per cent in 1991-92. That is over a 50 per cent drop in farm income.

In real terms, the 1991-92 net farm cash income is forecast to be only 44 per cent of the figure for 1989-90. This brief statement then outlines a whole range of products—beef, wheat and other crops, sheep, livestock and broadacre—for the years 1989-90, 1990-91 and there is a forecast for 1991-92. There has been a net decline in that two-year period, minus 54 per cent for the 1990-91 financial year and another predicted minus 33 per cent in 1991-92. I seek leave to have this purely statistical table inserted in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

#### Farm earnings

1. Farmers' terms of trade, which fell 15 per cent in 1990-91, are forecast to fall a further 8 per cent in 1991-92. Net farm cash income fell 35 per cent in 1990-91 and is forecast to fall a further 26 per cent in 1991-92. In real terms 1991-92 net farm cash income is forecast to be only 44 per cent of the figure for 1989-90.

2. Average cash operating surpluses per farm (\$) for various types of enterprise, following the reduction in the wool tax to 12 per cent, are estimated as:

	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92
Beef .....	28 620	27 300 (-5%)	26 700 (-2%)
Wheat and other crops .....	69 340	53 300 (-23%)	38 800 (-27%)
Sheep—beef .....	36 910	11 900 (-68%)	10 200 (-14%)
Livestock—crops .....	64 490	29 000 (-55%)	15 500 (-47%)
Sheep .....	45 270	6 700 (-85%)	300 (-96%)
All broadacre .....	48 400	22 500 (-54%)	15 100 (-33%)
3. The total value of farm exports (fob), which fell 14 per cent in 1990-91, are forecast to rise 2 per cent in 1991-92. Estimates for exports of individual commodities (\$m) are:			
Wheat .....	2 812	2 758 (-2%)	2 903 (+5%)
Wool .....	3 865	2 905 (-25%)	3 060 (+5%)
Wheat .....	2 694	1 870 (-31%)	1 685 (-10%)
Other grains/oilseeds .....	1 066	904 (-15%)	939 (+4%)
Sugar .....	1 052	870 (-17%)	714 (-18%)
Cotton .....	540	616 (+14%)	781 (+27%)
Dairy produce .....	741	696 (-6%)	608 (-13%)
Fruit .....	181	220 (+22%)	273 (+24%)
Wine .....	125	150 (+20%)	198 (+32%)
Other farm exports .....	1 745	1 762	1 840
Total farm exports .....	14 821	12 751 (-14%)	13 001 (+2%)

4. Total farm indebtedness to financial institutions which rose 21 per cent in 1988-89 rose a further 10 per cent in 1989-90 to \$11 704m. It has risen by \$2 857m or 32 per cent over 2 years.

Source: Agriculture and Resources Quarterly, June 1991. ABARE.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** I reiterate, after having brought to the attention of the House that Lumleys report, that that is obviously the reason why the member for Custance and all other members on this side of the Chamber, whether they be rural backbenchers or leading frontbenchers, are vitally interested in how the Government has managed to oversee or not to oversee the situation. Hands-on or hands-off—whichever it claims to have done—it is responsible for the parlous situation in which we find ourselves, and we will all continue to ask the question.

In case anyone believes that the figures are capable of being maladjusted by the member for Mount Gambier, I also draw to the attention of members the South Australian newspaper, the *News*, I think of yesterday or the day before (certainly as recent as this week) which, at page nine, states that 20 000 jobs were lost in July—not in Australia, but in South Australia. In other words, in this State alone we lost about a quarter of the jobs reported lost in the whole of Australia. Those figures were obtained by the Hon. Robert Lucas, MLC, from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The

article quotes the 'hidden' 20 000 South Australians who had lost their jobs in July.

It simply reflects what we all know. We do not need any gentle persuasion from the Government that things have never been so good; what we need is the truth about South Australia's affairs. We need a solution. Of course, we on this side of the Chamber are confident that we will be able to assist in that solution in the not too distant future.

I am receiving complaints, as all members must be, almost on a daily basis, and not only complaints but cries of distress, from people who can no longer cope. They can no longer cope with the Department of Social Security which is becoming even more stringent in its application of the test for eligibility for social security and other benefits—and this at a time when the Government itself has been unable to reduce the impact and pace of unemployment. Yet, it is telling the people in the community that it will make it harder for them to qualify. It is really saying, 'You people out there are falsifying the books. You are not really unemployed at all and we will find out which of you are not properly unemployed and find something else for you to do.' But, that 'something else' is a nebulous thing; it is on the horizon. The member for Briggs is going to take part in the Federal Government Kickstart scheme—

**The Hon. M.D. Rann:** It is a State Government scheme.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** You are not receiving any Federal funds at all for that?

**The Hon. M.D. Rann:** Some; but it is a State Government scheme.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** I thought it was perhaps a joint venture, as invariably happens. That is a recognition that you are in dire straits when the State itself initiates a scheme involving some millions of dollars.

**The Hon. M.D. Rann:** Don't you support it?

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** I do, yes. In fact, I am glad you mentioned that, Minister.

*The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** The Minister says that he hopes I support it. I have just quoted figures in relation to the 2 400-plus unemployed in the South-East—and they are the ABS statistics—and I have told you that hundreds more are on only four-fifths time, so that is another 20 per cent—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member will direct his remarks through the Chair.

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** I am delighted to, Mr Speaker, because I notice that you have been listening most attentively, and I am appreciative of that. I ask the Minister to explain at some time, probably by way of a press release such as he is wont to make in my electorate on occasion, the reason why the electorate of Mount Gambier has been left out of this Kickstart scheme. I wonder what sort of reason he will give.

**The Hon. M.D. Rann:** It hasn't been left out.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. H. ALLISON:** I am vitally interested in this matter and, as I say, if the Minister reads his own press releases he will find that Mount Gambier is not in the initial group to be given a Kickstart. I will talk at length about the multifunction polis later, but the MFP itself is really part of our problem in rural South Australia. I am not decrying the MFP, about which I will have more to say later—constructive criticism to which I hope the Government will listen.

He is really saying to the people of the northern and southern suburbs of Adelaide that have a huge unemployment problem and no real signs of employment—they are enclaves of housing and not of industry—and to the entire

rural population that they can kiss goodbye to any Government assistance because the Government's future endeavours will be directed to the multifunction polis with all the splendour, glitter and grandeur that that conjures up and that really the Government has not any great promise for them, other than for those at Gillman. In fact, they do not even live in Gillman yet—a technical-oriented elite may be brought in there.

I will resume the tenor of my remarks in later debates. This is only the beginning of comments that I intend to make on a whole range of issues which I have thought out and for which I hope that the Premier and his Ministers will not ridicule me.

**Mrs KOTZ (Newland):** It is with pleasure that I support the Address in Reply to the Governor's Speech reporting on Government policy in the coming year. I wish Her Excellency every continued success in her most worthwhile position. I would like to offer my congratulations to the Government for its intended actions in two areas that have been of great interest to me and members of the Opposition. Some four months ago the Premier announced the Government's intention to tackle graffiti vandals, a subject which the Liberal Party had been pushing for more than six months prior to that time.

The Minister of Employment and Further Education reaffirmed that commitment in this House, incorporating initiatives put forward by members of the Liberal Party's law and order committee. Therefore, I reiterate that I welcome this bipartisan support for Opposition initiatives. Further support for Opposition initiatives was announced by the Government on 28 May this year with the approval of identity cards for young drinkers. On 22 November last year I presented a notice of motion to the House urging the Government to introduce and provide a voluntary proof of age card to persons aged between 18 and 25 years as a positive measure to discourage and control under age drinking.

It is therefore gratifying to see the South Australian Government catch up with four other States by implementing the scheme, which will come as a welcome relief to many young adults who have been unable to produce satisfactory proof of age and who have been penalised accordingly. It is also of great assistance to licensees in the hotel and restaurant trade. The proof of age card will make it far easier for them to identify under-age drinkers and it has the potential to reduce what has become an enormous problem for the entire community. I look forward to viewing the Government's legislation on this issue which again shows bipartisan support for a Liberal initiative.

Turning now to the policy presented by Her Excellency, on the first page the Government states:

At this stage my Government recognises the vital need to take account of proper concerns about overall economic management while looking ahead to the challenges and the opportunities of this decade.

I hesitate to point out that it may be somewhat late to consider taking account of proper concerns, because the damage appears to have already been done. I refer to the words of a former Whitlam Government Minister that says what many South Australians are calling for at this time. A Western Australian newspaper report headed 'It's time to dump the ALP' states:

Former Whitlam Government Minister Clyde Cameron has called for the Federal Labor Government to be swept from power at the next election. Addressing a union rally in Cairns Mr Cameron said the Federal Labor Party was at war with its traditional voters and would have to be voted out at the next election. He said voters were left with no alternative but to sack all Labor

politicians who had 'betrayed traditional Labor policies and principles'.

He said that Federal Labor was responsible 'for sky-rocketing interest rates' and 'the worst recession since the disastrous depression of the thirties'. He continued:

As a consequence of what is now happening, the movement which gave rise to the formation of the great ALP in 1891 is now demanding a clean sweep of those who have betrayed their trust so that Labor's future will indeed be able to match its glorious past.

Although I question whether this Labor Government's recent past can be classed as glorious, I find myself in total agreement with the sentiments of Clyde Cameron. In this State we have seen the consistent betrayal of trust by a Labor Government. At the last State election 48 per cent of the people gave this Government their trust—a trust to manage the affairs of this State to provide for the welfare, the safety and security of the people and to administer responsibly the finances entrusted by the taxpaying public of South Australia. Clyde Cameron said it all. Labor politicians have abused that trust. Their betrayal, not only of Labor voters but of all citizens of this State, leaves one alternative. In Clyde Cameron's own words, they should be sacked.

Those sentiments are being strongly echoed in each of our constituencies, and they are echoed by those who previously were Labor voters. I have received phone calls over the past week from constituents of other members' electorates, including the electorates of Florey, Todd and Elizabeth. I seem to be in the unique position of being the only metropolitan Liberal member north of the Torrens, surrounded by Labor-held electorates. Most people wanted to know why—and I use their terminology—'that lot' were still in Government. I pointed out that the member for Elizabeth had secured for himself a place in the history of this State by applying his democratic right of vote to assist in retaining this Government, albeit its mismanagement of the finances of this State. What better example of mismanagement than the SGIC fiasco?

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mrs KOTZ:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The principle of responsible financial management has been demolished in the results and effects of this further burden that the taxpayers of South Australia will have to bear. For all the empty rhetoric that we continually hear from the Treasurer as alleged explanation for this latest financial disaster, the true circumstance means that the people of this State are being robbed of many millions of dollars that might otherwise have been available to maintain Government services and help to reduce the tax burden of the State Bank debacle. The people of this State have every right to ask, 'Why are that lot still in Government?' They also want to know why their areas of concern are not being met by appropriate resources.

The Government is wringing every cent from every conceivable area of structure, service commitment, business and industry possibly imaginable, but not to resource more policing in our constituencies, not to provide adequate staff in our schools, not to provide more beds in our hospitals, and certainly not to provide back-up services for the disabled or the mentally ill. Instead, those dollars are being directed to service bad debts incurred under the hand of the Treasurer and Premier of this State.

The SGIC's contingent liabilities now exceed \$1.5 billion. The Treasurer was made aware of this potentially huge financial risk by then Under Treasurer Prowse on 20 April 1990. The Treasurer literally went to sleep on this information for over 12 months. The very powerful propaganda machine within the Premier and Treasurer's department

has downplayed the Treasurer's responsibility in all matters relating to Treasury, aided and abetted by the Treasurer. The Treasurer should be totally ashamed by this attempted abrogation of responsibility, clearly identified in this instance within the SGIC Act which was established by Labor 20 years ago. It should be indelibly seared into the memory banks of any Treasurer.

Section 3 (3) gives the Treasurer the power and responsibility over all aspects of SGIC's operations, as well as specific powers over investments. According to the report of the committee of review, every aspect of good business management and procedure has been inept and, most importantly, some are in fact outside the Act and therefore illegal. The document provided by the committee of review is quite staggering. On almost each of the more than 100 pages the committee has identified the ineptitude of those who have actually been in control of SGIC.

Regarding section 3 and the Treasurer's specific powers in relation to investment, we read (page 55) that in June 1989 consultants were engaged by SGIC to review the investment division. They found two fundamental areas of concern with that division. First, there was a lack of discipline in procedure and control within the division. This meant there were inadequate controls on investment acquisition and trading, accounting treatments of various transactions were incorrect or inappropriate, and there was an overall lack of segregation of duties within the division.

Secondly, there was no formal investment strategy. According to the consultants, there was an overall lack of cohesiveness between investment strategies and the obligations and liabilities of SGIC. This was coupled with inadequate performance monitoring and information systems. In the final paragraph on that page, the most damaging statement is as follows:

The committee believes that the control of investment strategies for each fund has been *ad hoc*. There have been transfers between funds which, in the committee's opinion, have resulted in subsidisation of one fund by another and in the presentation of misleading results.

Misleading results! How responsible were the Treasurer's actions in this area alone? This is purely an abuse of power and responsibility related specifically to section 3 (3).

I turn now to page 103 of the review. This full document states very clearly the total ineptitude of management and the mismanagement that has gone on within SGIC over these past years. It is amazing to see (page 103) that those in control of the management area have been receiving exceptionally nice remuneration packages. It states that nine executives were receiving salary packages ranging between \$100 000 and \$230 000. That remuneration includes a combination of base salary, motor vehicle, car parking, superannuation, credit card balances, the payment of fees of one type or another, travel expenses and home loans. To add insult to injury, SGIC management brought in consultants who received (page 103) \$4.4 million over four years, because SGIC required the consultants to assist them in those salary packages.

The sad truth for the people of South Australia is that their trust in this Labor Government has been sorely abused. In fact, it has been slyly abused. The only policy that this Government has introduced to attempt to rectify its massive mistakes is the sly imposition of hundreds of taxes and charges, closely followed by the sheer duplicity of rises in water and sewerage rates, and a wealth tax on the family home. This vision of retarded policies was still not sufficient. The Government has now raised the threshold figures and increased the rates to grab more revenue for its depleted coffers.



The Treasurer's answers to this Parliament have been nothing short of shameful. This disgraceful attitude to Parliament and its members was no less epitomised in this House during the Treasurer's answers to the Opposition's no confidence motion. The performance presented in this House by the Treasurer was more suited to the Entertainment Centre than to this House of Assembly Chamber. The Treasurer waltzed his way around every allegation with a flurry of showmanship which, undoubtedly, will stand him in good stead at the end of his parliamentary career in amateur theatricals. But, while the Premier waxed lyrical about the positive outlooks for our economy, and the positive upward trend in employment figures, the news headlines for that day screamed at South Australians that one in 10 people are jobless, and 72 000 South Australians are looking for employment, 26 600 of those being teenagers.

The Treasurer was seen most clearly that day as an entertainer with substance but a politician without substance. South Australia's unemployment rate is well above the national average at 10.4 per cent, and that is a State disgrace. The loss of billions of dollars from this State's coffers is a State disgrace. Clyde Cameron was right: the Labor Government must be sacked and, if any vestige of ethics or integrity remained, the Treasurer would resign of his own volition.

I turn now to a subject that affects my region and electorate. Last year the northern metropolitan region saw the opening of the first hospice centre at Modbury Hospital. The six-bed ward was established to cater for terminally-ill people. This was followed later that year by a further six-bed facility established within the Lyell McEwin Hospital at Elizabeth. The need for these facilities had long been noted, therefore the hospice centre was welcomed and acknowledged with support from all groups in the community, including patients and their families. The hospice centre at Modbury has experienced certain difficulties in an operational sense since the time of its inception. The impact of these difficulties has been to deny the hospice facility the right to function as a specialised unit in caring for the terminally ill.

In November 1990 the occupancy rate was dramatically reduced whereby, at that time, the six-bed ward held only two patients and, quite obviously from the hospital register, it would be empty the following week. When this very serious situation was brought to my notice, I contacted the Modbury Hospital administration and, after a series of discussions, I was assured that the circumstances which caused the under-utilisation of the hospice facility would be addressed forthwith. A further telephone call confirmed that action was taken by the hospital administration and had apparently solved the issues, and that patients once again have access to the beds. In June 1991 I was advised that the hospice centre at Modbury was once again experiencing difficulties and that, for a period of three weeks, not one patient had been admitted to the centre.

To say that I was concerned at this latest development is something of an understatement. This palliative care unit was fought for over many years to provide a service considered most vital and necessary for our area. It involved taxpayers' money or public funding to provide this unit to cater for the pain management and comfort of the terminally ill. That these funds are being squandered, and access to this unit by those in need in our community is being restricted, is truly disgraceful.

The Minister of Health revealed, in his answer to my letter calling for his intervention in this matter, that interpersonal problems between medical and nursing staff within the unit were the catalyst for the problems experienced by

the unit and gave an assurance that the Health Commission would continue to monitor the situation.

It has been put to me that the statements that interpersonal problems between medical and nursing staff are the reason for problems besetting the unit is a grossly inaccurate assessment of the situation.

**The Hon. Jennifer Cashmore:** If it were that, it would be inexcusable.

**Mrs KOTZ:** Exactly right! It would be inexcusable if it were true, as the member for Coles says. It has been suggested that a general lack of acceptance of the need for specialised palliative care by medical professionals is the true catalyst. Allegedly, one of the major contributing factors has been the apparent inability of medical administrators of both the Lyell McEwin and Modbury Hospitals to appoint a suitably qualified specialist as overall Director for the Northern Hospice Service. Once again, I therefore call on the Minister of Health to reassess the Modbury situation. I am led to believe that a true settlement, which will allow the hospice unit to function as a true palliative care centre, can occur only when a suitable specialist, essential in terms of appropriate medical back-up, is appointed.

I would like to introduce into this debate a topic which, for over 20 years, has concerned me, first as a parent, secondly as a member of school councils and now as a member of Parliament—that topic being literacy. It is a subject which I will undoubtedly continue to raise until the recognition of the seriousness of this issue has been dealt with in a responsible manner.

Last weekend, I attended a seminar on teaching reading which was held at Pedare College, Golden Grove. Of the 150 people who attended, 50 per cent were identified as professional teachers and 50 per cent were parents, including several grandparents. It was also concluded that 40 per cent of those present were from country areas of the State, with 60 per cent being from metropolitan Adelaide.

This diverse group of people represent thousands of people in South Australia who have concerns for the growing illiteracy rates amongst not only our community at large but also our young children and young adults in our schools. The literacy debate must be addressed in an objective manner without the emergence of emotional rhetoric which produces only the red herrings that divert the important elements of rational debate.

The guest speaker on the topic of teaching reading at the seminar was Dr Sam Blumenfeld. I note that, in last night's *News*, an article covered some of the areas that he touched on during this seminar. The doctor is a teacher of reading by the alphaphonics method from the United States of America.

Dr Blumenfeld has, over the past two decades, taught children, dyslectic teenagers and functionally illiterate adults to read confidently and well. The doctor was indeed controversial, and his thought provoking statements were indeed complementary to his introduction of a simple, logical method of teaching reading. In relation to dyslexia the doctor states:

Dyslexia is the disease you get in school . . . it is mainly caused by the 'look and say' or 'whole language' method that most schools now use to teach reading.

Those statements will undoubtedly raise the ire of those who steadfastly maintain structures and methods within our education system that are not sufficiently pliable to cope with student needs that lie outside present-day methodology.

A report from Canberra is quoted in the *News* of 18 March 1991 as follows:

Nearly half the population cannot understand instructions on a medicine label and at least 16 per cent cannot fill out a bank deposit slip. A Federal Government report on literacy needs in

the workplace says 49 per cent of Australians of English-speaking background cannot understand meal surcharges, 68 per cent cannot answer questions on technological issues and 31 per cent cannot provide past employment details. This compared with 52 per cent of people with non-English speaking backgrounds who can perform these tasks.

The report was presented to an employment and training committee. More and more parents are removing their children from Government schools into non-government schools, where they believe basic disciplines in reading structures apply. More and more parents, if not already teaching reading to their own children, are certainly considering that option. The professionalism of the teaching professionals will most certainly be placed at risk by these changing attitudes.

The Minister of Education has a duty to the children of this State to provide quality of education. The ability to read is the basic tenet for all education. If we deny that the basics are elementary and necessary, we are condemning another generation of young Australians to the illiterate zone. I therefore ask the Minister to take immediate action to implement training for educationists to improve the teaching of reading skills and to include the phonic alphabet teaching method in the core curriculum of all schools.

I also bring the attention of the House to a matter that was brought to my attention by two articles in the *News* over a period of one week. The first article is entitled 'Prison block voted top building'. Judges from the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (South Australian Chapter) gave the prison an award of merit. The awards were announced at the Adelaide Convention Centre. The 80-metre square prison block, believed to cost about \$9.8 million, provides 95 living units on the site of the former C division in the north-west corner of Yatala for protective, transient and recalcitrant prisoners. The building was designed by SACON, or the Department of Housing and Construction.

This award must have been extremely gratifying for the Minister of Correctional Services. He could feel very pleased that F division had received this award for its architectural design. However, one week later, a further article states that a Yatala paint job ignored the South Australian award. Apparently the Minister considered that the corridors were, in fact, rather stark and, instead of maintaining the architectural character of these walls it was decided to paint them. Unfortunately, it will be rather difficult for this building now to be included in the national competition.

I am not sure whether this should actually be listed under fact or fiction, or perhaps 'Ripley's Believe it or Not' would be more appropriate, but I would ask the Minister whether he knows of any further award likely to be presented in the future to his department for providing nearly \$10 million for prisoner accommodation but in which not one prisoner has yet been accommodated.

**Mr HAMILTON (Albert Park):** I welcome the opportunity to speak in this Address in Reply to the Governor's speech to this Parliament. I add my congratulations to Dame Roma Mitchell for being the first woman Governor of South Australia and the first, I understand, in Australia. I congratulate her and I believe I speak for all members of Parliament when I say that her ability and understanding of issues in the community have been amply demonstrated by her other activities in her previous occupations. It would take too long for me to go through that list of activities. I would like to extend my condolences to the families of Dr Springett, Mr Giles and Mr Story.

In speaking to the Address in Reply, I believe that the Parliament is here quite clearly to address the issues raised by the Governor in her speech. Whilst I understand the role

of the Opposition, having been in Opposition myself for some three years, I believe that, when criticising the Government, the Opposition should put up propositions as to what it would do if and when it were to be successful in attaining office. I have listened most attentively during this debate. Is it any wonder that there is a feeling in sections of the community of doom and gloom, which have been perpetrated and promoted quite clearly by the Opposition here in South Australia?

I have also noticed the crocodile tears and the hypocrisy of the members opposite, when they talk about the needs of the unemployed, the needs of the disadvantaged in the community and the needs of all those people in the community who require assistance. We have just heard the member for Newland knocking the State-run Education Department. I have a vivid and long memory, as one who comes from the bottom of the heap, if you like. I remember very clearly at the last Federal election this bunch of hypocrites—these silvertails who parade around as those who are concerned about the welfare of the disadvantaged—were the very ones who supported their Federal colleagues when they said—

*Mr Ingerson interjecting:*

**Mr HAMILTON:** You'll get your opportunity in a minute. They were the ones last Federal election who wanted to cut \$4 billion from the welfare services of this country. Four billion dollars! So much for their concern about the disadvantaged out there in the community; so much for their concern for the aged, the pensioners and all those people who need the assistance of the welfare state. They are the very ones who promote the New Zealand experience in their support for the New Zealand Government. They are the very ones who say they will do away with the welfare state. Yesterday the member for Bragg said blatantly and unashamedly that his colleagues would support that proposition.

*Mr Ingerson interjecting:*

**Mr HAMILTON:** 'Good', he says again, when I say in this place that his Party, which he supports, would cut \$4 billion. That was what it said at the last Federal election; God knows what it would do at the next Federal election, and God knows what it would do to the disadvantaged here.

*Mr Ingerson interjecting:*

**Mr HAMILTON:** I cannot hear; that is why I am talking loudly. I do not want to hear you, because you are a fool, in my opinion. Anyway, we will get around to those issues later. Not once have we heard from members opposite anything good about what this State Government has done, in all the contributions I have listened to here—not once. No mention has been made of the tremendous fillip to South Australia of the Submarine Corporation, which is in your electorate, Mr Speaker. You would know better than most people in this House the importance of that particular contract, not only in terms of the western suburbs of Adelaide but in terms of the additional jobs that will flow from it, and I will come to that in a moment. They are not my words; I quote from the much-quoted and unbiased *Advertiser* of Wednesday 17 July 1991, an article written by none other than that very unbiased political reporter, Rex Jory, in which he said:

The Australian Submarine Corporation has become one of Australia's largest shipbuilders after buying major shipyard facilities at Newcastle, New South Wales.

According to the corporation's Managing Director, Dr Don Williams:

That acquisition had allowed the ASC to carry out major platform outfitting for the submarines as an alternative to subcontracting the work.

Welcoming the purchase, the Premier, Mr Bannon, said that while it added a new technology to the ASC stable, it would also emphasise the role South Australia played as headquarters of the corporation.

The purchase fits into the long-term strategy that was always a part of the ASC planning, that is that there would be a life for the corporation beyond the current submarine building program, he said.

The article which, no doubt, you have read, Mr Speaker, goes on to say:

Meanwhile, South Australian firm Eglo Engineering says it is in a strong position to win major work on the ANZAC frigates contract after recently completing a similar project for the Royal Australian Navy.

Eglo's State manager, Mr Chris Evans, said Eglo had proved its credentials by building the \$100 million superstructure for the Royal Australian Navy's latest guided-missile frigate on time and within budget.

That is just one illustration. I turn now to the MFP. Many members opposite do not want to recognise the role of the MFP any more than they wanted to recognise the role of the Submarine Corporation, or the Grand Prix and how that assisted us in South Australia, or the work that has been done by my ministerial colleague (Hon. Lynn Arnold) who has gone overseas seeking work and contracts for South Australia. They do not want to recognise that—knock, knock, knock! Those prophets of gloom—and we have seen them before—will be around.

I acknowledge that we have problems in South Australia and I do not walk away from them. I do not like that situation, but I believe that those issues are being quite properly addressed. Whoever is responsible for those problems in the State of South Australia will be assessed quite properly by the royal commission and, indeed, by the Auditor-General—and they will have to answer for that. It may well be interesting that, whilst all the proverbial stuff has been thrown via the fan on to this side of the House, it may well be that members on the other side may not be so smart about it at the end of the royal commission—only time will tell.

The fact that we are looking into the twenty-first century and at the need for the creation of more jobs has been clearly demonstrated by the very positive attitudes emanating from people in South Australia and overseas. The fact that we have Japanese interests and interests from Korea and many other European countries wanting to come—

*Mr Ingerson interjecting:*

**Mr HAMILTON:** Here we go; the knocker is at it again. Those people want to come to South Australia to set up new technologies which we should quite properly be able to utilise to expand our base. Once again, in the unbiased *Advertiser* of 9 May 1991, Jenny Brinkworth says:

The multifunction polis would create about 22 000 new jobs in South Australia by the year 2000, it was predicted . . .

This is not my view; it is a figure calculated by Dr Trevor Mules, who has prepared a report on the economic benefits of the MFP as part of the final feasibility study which was due to be released in June—and we all know what happened there. The article continued:

Dr Mules said that, if the MFP were successful in any sense, there would be about 40 000 people living in the new city at its peak. About one third of these would be employed, assuming that for every one person employed there were two dependants . . . The key industries being targeted are telecommunications and information technology, education, environmental management, health services and the media . . . Dr Mules said that the MFP would start off 'steadily' but there would be a big jump in the year 2000 . . . The 'boom year' of the major construction, if it began on schedule in 1995, was expected to be 1997 when about 2000 people would be involved in construction.

That was a very positive article. On 19 July of this year another article by the same reporter appeared under the heading '\$50 million project boost for MFP'. It read:

Adelaide's Technology Park will be boosted by a development estimated to cost \$50 million, the biggest single investment since it opened in 1982.

There was another article in this morning's *Advertiser*, which I will not read out to the House, but comments about projects are always buried in the back pages of that paper, and that is disappointing. I was talking to one of my colleagues who recently returned from the United States. As bad as it is there—over 1 000 banks have gone bust—I am told that in every newspaper every morning there is a positive story on the front page to build people up, to encourage people, to get things moving.

If we preach doom and gloom, it is self-fulfilling, and that is what the Liberals want. We see that clearly in this House. They want to frighten people with the old Fraser 'reds under the bed' attitude—put your money under the mattress! That is what they are about, and we know it. An article in the *Advertiser* of 7 May, under the heading 'Turkey deal closer for SA firms', stated:

A consortium of three South Australian companies has moved closer to winning a multi-million dollar contract for the design, supply and installation of computerised irrigation systems in Turkey . . . The State Industry, Trade and Technology Minister (Mr Arnold) announced yesterday the completion of detailed discussions with Ministers and officials responsible for the Anatolian project.

We have that technology in this country, particularly in this State, and we should use it. We should also be talking about the upturn in the South Australian housing market because, when that market is improving, it creates a tremendous fillip for many other industries. However, we do not hear that from members opposite, who knock and carp all the time. Even the national Housing Industry Association says that all the indications are that an economic recovery is under way and that the second half of the year will be marked by strong growth in the housing sector. We all know what is necessary in a home: a refrigerator, beds and carpets, and their purchase can assist the economy of this State.

However, we do not hear anything about that from members opposite any more than we hear about the Grand Prix and the benefits that have accrued to South Australia from that event and the fact that it has been secured past the year 2000. There has not been a word of congratulations from members opposite, because it will create—

**The Hon. T.H. Hemmings:** They opposed it.

**Mr HAMILTON:** Absolutely opposed it. There has not been one word of congratulations from members opposite in their contributions in this House over the past few days about how it will assist many of their conservative mates in terms of their profits.

**The Hon. T.H. Hemmings:** They didn't mention the Entertainment Centre opening up.

**Mr HAMILTON:** I will come to that in a moment. There has been no mention of the benefits accrued from the Grand Prix in South Australia. A tremendous amount of work has put South Australia on the map, both internationally and throughout Australia. We attract so many tourists who go back with a good impression of what South Australia is about, particularly our quality of life. I compliment the Minister of Tourism on the remarkable job she has done and on the way in which she handles her portfolio. She is getting better all the time. However, we hear no mention from the Liberal Party.

We hear much from the Liberal Party about all the negative things the Labor Party has done; a lot about the unemployed, crime and all the negative stuff. Members opposite want to tarnish the image of the Labor Party in South Australia, and we never hear them talking about their big and fanciful mates with their big firms, many of whom are paying too little tax in this country. You never hear

about that. An article referring to the Australian Taxation Office states:

Many of Australia's top 100 companies have paid too little tax, short-changing the country by hundreds of millions of dollars, an Australian Taxation Office audit has revealed. Reporting on the progress of the audit, begun four years ago, the Taxation Commissioner, Mr Trevor Boucher, said yesterday in some cases significant tax under-statements had been uncovered and these had been corrected.

He told the Nine Network's *Sunday* program that the majority of companies already audited had 'short-paid' hundreds of millions over a number of years.

Not one word do we hear from those silvertails opposite: all their goals are money, money, money. There is no concern about the average Joe Bloggs in the community. That is amply demonstrated by the Liberal Party's consumption tax proposal, and how members opposite want to kick the workers in the guts if they have the opportunity, with the New Zealand contractual arrangement.

It is interesting when you listen. We have Hewson parading around this country saying, 'I come from a poor background.' The Liberals want to associate themselves with the workers, but when the crunch comes, if they ever have the opportunity here in South Australia and nationally, I know what they will do to the workers, and you do not need to be a Rhodes Scholar to work that out.

On the one hand, they are prepared to express their so-called concern for the workers of this State yet, on the other, their own colleagues in another place are slamming the number of jobs in the Public Service. Let us address that point. I was interested to hear the member for Newland talking about the needs of hospitals, of education and of many other areas, like her bleating colleagues on the front and other benches in this Parliament. They all talk about it, and let me give the illustration of an article in the *Advertiser* of 13 May, as follows:

South Australia has recorded the second biggest increase in public sector size in Australia, employing an extra 3 800 people in 1990, according to the State Opposition.

The Opposition claimed yesterday the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics figures showed there had been an 'explosion' in State public sector numbers at a time of recession and private sector job losses.

The Opposition employment spokesman, Mr Lucas, said the figures made nonsense of the much-publicised 'razor gang' and Public Service job cutbacks announced by the Premier, Mr Bannon.

Of course, fiddling with the figures again. I now turn to an article—it is not my view—by Randall Ashbourne in the *Sunday Mail* of 16 July, which states:

An analysis of where the jobs are in the Public Service shows just how difficult it is to make meaningful cuts. Everyone seems to want fewer public servants—but the big Public Service areas are those where no-one wants cuts. Education, for example, has 18 780 full-time employees—nearly 15 000 of whom are teachers. 500 are people such as groundsmen and gardeners and 2 669 are people such as school assistants. The Health Commission has 25 761 employees, most of whom are doctors, nurses and orderlies. The next biggest department is the police (4 218 employees).

I digress from the article to say that South Australia has the second highest ratio of police to population in Australia. The article continues:

Agriculture has 1 308; prisons 1 290—  
and would they cut them? I doubt that:

TAFE 3 258; E&WS 3 961; Community Services 1 272; Housing and Construction 1 787; Road Transport 3 097; and Woods and Forests 1 369.

Where would the Liberal Party cut those jobs? I challenge the Liberal Party to declare between now and the next State election, where it will make those cuts in essential services throughout this State. Members opposite bleat and carry on about education, hospitals and police. Where will they cut jobs?

**An honourable member:** Where are you, Dale?

**Mr HAMILTON:** Yes, where are you Dale—whose declining popularity never ceases to amaze even his own colleagues? I now turn to the question of the consumption tax. I shall quote from an article from the Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission—an unbiased section of the community.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member on his feet has the floor in this Chamber and any further discussion across the chamber will force the Chair into taking action. The honourable member for Albert Park.

**Mr HAMILTON:** I appreciate that, Sir, because the question of the consumption tax is a very important issue. I commend to the House this discussion paper 'Consumption tax—is it necessary?' issued by the Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission. It is available from the Parliamentary Library. I shall read an excerpt:

In particular, the paper canvasses in considerable detail some of the arguments presented in favour of a switch in the tax mix from income tax towards a consumption tax . . . The paper notes that: 'if total tax revenues are to be unchanged and taxpayers fall into three groups—low, middle and high income—then the gains of one group must be at the expense of the others. If the highest marginal tax rates are cut, the high income group must gain at the expense of the middle and low income groups. If, in turn, the low income group is compensated by social security increases, the burden falls finally on the middle income group'.

That is from the foreword by the Reverend C.B. Kilby, the national director of that organisation. The Opposition is now trying to justify its position. The lengths to which this Opposition will go never ceases to amaze me. I also quote from an article in the *Advertiser* of 17 July this year headed 'Liberals accused of bid to buy silence', by David Walker from Canberra:

Taxpayers' association chief Mr Eric Risstrom yesterday accused the Federal Opposition of trying to buy his silence over a consumption tax. He said an Opposition representative had phoned him some months ago to see if he would help the Opposition write a consumption tax he 'would buy'. 'That offer was refused because it was a political way of trying to buy silence,' Mr Risstrom said. Last night, shadow Treasurer Mr Peter Reith denied the Liberal Party had asked Mr Risstrom to write the Opposition's consumption tax policy, accusing the association chief of distorting the truth.

I know what the overwhelming majority of people in this country will decide about who is telling the truth—Risstrom or Reith. I know who I would believe. The article further states:

Mr Risstrom in turn yesterday accused Mr Reith of 'running a dirty smear campaign trying to discredit me'.

Out come the gutter tactics, down there sniffing around trying to find slippery slimy ways of trying to convince the community that they are right. The Opposition will go to almost any length, as we have seen in this place.

In the short time that I have left—and I wish I had 1½ hours—I will turn to the New Zealand Employment Contracts Act, which is so much supported by members opposite—the ones who talk about how they want to assist the unemployed and the beneficiaries of social security.

**Mr Ingerson:** An excellent document.

**Mr HAMILTON:** The member for Bragg interjects 'An excellent document.' No wonder he was done like a dinner in 1982 in my patch. I will read some of the material that comes from New Zealand.

**Mr Ingerson:** Have you been over there?

**Mr HAMILTON:** Everyone does not have to go overseas to be able to get information. In this modern day of technology, with faxes and telephone link-ups all over the world, one does not necessarily have to jump on a plane and physically go overseas. The honourable member is thick, but I did not know he was that thick. Let me return to the

issue. With this measure, amongst the hardest hit in New Zealand are: single unemployed people between the age 20 and 24, and these people, who face the expensive task of finding work, had their benefits cut by 24 per cent; sickness beneficiaries under the age of 24, who had their benefits cut by up to 20 per cent; single widows' beneficiaries without children, who had their incomes cut by nearly 17 per cent; and single widows and sickness beneficiaries with children, who had their incomes cut by over 10 per cent.

*Mr Ingerson interjecting:*

**Mr HAMILTON:** The inane and stupid interjections still come from the member for Bragg—'Have they got a job?' In New Zealand they could be out of work for 26 weeks and get zilch. Members opposite profess to be concerned about the disadvantaged and the aged in the community, and they talk about crime and all the associated issues, but, quite frankly, to put it in the vernacular, some of them are as thick as ten bricks. They really are so stupid.

*Mr Ingerson interjecting:*

**Mr HAMILTON:** Here we are, Sir, the resort to abuse, which the member for Bragg has become renowned for. It is a proposal to decimate the trade union movement. Prospective employees will be there with the boss standing over them saying, 'Listen here son (or lass), this is what you are going to cop if you want a job here. If you start complaining you're out the gate.' If you are out the gate, what happens then? No social security benefits. These employers, who have the benefit of legal advice *vis-a-vis* the young people who are looking for jobs, want to smash the trade union movement. That is their aim. They want to do away with all those benefits. Those very same people—these silvertails who parade around and who want all the wealth for themselves—are quick to go overseas on their junkets and drive around in big flash cars at the expense of those in the working class and middle class of this country.

The poorest will suffer most. They will suffer more and more as a consequence of these policies, and this diatribe. Members opposite are painting themselves into a corner. Despite all the problems the Labor Party has in this country—and I acknowledge openly and frankly that we have problems—the workers are not stupid. Far from it. When it comes to the day of voting the workers, the trade union movement, the aged and the disadvantaged will assess these programs. They illustrate, with the consumption tax proposal, how the Liberals will hit the disadvantaged.

For example, there will be a consumption tax on funerals. That would be one of the worst and most diabolical ways to get at a person in their moment of grief. Yet, in that period of grief the Liberals want to tax them—but not the Rolls Royces and the Mercedes and all these junkets. No, it does not want to touch those things. It will hit the middle income workers, as has been demonstrated by the study commissioned by the Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission. They are the ones the Liberal Party wants to get at—the workers—but it will look after its mates. We see that repeatedly. I hope that in the ensuing 12 months the Liberals will paint themselves further and further into that corner. I cannot see them getting out of it. I believe that the Australian people will not accept their proposition at election time.

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

#### PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES BILL

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

#### MAGISTRATES COURT BILL

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

#### DISTRICT COURT BILL

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

#### PETITION: PROSTITUTION

A petition signed by 19 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government not to decriminalise prostitution was presented by Mr Groom.

Petition received.

#### ART GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA EXTENSIONS

The **SPEAKER** laid on the table the following report by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, together with minutes of evidence:

Art Gallery of South Australia Extensions, Stage 1.

Ordered that report be printed.

#### QUESTION TIME

##### RADIO 102FM

**Mr D.S. BAKER (Leader of the Opposition):** In light of tomorrow's midday board meeting at 102FM—

**The SPEAKER:** To whom is the question directed?

**Mr D.S. BAKER:** My question is directed to the Treasurer, Mr Speaker. In light of tomorrow's midday board meeting at 102FM, what communication has he received from SGIC on the imminent sale of the radio station and, if it is sold, could the Treasurer tell us of the likely loss SGIC will experience, and will it exceed \$5 million?

**The Hon. J.C. BANNON:** I was not aware that there was a midday meeting of the board of 102FM tomorrow. I thank the honourable member for that information. I will inquire whether it is of relevance for me to know, and I will also look into the other matters he has mentioned.

#### ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE

**The Hon. T.H. HEMMINGS (Napier):** Did the Minister of Housing and Construction turn up at the Entertainment Centre with three guests and two tickets for Friday night's opening gala performance?

**The Hon. M.K. MAYES:** Like some members opposite, I do not suffer with a 'Wotton' memory. I turned up with three guests and I paid for three tickets. I think this is scurrilous and smacks of what the member for Bragg attempted to do several years ago—and I still have not received an apology. On this occasion I am owed an apology by the member for Kavel who is out spreading scurrilous tales in the community. I will be seeking that apology accordingly.

## STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION

**Mr S.J. BAKER (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** My question is directed to the Treasurer, and it concerns something he should know something about.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr S.J. BAKER:** What advice can the Treasurer give the House concerning the State's total exposure to 333 Collins Street, Melbourne, as a result of the \$520 million put option he approved, and a State Bank exposure to the building of \$50 million; can he say what the likely gap between SGIC's purchase price and the current market value of the building will be; and will he provide details of the likely annual interest cost to SGIC of holding the building until prices improve compared with his estimate of lease income of only \$6 million provided last week?

**The Hon. J.C. BANNON:** As has already been announced and stated, I think, on a number of occasions, the transaction is not yet finally concluded. Indeed, it is very close to such conclusion. The documentation and other matters have, as I understand it, almost been resolved. SGIC has given an undertaking that, as soon as that transaction is completed, the full details of it and the nature of the way in which 333 Collins Street is to be handled will be publicly announced.

## GRAFFITI PENS

**The Hon. J.P. TRAINER (Walsh):** Will the Minister of Youth Affairs convey the appreciation of this Government to the firm Sands & McDougall for the lead that that company has given to the community in sacrificing profit and joining the fight against graffiti by restricting its sales of the large felt-tip pens of a type almost exclusively used for scribbling on the surfaces of public and private property? Further, will his department conduct a survey of other major stationery retailers to see whether they will follow the lead of Sands & McDougall?

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Yes, I certainly join the member for Walsh in applauding the Adelaide firm of Sands & McDougall for its policy of withdrawing common graffiti implements from sale. It is acknowledging that it can play a part in helping our society rid itself of graffiti vandalism. Yesterday I had talks with the Retail Traders Association and I am very pleased that Sands & McDougall has now been joined by the National Office Products Association in this very laudable enterprise.

## STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen):** When did the Treasurer last approve an SGIC corporate plan?

**The Hon. J.C. BANNON:** In terms of both investment guidelines and its corporate strategy and development, SGIC refers matters to me from time to time. These matters are outlined in its annual reports. When discussion concerning SGIC is before the House in the Estimates Committee, it is not only open to information I may have but, indeed, it is open to members of Parliament, including members opposite, to ask questions about that and adduce those details. In fact, I have requested, as members would know, that the General Manager of SGIC be available at the Estimates Committee for that purpose. All those matters can be properly canvassed in that forum.

*Mr Ingerson interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Bragg is out of order.

## ENVIRONMENTAL CHOICE

**Mr McKEE (Gilles):** Will the Minister for Environment and Planning inform the House of the decision by ANZEC to implement a national scheme of product labelling and education for consumers of products and services which will provide information on products with environmental claims?

**The Hon. S.M. LENEHAN:** I can inform the honourable member that in July of this year the Ministers of the Australian and New Zealand Environment Council agreed to have a national scheme of both product education and labelling for consumers and producers of products and services to commence in October this year. The 'Environmental Choice Australia' labelling program, as the scheme will be known, is an educational program and will be funded through the annual fees payable by producers.

Involvement in Environmental Choice will be a voluntary commitment, but participation will require agreement to a code of ethics. In addition, verification of environmental claims will be required through conformity with established definitions and testing methods.

## SEWAGE DISPOSAL

**Mr BRINDAL (Hayward):** Will the Minister for Environment and Planning confirm that faeces, used condoms, soiled toilet paper and other untreated, hazardous wastes are being transported by the E&WS Department in uncovered trucks from treatment works throughout Adelaide through densely populated areas, to be buried at Wingfield, and what assurances can she give to the public that this practice is safe both to people's health and to the environment?

**The Hon. S.M. LENEHAN:** I thank the honourable member for his question. I am delighted to inform him that the practice of using night carts and a pan service ceased last century. The Engineering and Water Supply Department—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Kavel is out of order. It is impossible for the Chair to hear the response to this question, and I would warn members of the consequences of their actions. The honourable Minister.

**The Hon. S.M. LENEHAN:** As I was saying, I believe the question was whether wastes are being carted through the streets of Adelaide in uncovered trucks. I can assure members opposite and, indeed, all members of the community that we are not carting any of these substances through the streets of Adelaide in uncovered trucks. I suspect that the honourable member is alluding to the fact that the Engineering and Water Supply Department uses covered tankers to remove effluent from areas where it is considered to be not economically viable to provide full sewage treatment plants. He may in fact be referring to a section of the Deputy Premier's electorate at Aldinga. I am therefore delighted to inform the honourable member that the practices that are currently undertaken by private contractors who provide a service to pump out septic systems, involve the same types of vehicle to transport effluent from the Aldinga area until it is considered that it would be in the best interests of the community, in terms of the viability

of the system, to have a full sewage treatment system installed at Aldinga.

I believe that this program has been put to the Public Works Standing Committee. I am not sure whether it has, but I hope that that is the case. If the committee has not considered it, it is about to, and I am delighted to inform the House that, as I said, the use of facilities such as night carts and a pan service went out with buttoned-up boots and top hats.

#### AVIATION

**Mr HERON (Peake):** My question is directed to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology, representing the Minister of Tourism. Can the Minister inform the House about the status and number of international flights using the Adelaide airport, and provide a briefing on the impact of domestic airline deregulation?

**The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD:** I will take the question in my own right, because the air services support group which was established by the Premier and which was announced at the last election comes under my portfolio area. I will ask that group to supply the statistical information that is needed to answer the honourable member's question, and I will provide it to him.

#### ROUGH CUT

**The Hon. B.C. EASTICK (Light):** Can the Minister of Employment and Further Education confirm that a cheque for \$30 000 that he gave to the community group Rough Cut Skillshare in November 1989 for the payment of wages for 10 instructors to conduct courses for unemployed people was indeed a genuine Government grant and not an elaborate publicity stunt, as has now been alleged by key people associated with the project?

The Opposition has been provided with a statutory declaration signed by a person who was closely associated with Rough Cut in 1989. This person was at a photographic session at Elizabeth in mid 1989 when a cheque for \$30 000 was presented by the member for Briggs (now Minister of Employment and Further Education) to Rough Cut management. An article reporting the handing over of the cheque to Rough Cut was subsequently published in the 22 November 1989 edition of the *Messenger News Review*. Approximately two weeks later, a member of Rough Cut went to see Rough Cut's manager (Mr Frank Kinnear) and noticed the same cheque pinned up on Mr Kinnear's office wall. When it was drawn to Mr Kinnear's attention that this was a somewhat unsafe method of storing such a valuable cheque, the reply was made that the cheque was 'worthless; it was only a stunt'.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Kavel is out of order.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** The State and Federal Governments have provided grants to Rough Cut at various stages. I understand that DEET is currently undergoing an investigation of Rough Cut's finances in terms of the Commonwealth's role. I am sure that any money given to Rough Cut was usefully employed in terms of the State Government's role back in 1985.

#### HERITAGE ACT REVIEW

**Mrs HUTCHISON (Stuart):** Will the Minister for Environment and Planning indicate what progress has been made

with the review of the heritage legislation and when it will be completed?

**The Hon. S.M. LENEHAN:** I thank the honourable member for her question. Indeed, the first draft of the review has been completed and will be considered by the Heritage Act review committee later this month. The review has been conducted in close liaison with the review of the Planning Act and reflects the proposals that were outlined in the document '2020 Vision'. We believe it is important that both these reviews run in parallel and complement each other.

#### ROUGH CUT

**Mr OSWALD (Morphett):** When was the Minister of Employment and Further Education first made aware of allegations about financial mismanagement, falsification of records, collusion, cover-up and other corrupt practices within the Rough Cut Skillshare project? Did he order his personal staff or departmental officers to investigate these allegations? If so, what was the result of those investigations?

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** I am delighted to respond to this. Sound Vision, formerly Rough Cut Skillshare, was established in 1985 to assist young people to gain skills and employment in the entertainment industry. Rough Cut participants have produced a number of videos, some of which won State film awards. A high proportion of those young people have gained employment after finishing their projects and courses. As the local member in Salisbury, and along with other MPs, Liberal, Labor or otherwise, I supported any initiative in the northern suburbs designed to assist young people.

This project is funded by the Commonwealth Government through DEET. State Government involvement has been limited to smaller specific project grants of the type that was mentioned back in the mid 1980s and specific project amounts over the past few years. The accounting procedures for those project grants have been separate, entirely separate, from the Skillshare project. Let me explain to members opposite—I know they are trying to hide the problems of the Leader's deferred reshuffle—that Skillshare is a Federal Government department initiative.

On 21 June I was visited in my electorate office by members of Rough Cut Incorporated, a separate group from Sound Vision Skillshare but with strong historical connections. They made a series of allegations about Sound Vision Skillshare, the Federal Government scheme, focusing on alleged misappropriation of funds, improper financial procedures and a lack of accountability, but also accusations of a cover-up by Federal officials. None of these allegations were substantiated. Nevertheless, I instantly considered them serious enough to warrant immediate attention by the appropriate authorities. I have telephoned the State Director of DEET (Ms Helen Swift) outlining the allegations, requesting that they be pursued, because this is a Federal Government initiative. I also immediately informed the Elizabeth police and CIB through my office, who also informed the State's anti-corruption squad.

I wrote to the head of DEET, to the head of Youth Affairs, and to the head of DETAFE, and also ensured that the police were given that information within two hours of my receiving these unsubstantiated allegations.

#### YEAR 12 RETENTION RATE

**Mr HAMILTON (Albert Park):** My question is directed to the Minister of Education. What is the South Australian

retention rate to year 12, and how does it compare with that of the other States and Territories?

**The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER:** I am very proud of the increase in the retention rate in South Australian schools over the past nine years. In fact, the retention rate from 1982 to the present time has more than doubled, from approximately 34 per cent to an estimated 72 per cent of students. This compares very favourably with the national average retention rate to year 12 of 64 per cent last year, is in excess of the rate of all other States apart from the Australian Capital Territory, and is comparable with the rate in Queensland. The figures range down to some 44 per cent in Tasmania, and all other States have a rate much lower than that of South Australia. It is a remarkable achievement for our education system.

### ROUGH CUT

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE (Coles):** Has the Minister of Employment and Further Education been personally involved at any stage in the administration or management of the Rough Cut Skillshare project?

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Of course I am not involved in the administration of Skillshare, because that is a Federal Government project. But let me go on to give you some more information about this.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** I will answer the question. I was advised by Ms Helen Swift, the Director of DEET, in a letter of 24 June, that DEET for some time has been actively pursuing the investigations of these serious allegations, including those that I passed on, but is hampered by the apparent unavailability of documentation to substantiate the claims.

However, following the receipt by DEET in late June of additional documentation, a tender was called for a financial consultant to undertake a fresh audit of this Federal Government—that is, Canberra mob, for those who are too simple—project. This tender was won by Price Waterhouse, who have been reported in the press as finding weak internal controls and poor accounting procedures.

However, the final report is not yet available, and I cannot make further comment until I have seen it. I understand that both the Commonwealth and State police are being kept informed of progress at every stage, and Rough Cut members have been repeatedly invited to make statements to the police to substantiate their allegations. If the allegations are true, if any shonky business has been going on, let us hope that the DEET people will get to the bottom of it.

### COUNCIL AMALGAMATION

**Mr De LAINE (Price):** My question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Further Education, representing the Minister for Local Government Relations in another place. Will the Minister inform the House of the current situation in respect of the proposed amalgamation of the Port Adelaide, Woodville and Hindmarsh councils?

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** I will be happy to pass that question to the Minister for Local Government Relations in another place, and I am sure that she will ensure that the honourable member receives a very detailed response.

### SAGRIC

**Mr MEIER (Goyder):** My question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. Did SAGRIC International, a wholly owned company of the State Government, have any involvement in producing the wheat from Saudi Arabia that may be sold at heavily subsidised prices to New Zealand? And, if this sale proceeds, what are the potential economic losses to the State's wheat farmers who produce wheat traditionally sold in New Zealand?

**The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD:** As to the actual involvement of SAGRIC International in the Saudi wheat industry, I understand that there is no involvement in the wheat production, although I think that some years ago there might have been some involvement in the technology associated with circular irrigation that is used by the Saudis to grow wheat in grossly distorted economics, whereby they apply a subsidy of \$600 a tonne or thereabouts and, as a result of that, have made themselves the seventh largest exporter of wheat in the world. They are now participating in what I think is nothing other than a corruption in the international marketplace, which is the most unlevel playing field I have ever seen.

### ADULT EDUCATION

**Mr HOLLOWAY (Mitchell):** Can the Minister of Education advise what action is being taken to cater for adults going back to school to improve their educational and job opportunities?

**The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER:** I am aware of the honourable member's interest in the Hamilton High School in his electorate, which is a designated adult re-entry school. In fact, there is now a network of re-entry schools, and I referred to this yesterday in answer to a question. The other schools in this network are Elizabeth West, Christies Beach, Thornodon (which is now known as the Charles Campbell Secondary School, having linked with Campbelltown High), Marden, The Parks, LeFevre, Thebarton and the Edward John Eyre High Schools (the latter being in Whyalla).

These specialist adult learning centres have proved enormously successful with adults and young people who, having left school, have chosen to return and improve their skills and education and employment prospects. More than 4 000 adults are now going back to school compared to around 2 200 last year, and the numbers are increasing each year. The State Government is providing additional amenities in schools to meet the needs of adults returning to school and the special demands they place on our physical resources. For example, at Hamilton High School extra facilities are being provided as part of a \$3.3 million upgrading of that school.

### CENTRELEAS

**Mr BECKER (Hanson):** Will the Treasurer make a full report to the House on the circumstances in which Beneficial Finance has sold a Sydney-based leasing company back to its original owners? In asking this question I point out that it is my understanding that this transaction has only recently been completed and therefore does not come within the terms of reference for the current inquiries?

I have been informed that Beneficial Finance originally provided a loan of \$1.5 million to the company Centrelease of Drummoyne in New South Wales. This was followed by loans of \$600 000 each to the company's principals, Mark



Smith and Michael Moses. In the process, Mark Smith became an employee of Assett Risk Management, a subsidiary of Beneficial Finance. The original \$1.5 million loan has been written off, and the company has been sold back to Smith and Moses and associates. I have previously raised with the Treasurer the issue of forgiveness loans to employees of the State Bank Group, and I am advised that the issue certainly arises in this case with the question of how much of its total exposure of \$2.7 million Beneficial has recovered in this deal.

**The Hon. J.C. BANNON:** I will seek a report for the honourable member.

### MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr QUIRKE (Playford):** Can the Minister of Health advise the House about changes to mental health services in South Australia? Members will no doubt be aware of moves to close the Hillcrest Hospital and transfer beds to Glenside and other public hospitals. Some concern has been raised in the community about these measures and about whether or not South Australia can continue to have the best possible mental health service.

**The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD:** The South Australian Mental Health Services Board, which has now been appointed, will have responsibility for the running and oversight of these changes. The plans for the devolvement of the beds from Hillcrest are very well advanced now, and one would imagine that it would be possible to transfer patients in a very short period. It is probably unlikely that very substantial amounts of money can be saved this financial year to go into alternative services, but over the two-year period one would expect some millions of dollars to be freed up for this purpose.

### STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION

**Mr INGERSON (Bragg):** Does the Treasurer agree with the SGIC review committee that the usefulness of SGIC's 'net worth statement is limited because it does not report current independent values for unlisted equities, properties and wholly owned subsidiaries'? If so, will he insist on comprehensive independent valuations and full market value reporting in SGIC's 1990-91 annual report?

**The Hon. J.C. BANNON:** The whole question of the application of accounting standards and the extent to which and the way in which SGIC should comply with them is one of the matters being looked at in consequence of the review committee's recommendations. I have already said that in principle I believe SGIC should subscribe to those standards, but there may be a case in some instances either for a different standard or indeed a greater standard. In fact, in some areas, as I understand it, SGIC has provided more than the standard. The question of net worth and so on is something that was also discussed at length in the report. Again, the implications of that are being considered by the group, and I refer the honourable member to my statement a week ago on that very matter.

### ELIZABETH-MUNNO PARA PROJECT

**The Hon. T.H. HEMMINGS (Napier):** Will the Premier say what progress has been made on the Elizabeth-Munno Para Project? As part of last year's budget a financial information paper No. 4 was released. The social justice chapter

9 of that paper dealt with the issue of 'locational disadvantages' and the need for strategic development in the Elizabeth-Munno Para area in particular.

**The Hon. J.C. BANNON:** The question is both timely and appropriate. I am aware of the honourable member's ongoing interest and involvement in these matters. It so happens that the first meeting of the steering committee of the project is being held today. It will elect a chairperson from the 11 people who have been invited to join it. I made that announcement a few weeks ago at an occasion at which the member for Napier, the member for Elizabeth and others interested in the project were present. It is certainly an exciting partnership venture between levels of government, the community and the private sector, and it will involve a number of very important pilot exercises. A project officer has been appointed and now, with the committee meeting, we expect to see results flowing pretty fast.

### STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION

**Mrs KOTZ (Newland):** I direct my question to the Treasurer. What is SGIC's total investment in the company Spaceguard? What return has it made on its investment and does it fit within the Treasurer's investment guidelines for SGIC?

**The Hon. J.C. BANNON:** I will seek a report on that for the honourable member.

### FOCUS SCHOOLS

**Mr HERON (Peake):** Will the Minister of Education advise the House on the role of focus schools within the education system in South Australia?

**The Hon. G.J. CRAFTY:** I thank the honourable member for his question. One of the features of our education system in recent years has been the development of a network of focus schools to provide for greater professional development opportunities for our teachers and to improve curriculum and develop an ethos of excellence in our schools. Special attention has been paid to the key areas of literacy, mathematics and science and technology. Obviously those key study areas are seen as essential in preparing young people for the future.

The idea of a focus school is that excellent teaching and learning strategies are developed through training and development programs to enhance the skills of teachers. The school in turn becomes a focus for other neighbouring schools, providing opportunities for teachers to learn the latest methodologies and practices. Currently, for example, there are 90 primary focus schools in the key areas of literacy, mathematics and science and technology.

Three secondary schools are highlighting excellence in physics and by the end of this year nearly 100 physics teachers will have participated in a scheme to strengthen their skills. Further, 26 focus schools around the State are highlighting landcare and environment education programs. Just last week it was announced that a new network of eight engineering focus schools was to be established to provide more of a world of work skill in that area and to complement the offerings available through the proposed new South Australian type Certificate of Education curriculum focus in that area. Each of these endeavours are providing better learning opportunities for school students throughout the State.

## STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION

**Mr SUCH (Fisher):** My question is directed to the Treasurer. Was the SGIC review committee correct to find:

No Treasurer approved guidelines are in force for the separate insurance funds. Guidelines were last approved by the Treasurer in April 1987.

If so, has the Treasurer now provided guidelines and will he advise the House what they are?

**The Hon. J.C. BANNON:** I have already covered that in statements that I have made. The honourable member's question represents tedious repetition and a call for information that has already been supplied.

## CLEMENTS SUCTION APPARATUS

**Mrs HUTCHISON (Stuart):** Will the Minister of Health advise whether he can provide assistance for a constituent of mine in Port Pirie, who has a limited income, to obtain a machine known as a Clements suction apparatus to treat her daughter's disease *metachromatic lukeodystrophy*, a severe and degenerative disease?

**The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD:** I will refer that matter to the Health Commission and obtain an early response for the honourable member.

## ROUGH CUT

**The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY (Kavel):** Why did the Minister of Employment and Further Education just tell the House that he was not involved in the management or administration of Rough Cut Skillshare because it is a Federal scheme, when documentary evidence shows that, in the 1988 application for DEET funding for Rough Cut Skillshare, a 10 person project advisory committee—Rough Cut's management committee—is listed—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY:** I would like the Minister to hear this, because it is interesting. The application lists Rough Cut's management committee, and it includes the name of Mike Rann, local State M.P., whose occupation/area of expertise is described as 'publicity and promotions'.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Absolutely! Come in spinner! I am delighted to answer this because I can reveal that, first, of course I am not involved in the management of Skillshare because I am not a Federal Minister. In fact, I was not a Federal or State Minister at the time those grants were made, and that is where the honourable member got it wrong. Secondly, I give my support to any unemployed kids in my area. Thirdly, I have to tell you who is involved in the management of that project. I can reveal to this House that the police are investigating the managing agency, with which I am not involved, and a member of the board of management is Mr Legh Davis.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

*The Hon. T.H. Hemmings interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Napier is out of order, and the Leader of the Opposition is out of order.

## HAPPY VALLEY WATER FILTRATION PLANT

**Mr De LAINE (Price):** Will the Minister of Water Resources indicate when the Happy Valley Water Filtration Plant is to be completed and which suburbs it will service?

**The Hon. S.M. LENEHAN:** I am delighted to inform the honourable member that stage one of the Happy Valley Water Filtration Plant was commissioned, as members will know, in November 1989, and it services the suburbs from Outer Harbor to Moana. Indeed, stage two will be completed in November this year, and it will service the Happy Valley, Aberfoyle Park, Blackwood and Belair areas.

## STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION

**Mr MATTHEW (Bright):** Has the Treasurer appointed the fifth member of the SGIC board on either a permanent or casual vacancy basis to satisfy the requirements of sections 3 (5) and 4 (1) of the SGIC Act which have been breached since 23 December 1989?

**The Hon. J.C. BANNON:** I deny that the Act has been breached. The Act also clearly makes provision for the board to operate when there is not in fact a full complement of members. That is quite common practice in a number of statutory bodies and other organisations where vacancies are left open. In fact, I remind the honourable member that the recommendation of the review is that the board membership be expanded. This would require changes to the legislation, and I have already indicated our acceptance of that as a reasonable recommendation. In terms of providing overall balance to the board, I hope first to make a further appointment pending that change and, finally, I hope that the House would accept the legislative change that would expand the board to three or four more members than it has at present.

## OPEN ACCESS COLLEGE

**Mr FERGUSON (Henley Beach):** I direct my question to the Minister of Education. What was the increase in senior secondary enrolments in the Open Access College this year, and how many SSABSA subjects does the college offer?

**The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER:** I think all members are aware that there has been a more dramatic increase in the number of students who are seeking access to the full complement of senior secondary subjects through the Open Access College and the distance education methodology used by that college than has ever been seen in the past. In April last year there were 103.8 full-time equivalent year 11 students at that college, and that number has increased by 38 per cent this year. In year 12 there has been a 105 per cent increase in enrolments in those years. The April 1991 figures showed a total of 2 487 students enrolled at the Open Access College. Indeed, that is the largest school in South Australia.

I have been advised that the preliminary July 1991 figures show a further increase of 127 students since last April. This increase during the year, I understand, occurs because students are mobile or, for other reasons, want access to such education. In 1991 the college is offering 15 school-assessed subjects and nine publicly examined subjects, that is, 24 SSABSA subjects, and it acts as a broker for a further six subjects that are available through TAFE colleges throughout South Australia. The Open Access College is providing wider education opportunities for an obviously increased number of students throughout South Australia who are seeking to undertake senior secondary studies.

## RURAL ASSISTANCE

**Mr BLACKER (Flinders):** Can the Minister of Agriculture advise whether guidelines have been established for

small businesses in country areas to access funds through the rural assistance funding schemes? The Minister would be aware that discussions were held some months ago with the State Manager of the Rural Assistance Division to examine possible ways in which small country businesses could access funds in a way similar to the method used by primary producers. My constituents advise—and this House would be aware—that small country businesses are taking the brunt of the economic downturn because of a lack of turnover and business from their rural clientele.

**The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD:** The only opportunity that exists under the current rural assistance schemes at the State level is through commercial rural loans available from the Rural Finance and Development Division, and they can be accessed by agribusiness, in other words, enterprises in rural areas that are primarily concerned with doing business with the rural sector, as well as by farmers themselves. As for any other assistance, that really does require changes to the guidelines under the various categories of rural assistance. This was considered again by the meeting of RAS Ministers in Sydney last year, but we understand now that the next opportunity for that matter to be further canvassed will be under the review of all rural assistance that the present Federal Minister for Primary Industries and Energy has promised in October this year. I will certainly be asking him that question and discussing the matter with him and other Ministers at that time.

#### HOUSING TRUST TENANTS

**Mr De LAINE (Price):** Will the Minister of Housing and Construction advise what steps the South Australian Housing Trust is taking to deal with disruptive tenants? I have received numerous complaints from constituents concerning the disruptive behaviour of a small number of Housing Trust tenants. These tenants engage in anti-social behaviour and are a cause of considerable concern for neighbours and the community in general, as well as giving the vast majority of good trust tenants a bad reputation.

**The Hon. M.K. MAYES:** I thank the honourable member not only for his question but also for his interest in this issue, because it is a matter of increasing concern to members of the community. As we have seen over recent years, there have been a number of cases where disruptive and anti-social behaviour of Housing Trust tenants has been evident. I want to refer briefly to the steps that the Housing Trust has taken to address this.

Continual efforts are being made to add new processes to our approach to the problem. We counsel tenants who are repetitive in their disruptive behaviour. On occasions, trust officers visit those tenants and hold conferences that involve all agencies. Where there are disputes between neighbours who are trust tenants or between private owners and trust tenants, the trust will intervene in that process and assist with mediation or it will point people in the direction of community mediation. The trust will also resort to arranging transfers in the interests of stabilising the neighbourhood and to give the neighbourhood and the tenant a fresh start.

When all else fails, the trust is faced with the inevitable situation of eviction. That process is reinstated on the basis of counselling and arrangements to assist those tenants. I assure the honourable member that it is not something that we are overlooking: the trust is very much involved and will continue to be involved as an authority. New steps are being developed and some are already in process.

#### STAMP DUTY

**Mr S.G. EVANS (Davenport):** Will the Premier take the necessary action to exempt victims of motor vehicle theft from having to pay stamp duty on their replacement vehicle? Something like 16 000 motor cars are stolen in this State per year, 2 000 of which are never recovered. Others of the 16 000 are not recovered in time for the owner to be able to use them, so that person requires a second vehicle. The people who approached me are concerned about the 2 000 cars that are never replaced. Stamp duty on a \$20 000 motor vehicle is \$740. The amount the Government charges on average to victims of car theft is about \$1.5 million. I ask the Premier to take action to make sure those people are not penalised where there is double jeopardy.

**The Hon. J.C. BANNON:** I thank the honourable member for drawing the matter to my attention. I will take on board what he has to say and have a look at it.

#### CHILDREN'S INTEREST BUREAU

**Mr ATKINSON (Spence):** Will the Minister of Family and Community Services say whether he will introduce legislation to establish the Children's Interest Bureau under its own Act?

**The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD:** Yes, and the legislation is being drafted.

#### MEDICARE

**Dr ARMITAGE (Adelaide):** Has the Minister of Health made any representations to the Federal Minister for Community Services and Health in regard to the proposal that people bulk-billed for medical services will have to pay \$3.50? If so, what is the content of those representations and does he believe that this is the first sign that the principles behind Medicare are being dismantled?

**The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD:** I would certainly hope not. I have not as yet made a direct representation, but at departmental level there have been a number of discussions about this, both because we are concerned about the policy and because we are concerned about the impact it could potentially have on our accident and emergency departments at the hospitals. These discussions are continuing.

#### ROAD TRANSPORT CHARGES

**Mr GUNN (Eyre):** Will the Minister of Transport give the House an assurance that the new arrangements entered into by the Premier at the special Premiers Conference concerning charging for heavy motor transport in this country will not adversely affect primary producers or small business people who transport their own goods in their own vehicle? A great deal of concern has been expressed throughout the community that the new charges that will apply following this agreement between the Commonwealth Government and all the States could have an adverse effect on people in isolated communities. If these charges were to apply to primary producers, many of whom travel only a small number of kilometres a year in their trucks, the charges would adversely affect them and impose more financial hardship on an industry which cannot afford to meet any further Government charges or imposts.

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** As all members of the House would know, the South Australian Government was

successful in arguing at the Special Premiers Conference for a two-zone system. South Australia has been put in B zone, which will soften considerably the impact of the road user charges system advocated by the Federal Government.

It was advocated by the Federal Government and supported by the Federal Opposition and the National Farmers Federation. However, the South Australian Government had another view, and we were successful in having our view translated into the agreement, so that little, if any, impact of the new charges will be placed on South Australia's primary producers.

#### FLINDERS MEDICAL CENTRE

**The Hon. J.P. TRAINER (Walsh):** My question is directed to the Deputy Premier as Minister of Health. Has the Flinders Medical Centre agreed to undertake an efficiency review?

**The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD:** Yes, it has, along the lines of those being undertaken by the Royal Adelaide and Queen Elizabeth Hospitals. However, who will undertake the review has yet to be determined.

#### RETIREMENT VILLAGES

**Mr FERGUSON (Henley Beach):** I direct my question to the Minister for the Aged. Does the Government still intend to legislate to overcome problems with the management and administration of retirement villages?

**The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD:** Yes.

#### STOCKYARD PLAINS EVAPORATION BASIN

**The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD (Chaffey):** Is the Minister of Water Resources aware of any problems developing within the Stockyard Plains evaporation basin, and can she give an assurance that the basin is not returning the saline Woolpunda groundwater to the river? Concern has been expressed to me by people living in the Blanchetown-Waikerie area that the water going into the basin has remained constant, yet they believe that the water level in the basin has actually dropped while, at the same time, there appears to be an increase in the discharge of groundwater at the base of the cliffs in the Blanchetown area which, they believe, could be a result of the new evaporation basin.

**The Hon. S.M. LENEHAN:** I will be delighted to ask the E&WS Department to provide me with a detailed report on the suggestions the honourable member is making.

#### HOSPITAL PHARMACY FEES

**Mr HAMILTON (Albert Park):** Will the Minister of Health advise the House whether or not any results have come from the working party set up by the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council to consider uniformity in charging practices in hospitals, and also the variability in the application of safety net provisions? I understand that at present prescriptions filled by pharmacies at public hospitals cannot be included for accountancy purposes on the same list as PBS prescriptions; that is, when the cost of PBS prescriptions reaches \$150 on the card in less than one year, each prescription thereafter is free.

**The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD:** This matter has been of concern to us for some time. Members will recall questions

in this House about the charges of the pharmacies in public hospitals and what had to be done to protect our position there and, in a sense, also to protect the position of the private pharmacies. That is why the study was set up. I am not aware of any specific outcome at this stage, but I will obtain the information for the honourable member.

#### VICTORIAN PREMIER'S STATEMENT

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE (Coles):** Does the Premier agree with his colleague the Premier of Victoria (Mrs Kirner) that men have brought economic ruin to Australia? Does he count himself one of those men? Does he agree with Mrs Kirner that, if women had been involved in the decision making, we would not have had the economic collapses of the 1980s? And what in his Government does he propose to do about it, if he agrees with Mrs Kirner?

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! This is a very important question.

**The Hon. J.C. BANNON:** I plead the protection of the Equal Opportunity Act, both from questions and from implications of that kind.

#### CHILDREN'S CARE

**Mr HOLLOWAY (Mitchell):** My question is directed to the Minister of Family and Community Services. Notwithstanding the closure of the Special Needs Unit of the Department for Family and Community Services, is the Minister satisfied that so-called special needs children and their families will receive proper care and attention from the department?

**The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD:** Yes, I can certainly give that assurance.

#### COURT SUPERVISION ORDERS

**Mr OSWALD (Morphett):** I direct my question to the Minister of Family and Community Services. Why is it that when the Children's Court awards a bond with supervision, which effectively places a child under his guardianship, the supervision of those children by the Minister through his department is virtually non-existent? It has been put to me by both court sources and foster parents that the Department for Family and Community Services regularly recommends to judges and magistrates that they hand down bonds with supervision, but in reality provide no supervision, leaving that to the foster parents. These foster parents have put to me that there are no programs, and that the supervision provided by the Minister is a joke.

I have been informed that when the court orders a curfew this means nothing and that the police are unaware of which children are on curfews. Also, for a variety of reasons, many of these children are not going to school, and alternative arrangements are not being made, with many children ending up reoffending.

The reoffenders are returned to the court after they are eventually apprehended by the police, with FACS recommendations for further bonds with more supervision, which is non-existent except for that provided by the foster parents themselves. I have been further informed by foster parents that when children are put into SAYTAC for assessment the foster parents are brought in to suggest what is a reasonable program for these children.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the honourable member to draw his explanation to a close.

**Mr OSWALD:** I will. It is a terribly important matter. One parent claimed that FACS is treating many foster families like hotels without instigating follow-up visits. Indeed, I have had referred to me examples of foster children being visited twice in one year and, on another occasion, three times in one year; and of one child who, having been in foster care for 10 years, when she went to another foster parent did not even know what 'social worker' meant.

**The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD:** I am not sure that you, Sir, are still supposed to be in the Chair, because I am sure that that was a second reading debate and we are into Committee. What the honourable member has outlined is not my understanding of the situation, but I will get a considered reply for him.

#### PALYA CLEAN-UP

**The Hon. T.H. HEMMINGS (Napier):** I address my question to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, and I assure him that it is not about Legh Davis. Will the Minister inform the House how the Palya clean-up campaign is being accepted in the Pitjantjatjara lands in the north-west of the State? As a member of the parliamentary committee for the Pitjantjatjara lands, I had been concerned on previous visits that action needed to be taken to encourage communities to keep their environment litter free. Along with other members of the committee I was present at Umuwa when the Minister launched this campaign aimed at encouraging schools, youth and adults to become involved in a community clean-up competition.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** I am delighted to be able to announce that, of the 16 or 17 communities in the Pitjantjatjara lands, we already have received applications from 15 communities to be involved in the Palya clean-up competition. We are delighted with the support, and I strongly appreciate the support of members on both sides of the Chamber for this initiative.

#### SEWAGE DISPOSAL

**Mr BRINDAL (Hayward):** In view of the Minister for Environment and Planning's answer to an earlier question today, will she assure a lady who rang my office, having followed a Waste Management Services collection bin and having been hit on the windscreen by material that looked very like soiled toilet paper, that she was in fact hallucinating, as the Minister has informed this House that night carts disappeared last century?

**The Hon. S.M. LENEHAN:** I can inform the House that night carts and pan collection services no longer exist in South Australia.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. S.M. LENEHAN:** This is most amazing. That is actually a correct fact. If a person has in fact encountered this unusual occurrence, I would be very pleased to have the matter investigated by the department to ensure that this practice never happens again, because that would be a most unpleasant experience. I have said, and I repeat, Mr Speaker, that we do not have a night cart and pan collection service in South Australia, and I stand by that statement, Mr Speaker.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Hayward is out of order.

#### TOGETHER AGAINST CRIME COMMITTEES

**Mr FERGUSON (Henley Beach):** Can the Minister of Education, representing the Attorney-General in another place, say how many local Together Against Crime Committees have been established as part of the Government's crime prevention strategy? I recently attended a meeting in my electorate for a crime prevention committee that had been formed in association with the Woodville council, local residents and myself to take on much needed work in that area.

**The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER:** In response to the honourable member's most important question, I can say that the Government has provided some \$10 million over a five year time span to ensure that policing and legislative effort to stop crime is supplemented by a variety of community initiatives. As a member of the ministerial group on crime prevention, we receive updates on these matters from the Attorney-General and the Minister for Crime Prevention. It is my recollection that there are about 21 or 22 areas where local Together Against Crime Committees are at various stages of development. Some are at the discussion stage and others have prepared comprehensive crime management strategies for their local areas in association with local police, local government and local community organisations. My recollection is that close to \$1 million has already been allocated and that substantially more than that is committed for 1991-92.

#### MULTIFUNCTION POLIS

**Mr INGERSON (Bragg):** Can the Premier assure the House that the \$5 million granted by the Federal Government to the State is a fair and reasonable grant in relation to the development of the multifunction polis project? Many people directly involved with this project have expressed concern to me that the \$7 million to be spent under the \$12 million budget in Canberra will duplicate the preparation and documentation likely to occur at State level.

**The Hon. J.C. BANNON:** I assume that the honourable member is complaining about the Commonwealth allocating money to this project because, when the feasibility study was published and it was suggested that this project was viable and financable and that it should go ahead, it was the honourable member who said that this was a terrible thing and that it should not happen. I can understand his concern about any Federal funds being spent on the project. All I can say is that they have made a commitment. We are negotiating further with them on their ongoing involvement and, of course, things such as the placement of the Environmental Protection Agency will reinforce the MFP development on a Commonwealth basis.

#### AUSTUDY

**Mrs HUTCHISON (Stuart):** Can the Minister of Employment and Further Education advise the House whether there are likely to be changes to Austudy eligibility guidelines in the forthcoming Federal budget? The student allowance scheme Austudy provides vital income support to disadvantaged young people wishing to improve their skills base through further study. However, I am told by constituents that the guidelines under which it operates disqualify many genuine needy young people who, as a result, cannot afford to study.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Of course, it is of great concern to me that some students face unnecessary difficulties in

obtaining Austudy. Last year, after the Federal budget, I called on the Federal Minister for Higher Education and Employment Services to review the Austudy guidelines. I was particularly concerned at the effect on rural students of the decrease in assets that parents are allowed to have and the reduction in the amount that a spouse is allowed to earn. In fact, I was very surprised at the lack of support my submission received from Liberal Party members representing rural electorates.

Members will be aware that the level of assets was increased shortly after this, a move that was welcomed throughout the rural community. Quite frankly, it did not go far enough. I also agree that there are too many instances where talented people have not been able to pursue education because of their need for adequate income support. Some of the major issues for South Australian students have been, first, surviving the waiting period while an Austudy application is being processed, especially when transferring from another allowance such as the Jobsearch allowance; secondly, the application of a harsh assets test on rural students and little recognition of the additional cost of study for people in remote areas. In May I wrote to the Federal Minister, Peter Baldwin, outlining the inability of Austudy to meet its objectives in assisting financially disadvantaged young people to remain in or to re-enter structured education and training.

I have also asked the State Youth Strategy, in cooperation with officers of the Commonwealth Departments of Social Security, Employment, Education and Training, and Community Services and Health, to monitor problems in the income support area for young people in South Australia and to recommend changes as appropriate. I remind members opposite—and I know that the Leader of the Opposition is very interested in rural students, even though his approval rating is on a bit of a downward roll at the moment—that this is a Commonwealth body.

I am pleased that the Federal Government has agreed to institute a review of Austudy and will address the issues raised in a House of Representative's report which highlighted a number of anomalies, particularly in regard to rural students. However, this review will not be completed until at least late this year and, in the meantime, some students, particularly rural students, are being disadvantaged. In fact, they are hurting, and hurting badly. One week ago last Friday, at the time of the meeting of all Ministers responsible for education and higher education, I repeated my call for fundamental changes to Austudy in next week's Federal budget to enable the scheme to better target disadvantaged students. Certainly, we would be looking for some support in this area from the Federal Government, particularly in relation to rural students. Again, I am surprised that members of the Liberal Opposition are not giving support for rural students in this area.

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#### ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

(Continued from page 230.)

**Mr MEIER (Goyder):** I am pleased to have the opportunity to reply to the speech by Her Excellency, Dame Roma Mitchell, at the opening of the third session of the forty-seventh Parliament last week. At the outset, I express my condolences to the members of the families of those former

members of Parliament who have passed on. I refer to Dr Victor George Springett, whom I did not know personally; Mr Geoffrey O'Halloran Giles, the former member for Wakefield in the Federal arena but also a member of the Legislative Council at State level; and Mr Ross Story, a former Minister of Agriculture in this State. As I said at the time of Mr Giles' passing, I certainly knew Geoff very well. He assisted me, even before I got into politics, on many occasions, and I was very saddened at his passing. Likewise with Mr Ross Story, I got to know Ross after I came into this House and he was always active and interested in the political arena. His activity in the agricultural sector was well known. He did a great deal for this State over the many years that he was Minister of Agriculture.

I note also in the Governor's speech the reference in paragraphs 9, 10 and 11 to the agricultural community. I was interested to read that legislation will be introduced to restructure the Australian Barley Board and to facilitate the more efficient marketing of barley in South Australia. I am well aware that legislation is proposed. There has been much discussion for quite some time in this area, and I know that the Opposition is most concerned that any new legislation should ensure the best representation for barley growers. I will be interested to see what is contained in the Bill when it comes before this House. As I represent an area where the majority of barley is grown in this State, I have been consulting with barley growers for quite some time in relation to proposed aspects of this Bill.

I also note that the speech indicated that the Meat Hygiene Act is to be broadened in relation to premises and products that are subject to the Act. Well, all I can say without knowing what will be in the Bill is that, in many respects, it is about time. Only this week an example was brought to my attention, where the Meat Hygiene Authority has almost stopped a small business from operating in this State. The small business concerned is that of a slaughterhouse at Penola in the South-East that has been operating for many years. Nearby, the butcher in the town of Nangwarry has traditionally had his meat killed at the Green Triangle Meatworks at Mount Schank. When those works closed down last year the butcher sought permission to have his meat killed at the Penola slaughterhouse. The Meat Hygiene Authority grudgingly indicated that it would be prepared to grant a three month period during which time he could have his meat killed at the Penola slaughterhouse. That three month period extended for many more months and, in fact, it was only at the beginning of July this year that the Meat Hygiene Authority indicated that it would not renew the contract. This meant that, instead of the butcher travelling only 18 kilometres from Nangwarry to Penola to have his meat killed, he would have to travel some 60 kilometres to Casterton in Victoria or have his meat killed in Adelaide.

This is an absolutely untenable situation. It shows that, if those sorts of laws still exist in this State, it is high time the Meat Hygiene Authority Act was changed and commonsense was restored. That slaughterhouse kills for the Penola butcher and has been doing so for many years, as I indicated earlier, but the Meat Hygiene Authority indicated that it did not want it to kill for the nearby butcher in Nangwarry. I believe the Minister has now sought to intervene and allow an extension for a period, but a short extension is not enough. We need a proper change and I hope that will come about in the Bill that will be presented to us.

I note also that the Governor's speech mentions the rains that have helped boost the prospects of increased yield in the rural sector and, certainly, we need that very much,

particularly at a time when we see that our overseas commodity prices are playing havoc with our rural sector. Only in the past two days we have seen that massively subsidised Saudi Arabian wheat is proposed to be sold on the New Zealand market. Today in this House I asked the Minister what role our South Australian, Government-owned company SAGRIC played in Saudi Arabia in helping to produce this wheat. It disturbs me greatly that we have perhaps got ourselves in a situation where a South Australian company has brought a country to such a level that it will now push us out of our own markets, through enormous subsidies. If that is the case, what on earth are we doing?

Questions must be asked relating to what were the conditions in which SAGRIC went into Saudi Arabia. Is there any way of ensuring that Saudi Arabia does not undercut us in our own markets? Are there any avenues we can pursue to ensure that the cutting of commodity prices to our traditional trading partners will not occur while our help and assistance are being given to the country that is targeting us? It is an area which concerns me greatly and which needs to be looked at much further.

There is no doubt that not only have low commodity prices caused our problems but also so many Federal Government factors have impinged. High interest rates is one of the key areas; high interest rates where people were paying from 22 to 28 per cent interest; high interest rates that virtually no-one can sustain for any length of time; interest rates that are now seeing many of our farmers being forced to the wall; interest rates imposed by Hawke and Keating. I guess we could refer to them as the silvertails, those who go around with the Bonds, Skases, Abeles and the like and who have forgotten about the small man in the this country. They have forgotten about the everyday farmer, the everyday small business person.

**Mr Lewis:** They are led by a silver bodgie.

**Mr MEIER:** They are led by a silver bodgie, as the member for Murray-Mallee suggests. The one who has been kicked out of that show, the Keating half, is trying desperately to unseat the silver bodgie. Heaven help us if he should succeed, because we would be in for worse times and conditions than we have ever known. High interest rates are of great concern. They have come down somewhat and farmers are paying only between 14 and 16 per cent if they are lucky. Some farmers are still paying between 17 and 18 per cent, yet the Hawke Government says there is no need to reduce interest rates further. By comparison, the Japanese pay 3 or 4 per cent and the Americans pay 8 per cent. In other words, we in this country are paying double or four times as much as farmers in those two countries. Interest rates are still far too high to establish the economic productivity which we need and which the Government has been promising for almost 10 years.

Let us not forget the high value of the Australian dollar. There was supposedly a free float, but it was a dirty float. In addition, high taxes have been imposed on all of us. Thankfully, the Coalition is taking the bull by the horns and is determined that we will not have to suffer high taxes any longer when it is returned to government.

I refer also to superannuation and the compulsory scheme into which farmers have to pay for their employees. Of course, it is not only farmers but all employers who are affected. In theory, compulsory superannuation is a very good idea, but why not make every person responsible for their own superannuation? Various statistics have been brought to my attention by farmers who employ workers in an irregular basis, for example, at shearing time. I was most disturbed to receive a letter in relation to a national superannuation plan from the company that administers it indi-

cating that the person concerned no longer had an account balance sufficient to cover further administration and insurance costs. That person had shorn for someone else. His employer had paid into the fund. The notice said:

Although you remain a member of the plan, your death and total and permanent disablement benefits will expire if no further contributions are received within 45 days of the date of this letter.

I sought further information and was informed that there were so many accounting fees and taxation takes from compulsory superannuation plans that many of these accounts go into the red and have to be closed. They can be reopened. In other words, the scheme is not working. There is a Government contribution tax of 15 per cent and the administration fees of the company administering the plan, in this case amounting to \$4 per month. The employers' contributions are being whittled away by Government charges and by the corporation running the scheme. If the employee wants the fund to continue, he has to make further contributions. Members will understand how many of my constituents feel about that scheme.

Not only do we have Federal Government taxes and charges but we have State factors, as well. I will refer to a few of those factors as they affect the man on the land and people generally. The first is WorkCover, which is before a select committee. WorkCover is causing this State great concern, because millions of dollars are being eaten up by abuse of the scheme. It seems there is every chance that the taxpayer might have to pick up further tabs in that area. When the scheme was introduced by the Government, it was heralded as the saviour of workers compensation. The Opposition warned what would happen without competition from other companies. It is another noose similar to those caused by the other bad investments that the people of this State are getting used to.

Occupational health and safety demands are being pushed throughout the rural community. Proposals have been made relating to the licensing of farmers with respect to mechanical spraying. This was suggested in a recent discussion paper. It is not good enough to have farmers responsible for spraying in their own right; it is not good enough to have education mechanisms to enable farmers to better understand what they are applying to their crops. The Government wants to license them as well. That is another fee, another tax, something the rural sector does not need or want and cannot sustain in the current rural crisis.

We have seen massive increases in land tax across the board. Lease rentals have increased, particularly in the pastoral area, and those problems are still being debated and sorted out, years after the Pastoral Act was proclaimed. Again, the Opposition said that this course of action would ruin the pastoral industry, and now elements of that are coming out. We pay high stamp duty for property transfers and loan arrangements. At a time when farmers could, in some cases, re-finance with another bank they have the imposition of high stamp duty on such a transaction, so it becomes an unrealistic proposition.

In Question Time today the member for Davenport asked a question relating to the cost of stamp duty on cars, requesting that cars purchased to replace stolen vehicles should be excluded from that duty. The number of vehicles that are not sold because of Government impost would be enormous. I am sure that you, Mr Speaker, and other members would be aware of the extra cost that stamp duty adds to the cost of a car in this State. All those State charges are a great concern and a great worry to the rural sector.

We are in a rural crisis, and there is no doubt that South Australia is being hit harder than the other States. That was highlighted in Wednesday's *Advertiser* in an article that indicated that, whereas there had been a fall of 9.9 per cent

nationally in agricultural commodities in the 1990-91 financial year, South Australian returns to farmers showed a 24.1 per cent fall from the previous year. That is a catastrophe. It has not flowed through to the general sector and, unfortunately, the worst is yet to come, unless my observations are incorrect. I would be delighted if they were incorrect, but I cannot see that happening. Whereas previously South Australian farmers and the rural sector contributed \$2.6 billion to the State's economy, that figure has now fallen to \$1.95 billion—over half a billion dollars less at a time when we could well do without such a negative flow.

Opposition members were very pleased to have the opportunity to meet with the banks during the parliamentary recess. We met with all the key banks in the State and with the Rural Finance and Development Division. Many elements of the current rural crisis were highlighted. We discussed how people were suffering and what they were experiencing. I must say that the banks have to take some of the blame for the problems we are facing. However, in their defence, let me point out that the banks recognise that their communications with the farming sector have not been as strong and as positive as they should have been. They realise that many farmers got themselves into enormous difficulties because they did not communicate when they should have. From what I have seen, the banks are doing everything they can to liaise with their clientele as often as they can and to encourage their clientele on a person to person basis to indicate where they have problems. The tragedy is that this should have occurred 12 months ago when the crisis was starting to raise its ugly head.

There is no doubt that the Rural Finance and Development Division, particularly the Rural Assistance Branch, needs a complete overhaul. I was staggered to find that in almost all cases the lending of last resort came from the banks. I asked myself, 'Why do we have a Rural Assistance Branch?' I thought it was there to assist the farmers as a last resort. That is not the case at all. In fact, rural assistance bows out well before the banks bow out. If that is the case, do we really need the Rural Assistance Branch operating as it does? Surely, the banks can operate more efficiently and effectively than a Government-run agency. It must be looked at further.

If rural finance is made available, it must be used for assistance in the proper areas. It was also very disturbing to learn that one bank indicated that up to 80 per cent of our farmers are not viable on current commodity prices. We cannot talk in terms of whether or not a farmer should be viable. It has gone beyond that at present and, if we do not have a very good season and good return from the harvest, things will only get worse.

None of us knows what the end result will be. One rural counsellor indicated that the 139 clients that rural adviser has have a total debt of \$44 million—an enormous debt shared between those farmers. If we looked at the figures across the State, we would realise what a precarious situation the key sector of our State is in.

The other factor relates to individual hardship cases. This week, again, two different farmers telephoned me: one had his property put up for auction some months ago, and it did not sell, but he and his family have to live from day to day wondering what will occur next, wondering whether the bank will let them stay on the property. He told me how they had to borrow from family and friends to get the crop in.

The other constituent spoke with me in only the past 24 hours. He has now received a letter of demand from the bank indicating that, if his total debt is not paid by later this month, the bank will move in to sell the property. In

both cases, discussions are continuing and I hope that something can be worked out so that these people are not pushed off their properties because of what the Federal Government, in the main, has imposed on these people for many years.

There is no doubt that not only the Federal Government but also this State Government is inept at running the rural sector and at trying to help the rural sector when it is in a period of great crisis. It is a great tragedy. However, not only in the rural sector but right across the board, with the State Bank, the Scrimber project and the current SGIC problems, we see that the Government and the Premier, in particular, is keen to duck and weave at every opportunity.

Members might recall that I asked a question earlier this week about SGIC's put option on the building at 333 Collins Street, Melbourne. Instead of seeking to answer the question, the Premier immediately turned back on me and asked why I did not ask a rural question. Does he not realise that the \$520 million put option on 333 Collins Street has an enormous impact and enormous implications right across the board, through the metropolitan sector to the rural sector?

But he did not want to answer the question. He tried to throw it back at me in an embarrassing way. I can tell the Premier that those sorts of tactics will not work. He has to face up to reality and realise that he and his Government have caused the problems with which we are now living.

It is no good his trying to sheet home the blame to the Opposition. The Opposition has been highlighting so many of these problems for so long, and the Government is now madly trying to run away at 1 000 miles an hour. We could look at individual cases, and I cite here a case of a small business person in my electorate who has been a car dealer for more than 42 years.

He came up with some very alarming figures. In his letter to me he said that we hear talk about the depression as if it has been a recent occurrence, but he believes that the slowdown has been very deep seated over quite a long period of time and, for that reason, has highlighted this set of figures. He said that the total number of new vehicles sold in his council area during the 32 years from January 1949 averaged 450 per year, that is, considering new vehicle registrations of all makes and types.

After 40 years of trading, he found that the annual average number of new vehicles registered had dropped to 390. He presented a set of statistics from 1983 to 1990, and I seek leave to have those statistics incorporated in *Hansard*.

**The SPEAKER:** Is this table purely statistical?

**Mr MEIER:** Yes, it is.

Leave granted.

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#### MOTOR VEHICLES

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In 1983—267 were sold i.e. 59.3% of the 32 years average.  
 In 1984—178 were sold i.e. 39.4% of the 32 years average.  
 In 1985—210 were sold i.e. 46.6% of the 32 years average.  
 In 1986— 93 were sold i.e. 20.6% of the 32 years average.  
 In 1987— 66 were sold i.e. 24.6% of the 32 years average.  
 In 1988— 82 were sold i.e. 18.2% of the 32 years average.  
 In 1989—110 were sold i.e. 24.4% of the 32 years average.  
 In 1990—137 were sold i.e. 30.4% of the 32 years average.

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**Mr MEIER:** The car dealer goes on to say that, during the past eight years, total new vehicle sales in the district have averaged 31.6 per cent of the average of the first 32 years. That is running at less than one-third of the previous years averages. It shows how the depression has been coming in slowly and gradually for most of the time during which this Government has been in power.



The writer goes on with a variety of information that time will not allow me to detail here and now. There is no doubt that small business is important to this State and to our economy, but the Government seems paranoid about the Opposition's suggestions to help small business and to help the rural sector get back on its feet—so paranoid that, when we had a no-confidence debate last week, the second speaker, the Minister of Agriculture, did not address the problem at all. In fact, he took great delight in trying to have a swipe at me.

**An honourable member:** That's churlish!

**Mr MEIER:** As the members of the Government indicate, it was churlish of the Minister of Agriculture to try to take a swipe at me when he should have been addressing the no-confidence motion, and I thank them for their support, because they recognise that the Minister was way off the track.

**Mr Ferguson:** Catfish!

**Mr MEIER:** Yes, the interjection comes from the other side—catfish! The Minister tried to belittle the case example I cited to the UF&S conference, and I have cited it in many other places, of how one overseas State I visited just over 12 months ago is tackling its small business promotion. Be it in catfish, crawfish, trout or snapper—pumpkins, if they can produce them—the examples do not make any difference: it is the method that the Louisiana Government has used to try to bring new industries into its State that I am concerned about. And it has done it successfully.

The example I cited was of a Government that was prepared to guarantee up to \$10 million to a company, to offer a loan of \$500 000 and to buy stocks and shares in the company. As a result, that company was pleased to go into that State. Within five years, the \$10 million guarantee was no longer necessary, because the company was operating very profitably. The \$500 000 loan had been paid back, and the stocks and shares were no longer owned by the Government: it had sold them all to the private sector. So, it had a new business that was employing hundreds of people itself, but its spin-off effects meant that thousands more were being employed in the State.

Millions of dollars were being produced in that State that had not been produced before. But what did the Minister of Agriculture do? He tried to belittle that scheme. He said that, if that was my answer to the rural sector, heaven help us. I would say, heaven help us the way things have been going so far. We could do with new projects, be they catfish or crawfish projects, or a woollen factory.

What about turning our wool into value-added goods—jumpers, socks, etc.? What about a tanning factory? Remember the fiasco with the Koreans just over a year ago when they wanted to set up a tanning factory? The Government gave them no help and kicked them out of the State. We could well do with extra fruit canning factories in this State, many of which have gone bust over the years. At a time when our fruit industry is calling for help the Government says, 'You sort it out. Don't come looking to us for this sort of assistance.'

What about machinery manufacturers? Look at the small tractor market. There are so many small tractors now, all of which are produced overseas. Japan and Korea are major importers. Yet, this country just sits back and looks. In fact, I believe that we have one tractor manufacturing plant left in Australia which produces some 10 or 20 very large tractors a year, but the average farmer would not be able to buy them. This country's machinery manufacturing has gone right down to nothing. What about setting up a company to manufacture irrigation equipment and the like?

That is the type of thing we need. I could give example after example of how this State—

*Mr Holloway interjecting:*

**Mr MEIER:** No, we need new business. At this time, considering the way in which your Government has ruined the economy, help is needed. We could go back to the Playford days when General Motors-Holden's came into this State. It boosted South Australia in a way that no-one had ever thought possible, and it is still boosting our economy. Thankfully some of those decisions were made many years ago. I will take the opportunity to highlight many more examples in the future.

**Mr De LAINE (Price):** I support the motion. The opening of the third session of the forty-seventh Parliament was performed by South Australia's new Governor, Her Excellency the Hon. Dame Roma Mitchell, AC, DBE. I congratulate her on her appointment to the State's highest office and acknowledge her history-making achievement on becoming the first woman Governor in Australia's history.

As members know, Dame Roma is no stranger to firsts in her remarkable career, which has been studded with many examples of firsts for women in Australia and South Australia. I congratulate her on her achievements and wish her well in her future years as Governor of this State.

I also acknowledge, with sadness, the deaths of three former members of the South Australian Parliament: Dr Victor Springett, Mr Geoffrey O'Halloran Giles and the Hon. Ross Story. I only knew one of them personally, and that was the Hon. Ross Story. I attended an interstate parliamentary bowling carnival with Ross and his wife a couple of years ago. I thoroughly enjoyed my association with him and had great respect for the man. I offer my sincere sympathy to his wife and family.

In her speech Her Excellency referred to the current task of the South Australian Government in the recession. Some private sector businessmen in my electorate have been telling me for the past few months that there are encouraging and positive signs that the economy is recovering. I hope, for all South Australians, that they are right. The working men and women of this State—indeed the whole nation—have carried a very unfair and heavy burden, and they deserve better times.

I recognise the hardships being experienced by people on the land in the country areas of this State. Some members opposite say that the members on this side of the Chamber who represent city electorates do not know or care about farmers' problems. I assure Opposition members that that is not the case. We understand many of the problems, although maybe not all, of primary producers—problems like drought, the world over-production of wheat and wool and low commodity prices, especially as it relates to the disgraceful US wheat subsidy.

These working people are completely at the mercy of nature, be it rain, wind, sun, fire, disease or pests, and so on. After running that gauntlet of problems and producing a quality crop, they then come up against the problem of world market prices. I am sure that all members of the House hope the current season, which appears at this stage to be a good one, proves to be so. If it is, the whole State will benefit from the success of the farming sector.

Possibly never before in the history of South Australia has so much pressure been put on any Government and the whole system of service delivery as applies today. The State's income is shrinking, mainly because of the recession and Federal Government cut-backs, which we experience year after year. At the same time, the needs of the community grow each year with respect to the services and

other things desperately needed by the people, especially in recessionary times. Problems like the world-wide recession, falling commodity prices, record imports and the phasing out of tariff protection have disastrous effects on our economy. The behaviour of some of our corporate cowboys has seen our international standing damaged and has destroyed business and consumer confidence.

Economic health is such a fragile thing. It is almost entirely dependent on the attitudes and confidence of consumers. Additional problems that must be dealt with by Governments such as ours are the impact of technology and the improved work practices that achieve efficiencies. These factors help to make us a clever country and to be more competitive on a world basis, but it is disastrous for jobs.

When I was an employee of General Motors-Holden's the company employed something like 120 draftsmen to carry out the design and drawing stages of tooling. With the advent of computer aided design equipment, I believe that that number is now about five or six. Those same five or six draftsmen can turn out the same or more work than did 100-plus draftsmen in the past. So, this efficiency and technology, while it is good in one sense as it makes us more efficient and cost competitive, is disastrous for the employment prospects of the people of this State, and indeed in the world.

The more efficient the State and country become, the more support services we have to provide for the unemployed and disadvantaged. It is a catch 22 situation for the Government which is extremely difficult to overcome. The catch 22 situation accurately describes the problems facing the manufacturing industry in this State. I will again quote a situation in the motor vehicle industry where I spent 34 years of my working life. I believe that locally produced motor vehicles are basically equal to similarly priced motor vehicles manufactured in Japan. In Australia it costs hundreds of millions of dollars to tool up for a new model motor vehicle. Compare this to the billions of dollars that it costs to tool up for a similar new model in Japan. The difference is in production volumes. Because the Japanese markets are world wide, the extensive tool-up costs can be amortised over the large number of vehicles produced and sold. Therefore, Japanese companies can justify the billions of dollars invested.

On the other hand, local manufacturers, because of their comparatively small markets and correspondingly small numbers of vehicles produced and sold, cannot warrant an investment of billions of dollars and, instead, we have to spend hundreds of millions of dollars to tool up to manufacture a particular model. Despite our huge land mass, Australia is a very small nation and quite remote geographically from the chief world markets. For these reasons, I am convinced that we need to maintain some sort of protection for our automotive and some manufacturing industries, in this State in particular.

I now wish to spend some time addressing the problems in the Port Adelaide business and retail area. After the build-up and excitement of 1986, the sesquicentenary year of South Australia and, to a lesser extent, 1988, which was the bicentennial year of Australia, business activity in Port Adelaide has slowed right down to an alarming degree. History will play an important part in identifying problems and finding solutions to current and future problems. For that reason I will trace some of the historical events that have influenced problems at Port Adelaide through to the present time.

The Colony of South Australia was established at Port Adelaide in 1836 and, although the Port River was ideal

geographically for a major sea port, it was not deep, and routine dredging was commenced and continued for many years. Dredging operations ceased only in the past three or four years. Silt taken from the river was used to build up the swampy low-lying land to overcome drainage problems, and even today there is ample evidence of buildings that have been built on top of other buildings in the port area.

The level of the low-lying land was raised with these deposits of river silt. I recall my parents in the old days telling me that in Port Adelaide some of the roads were built up as high as the gutter level on some houses and other buildings. As further evidence of this, I can remember as a child having to walk down into shops in Port Adelaide, which shows how the roads had been built up.

*The Hon. R.J. Gregory interjecting:*

**Mr De LAINE:** Yes, as the Minister interjects, one still has to walk down into the Port Admiral hotel. There is much evidence around Port Adelaide of the build-up. Critics of the MFP say that swampy ground cannot be built on. That is absolute rubbish, because it has been done at Port Adelaide and stood the test of time for well over 100 years. Many fine old buildings in Port Adelaide are still standing and are in good condition despite having been built on top of river silt.

The historic Customs House building, completed in 1878, is built on red gum foundations, a building technique obviously brought here by the people who migrated from England to Port Adelaide. Many of the major buildings in London are built on the Thames mud using this technique. No-one can argue that London's buildings are falling down, and they have been there for hundreds of years longer than those at Port Adelaide. The same sorts of criticism were levelled in respect of West Lakes. Members should look at the development today in that area.

As to the MFP, today's knowledge and building methods will ensure that building on low-lying or swampy ground is even more successful than in the early days of Port Adelaide's establishment or when London buildings were being constructed. Much of the Gillman area has been built up in the past and is ready for redevelopment now. Engineers have learned from the early Port Adelaide experience and will be doing almost the same development in the Gillman area, but this time they will be armed with more knowledge and using methods that have been learned over the past 100 years. This knowledge will be used to build up the Gillman area for the MFP.

The situation will be similar to the Port Adelaide experience in more ways than one, because the intention with the MFP is to create something similar to the way in which Port Adelaide was established, by dredging out the soil to produce lakes in the MFP area and using that silt and soil to build up the surrounding area, which will take the wooded areas and the urban development. When this has been done, particular attention will need to be paid to the expected rise in water level as a result of potential 'greenhouse effect' changes.

Port Adelaide was built up and rapidly became a thriving community involving a major sea port and residential, business and commercial areas, involving an ideal mix of trade, people and jobs. In the years from the early 1900s until the mid-1950s we saw Port Adelaide really prosper: sailing ships lined the many wharves three or four deep, with others lying at anchor in the middle of the river until they could get a berth. In later years ships converted to steam power and then to motor power; they became larger and stayed in port for lengthy periods, sometimes even up to four to six weeks. Many of those ships carried large crews of up to 100

men. Most of the crewmen during those lengthy stays spent much time in Port Adelaide and the surrounding areas.

I suppose one could say in retrospect that those seamen and ship crews were tourists, as they were here for lengthy periods and were eager to see the place and spend their money. There were many commercial spin-offs as well in the area because, being a port of such importance, Port Adelaide supported many shipping companies and agents, ship repair and refitting companies, ship provedore companies, and the like, plus about 3 000 waterside workers. Passenger services also constituted a major component of the shipping trade, and at one stage over 40 shipping companies were operating in Port Adelaide.

As a young person, I remember the end of the passenger ship era, the passenger liners and the gulf trips, which other members in this place will recall. I can remember them vividly because as a youngster I sold papers and streamers when ships were departing on gulf trips. At the same time there were extensive residential areas in and around the main port commercial areas, and all those factors combined meant lots of business and jobs. The many seamen in Port Adelaide for lengthy periods spending their money created further employment in and around the shops and retail areas of the port, and the employees of local Port Adelaide companies (the shipping companies, provedores, and so on), lived with their families in that area, where they would spend their money.

Most of the 3 000 waterside workers and their families and the then big Harbours Board contingent lived in the local area. However, gradually this prosperity started to decline with the advent of competition from rail, road and then air. The biggest immediate impact was in the area of passenger services, which dried up almost overnight. Indeed, as I said, the gulf trips were probably the last remnant of that lucrative business, which eventually dried up.

Since then we have seen ships becoming larger and crews becoming smaller. These days ships have modern technology and, instead of having up to 100 crewmen, there are crews of between 11 and 16 on some of the biggest ocean-going container vessels. Indeed, turnaround time has been reduced from a period of 4-6 weeks, which I mentioned earlier, to 1-4 days. In fact, some large ships come in now and spend only 4-6 hours in the port before they turn around and go out. This is the result mainly of modern technology, bulk handling and containerisation.

Many shipping companies, provedores and shipwrights disappeared, and the number of waterside workers gradually fell to the current level of fewer than 200. That had a major impact on the commercial viability of Port Adelaide. Because the business and retail sector at Port Adelaide could not, or would not, adjust, many of those businesses gradually died out, and many companies disappeared when the ageing proprietors retired.

During the past two or three years major effort by the Bannon Government has seen a significant increase in shipping services to Port Adelaide. In fact, more tonnage is handled now in the port than previously, as a result of modern technology, containerisation and bulk handling improvements. While that has meant great benefit to the State in general, there has been no benefit in this at all for the retail trade and business people in Port Adelaide.

On the contrary, less benefit has resulted from this activity than previously, because there has been less custom. People who lived in the local community became more mobile and bought cars, and so there was no need to live within walking distance of shops and other services.

Likewise, the need to live close to public transport became unnecessary. People complained that, when they visited the

Port to shop, not enough car parking spaces were available. So, retailers and local government got together and, with the help of developers, proceeded to gradually demolish whole streets of houses to provide car parks. This was disastrous as it meant that, in the end, we had plenty of shops and car parks in Port Adelaide but no people. Of course, this was a further nail in the coffin for local business.

I distinctly remember one very outspoken person, Councillor Jack Morton of the Port Adelaide City Council, over 30 years ago trying to warn everyone that it was getting rid of people out of Port Adelaide at the expense of providing more and bigger shops and more car parking spaces which would be to no effect because there would be no people to use the facilities. He has been proven correct. We now see a turnaround in thinking and there are positive moves to bring back more people into Port Adelaide with the establishment of further housing developments in the area. As if the loss of people from Port Adelaide was not bad enough as far as retailers were concerned, we then saw the proposal for the Myer Queenstown project. Instead of the Port retailers of the day responding to this challenge in a very positive way, they responded negatively and fought the proposal. After a long, protracted fight, they finally won the battle but lost the war. Instead, the West Lakes shopping development was built. This complex, along with the now Westfield Kilkenny shopping development, really finished off the Port as a major retail shopping centre.

Again, the Port Adelaide retailers would not or could not adjust to the new challenges. The magnificent job done by the Special Projects Unit of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, headed by the Director, Hugh Davies, has seen tremendous changes to Port Adelaide in recent years. This unit, in cooperation with the Port Adelaide City Council, has done many amazing things at the Port, but until now has not received much support from the majority of the Port retail traders.

The State's sesquicentenary celebrations in 1986 accelerated many projects at Port Adelaide. With the tremendous amount of interest and participation generated by people, things looked particularly rosy for the future of the Port retailers. Unfortunately, things have just not kicked on since that time, and many shops are again empty. Super K-Mart and the Old Port Canal development has been quite successful but, in my opinion, because of local politics it was not built in the right location. It is just too far from the main shopping area and has tended to polarise shopping activity. Hugh Davies has highlighted the fact that a link between the two areas needs to be established.

I do not want to appear too critical of anyone, because people and organisations make decisions to the best of their abilities and according to the best information or advice at the time. However, the entire local community at Port Adelaide, including me, needs to analyse the situation, acknowledge when mistakes have been made, and work towards a strategy to reinstate Port Adelaide to its former glory. There are some excellent people in the local community—traders, service providers, elected members and staff of local government, police, business people etc—and, if we all combine our energies, I am sure that we can overcome the problems facing us. The philosophy of many traders has been, and I believe still is, to give people who come to the Port what they want. What they must do is actually attract and bring people to the Port because of what they offer. That is the major difference, and they must be able to see it.

There are other problems which I believe are working against the re-establishment of the Port as a major regional shopping centre. First, there is the current recession, but I

believe a recovery is on the way. I sincerely hope that it is. Parts of the old Port shopping areas are looking degraded. The blame for this must be directed at some landlords and at the local council. Some footpaths are in poor condition and dirty. Many properties, particularly shops, have been neglected and need maintenance, including a coat of paint and windows to be cleaned. There are empty buildings, empty offices and empty shops, many with broken windows and doors, and many covered in graffiti. No attempt has been made by the landlords or council to clean it off. No wonder people stay away from the Port in droves!

Public drunkenness and harassment of shoppers is also a major problem which I have spoken about previously in this place. For a time it seemed to be overcome by the proclamation of a dry area in the Port Mall. However, lately I have observed the law being flouted in this regard and the drunkenness and harassment seems to be returning. Drunk people use the recessed doorways of some shops as toilets, and quite often the landlords do not clean it up.

There is an urgent need for police foot patrols to be employed on a full-time basis. From time to time these patrols have been put into operation, and the results have been excellent. They are needed all the time, or at least until the area is cleaned up. There is also an urgent need for Aboriginal police officers or police aides in the Port. In answer to a question from me in this House earlier this year, the Minister of Emergency Services has advised that this is to be addressed in the coming financial year.

Heavy trucks and industrial traffic rumbling through the Port shopping area is also a major factor in turning people away from shopping here. The vibration, noise and exhaust pollution at times is almost overwhelming. Since 1986 I have been trying to have this heavy traffic stopped from travelling through St Vincent Street. I have not been successful even though a special heavy duty road was constructed to allow those vehicles to bypass the Port's shopping and business area.

The historic precincts of the city are looking wonderful. Buildings have been brilliantly refurbished and restored, streets and footpaths paved, trees planted, electric wires undergrounded and top quality signs have been erected. I never see drunks in these upgraded areas—they seem to be attracted only to the run down areas. So, if the main retail areas were similarly upgraded, I believe that the problems would largely disappear.

Again, I apologise if this speech sounds negative and critical, but I believe that only by putting all the factors in historic perspective can we find long term solutions for the future. In my opinion, the future for the Port is at the crossroads. I believe that we have just one last chance to get things right, and MFP Adelaide is that last chance. I know that it is a long way down the track but we—the local Port Adelaide community—must start now in order to grasp the opportunities as they arise. We had the chance to be the regional shopping centre for the West Lakes development, but we blew it.

Port Adelaide has been officially recognised as the regional shopping and business area for the MFP as there are to be no shopping facilities within the village structure of the massive project. The Port retail traders must get together with local, State and Federal Governments, and the entire local community, to form a cohesive group to take up the challenge and look at what needs to be done. We must take the initiative and ensure that Port Adelaide is the natural regional trading and commercial centre as the MFP evolves.

We must be able to attract the number and type of people that we want. We must be able to give them what they want in the manner and environment that they want it. Obviously

great care must be taken to preserve the heritage of the Port, but we must also bring back people by providing a whole range of housing, transport, tourist accommodation, business and shopping facilities that people will need in the twenty-first century. The achievement of these objectives is a tremendous challenge, but I am confident that, with the right attitude by all concerned, it can be done. It must be done correctly as it is our very last chance. To fail will mean the end of Port Adelaide forever, and we love the place too much for that to occur.

In the few minutes remaining, I again place on record the marvellous achievement by my colleague the member for Albert Park in his third walk to Port Pirie in January this year, during the heat of summer. On this occasion he excelled himself by not only walking to Port Pirie but he turned around and walked back to Adelaide—a feat he covered in approximately 16 days. In the process, he raised about \$39 000 for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the Port Pirie Hospital and a small portion for a cholesterol study amongst the 14 to 15 year olds in Port Pirie. I am sure that you, Madam Acting Speaker, will appreciate that, being the member for the local area.

I do applaud the member for Albert Park, as other members of this House probably do, for his energy and his commitment to the health of the people of this State. As I said, it is the third walk he has performed, this time walking there and back as well. Over the three walks I am led to believe that the honourable member has raised in excess of \$75 000 in three years, which is a terrific effort. Every single cent that is collected along the way and raised at functions he holds before the event goes into the hospitals. All the normal expenses involved in undertaking a project like that come out of the honourable member's own pocket. I applaud him for that and for his commitment.

It is really a top effort and I believe he will front up again in January next year for a fourth time and he plans to walk the double leg—there and back again. So, he deserves full credit for that and I know that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital certainly appreciates his efforts. He is held in very high regard in that place. As I mentioned last year, the political Party to which the member for Albert Park belongs does not come into it. Whenever he walks in country areas he is extended very friendly courtesies and he is made welcome in every place he visits. Even though the local people may not be supporters of our Party, they come forward with donations and they certainly have tremendous respect for the honourable member. I congratulate him again and look forward to perhaps assisting him in his next walk in January next year.

**The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD (Chaffey):** I support the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply and, in so doing, I express my regret at the passing of Ross Story, Geoff Giles and Dr Springett. Last week I referred to my long association with Ross Story and my deep regret at his passing. While I did not serve in this Parliament with Geoff Giles, he was my Federal member of Parliament for many years as the member for Angas and the member for Wakefield. Dr Springett served in the Legislative Council during the years I have been a member of the House of Assembly. So, I express my deep regret at their passing.

Now I would like to move on to Her Excellency's opening address in relation to the various matters that she raised in that speech. First, I would like to make reference to the concerted attack that we have seen on the Westminster system by this Government over the past two or three years. By that I mean that the strength of the Westminster system is based very much on ministerial responsibility. We have

seen the denial of that responsibility by Minister after Minister, including the Premier. The Premier is entrusted with the State's funds. In that position he must accept his full share of responsibility in relation to the problems of the State Bank and its \$1.5 billion loss; for the \$1.5 billion unfunded liability of SGIC; for the unfunded liabilities, or contingent liabilities, of SGIC; and for the unfunded liabilities of WorkCover, which are currently somewhere between \$250 million and \$500 million; let alone for the Scrimber project, where we have seen the loss of a further \$60 million.

Any one of those issues alone deserves a motion of no confidence in the Government. Here we have seen four major issues of financial mismanagement in this State, which have cost the taxpayers of this State an incredible amount of money, yet all the Premier said in his response to the Leader of the Opposition when he moved a motion of no confidence was that the Government has not performed any worse than have some of the entrepreneurs that we have seen during the 1980s, such as Bond, Skase, Elliott and so on. The big difference and the key point that the Leader of the Opposition made is the fundamental one between the people to whom I have referred and the Ministers who are responsible for the Government instrumentalities which I have just mentioned. That is that they accepted that they had failed, and they resigned. However, that is not what has happened in this Parliament, and that is why I say that there is a concerted attack on the Westminster system. If that continues, the Westminster system of parliamentary democracy in this State is absolutely doomed.

I was interested to note the concern expressed by the member for Price in respect of country people. I believe he said that quite sincerely but, unfortunately, those sentiments are not shared by his Government. Time and again in this place I have brought to the attention of the House the extent to which country people are disadvantaged and the fact that, although they generate 50 per cent of the State's economy, they receive very little in the cut-up of the cake between the metropolitan area and the country areas when it comes to resources. I would refer members to the article that was written by Malcolm Newell on Saturday 8 June 1991. Headed 'Shameful reality of State development,' it states:

Take the Bannon Government, for example. Let's look beyond the Entertainment Centre, that submarine business, the MFP and urban industrial development in whatever form and ask what has been achieved outside the metropolis. The short answer is Roxby Downs.

Roxby Downs was achieved with great difficulty by the Liberal Party and fought against tooth and nail by the present Government. The article goes on to say:

Thanks to this project, the cash investment in the regions of South Australia has been about \$600 million or roughly 15 per cent of the total. Metropolitan Adelaide, however, scored about \$3 500 million or 85 per cent. That, you may say, sounds reasonable. Look a little farther. On a population basis, some 27 per cent of the State's population lives in the regions.

Now, subtract from the regional investment total the Roxby Downs outlay and you are left with five per cent of the total investment for more than a quarter of the State's people—people who are suffering a severe rural recession bordering on depression.

Go a step farther. The regions contribute a substantial share of the State's gross domestic product, far higher per head of population than in the city. For example, agricultural output directly or indirectly contributes about half South Australia's total exports—about \$1 700 million to other States or overseas.

There is more to this sorry tale than a dearth of investment. The savings and wealth, even the brainpower and skills, of the country are bleeding into the cities at an alarming rate.

If members opposite can believe that a fair cut of the cake is five per cent of the State's split up of resources when it generates 50 per cent of the State's economy, I hope they will go out into the country areas of South Australia and

tell the country people that that is what they see as a fair deal, or all that they consider the country people are worth. I think that is an appalling situation, and no-one on earth can justify it.

We have seen that in almost every instance. The facts speak for themselves. I have absolutely no doubt that Malcolm Newell has done his homework well and I believe that those figures are accurate. In fact, I have been more generous to the Government inasmuch as I have said that approximately 30 per cent of the population lives outside the metropolitan area. He painted a worse picture than I have painted over the past 10 or 15 years.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD:** Members opposite are trying to justify the suggestion that people in country areas are worth only 5 per cent of the expenditure of or resources available to the State Government. That is absolutely appalling, to say the least. They can sit over there and laugh and say that is all country people are, that they are merely fodder for the mill, so that they can live in the style in which they wish to live in the metropolitan area.

I refer now to the anti-dumping inquiry that was conducted by the Senate. The Senate committee visited South Australia to take evidence. I have read its findings and I am certainly not satisfied with them. The one thing above all else that the agriculture industries of this country need is a fast track anti-dumping mechanism which can be put in place by the Minister responsible when unfair competition is evident in this country. Such a mechanism would have a reverse onus of proof, so the country of origin would have to prove that it was not dumping. A countervailing duty would also be imposed.

If Brazil dumped citrus juice concentrate into Australia and the Australian Customs Service believed that the product was dumped, the Minister responsible could immediately apply a countervailing duty to bring the product up to what we believe is the cost of production. If the country of origin could prove that it was not dumped, the countervailing duty that had been imposed would be refunded to the nation of origin. Unless a fast track anti-dumping mechanism is put in place to enable that to happen within four weeks, Australian industry has little chance of surviving or competing. We have often heard the Minister of Agriculture say that he believes in fair trading, and that mechanism would provide for fair trading. It would not disadvantage the country of origin that was exporting its commodity to Australia. If it could prove that it was not dumping, the countervailing duty would be refunded.

I refer now to an article by the Institute of Public Affairs referring to the 1990-91 budget of the South Australian Treasurer. The article was written by Dr Mike Nahan, who is the Director of the IPA States' Policy Unit based in Perth. Under the heading 'Mr Bannon gets the lemon' the article states:

The 1990-91 IPA lemon award for the most irresponsible budget was won by Mr Bannon, the Premier and Treasurer of South Australia.

The article goes on in more detail to say:

Mr Bannon has up until now been able to hide and rationalise his fiscally aberrant behaviour behind the outrageous behaviour of his Victorian and West Australian compatriots. The demise of Messrs Cain, Burke and Dowding has taken away his smoke screen, although the South Australian press gallery has yet to awaken to this fact. But Mr Bannon's ninth budget stands out as the most irresponsible of all the States and a clear winner of the IPA lemon award.

In 1990-91 Mr Bannon plans to continue his high spending ways with recurrent expenditure set to increase by 8 per cent. This is to be financed partly by a truly massive 18 per cent increase in State taxation and a 2 per cent reduction in capital spending for general government purposes. The impost on the

private sector will not cover the schedule increase in expenditure; as a result the deficit or NFR [net financing requirement] for the general government sector is set to expand by \$80 million to \$260 million and borrowings are forecast to expand by \$116 million. Because of a reduction in capital investment and greater use of own-sourced funds by trading enterprises, the NFR for the South Australian public sector is scheduled to decline to \$292 million in 1990-91.

Mr Bannon's refusal to take the knife to recurrent expenditure, in a post-election year, portends poorly for such action in the future. A further round of tax increases should thus be expected next year.

Some 800 taxes and charges were increased in the past few months, so his forecast in relation to what will happen in South Australia was accurate: in fact, it is spot on. Consequently, as far as the Institute of Public Affairs is concerned, the Bannon Government gets the lemon of the year award. A write-up like that by such a recognised authority, given what the Opposition has been saying constantly about the mismanagement of this State, does not give the people of South Australia much hope.

Included in the 800 taxes and charges increased by this Government we find that rentals on shack sites and sporting facilities have been increased by an enormous amount. Let me make reference to just one, namely, the Barmera Gun Club. It is a Clay Target Association club which provides sporting facilities for members of the association not only in Barmera but all around Australia where competitions are held. It has only five or six active members to keep it going as part of the chain of clay target clubs in South Australia. Until last year the rental charged on the small portion of land that it occupies was \$50. It has just received its renewal licence from the Government to find that it has been increased to \$250, a mere 500 per cent increase.

That is typical of the sort of increase affecting people occupying shack sites and virtually all other types of lease land in South Australia. With increases like that and with a declining economy, I wonder how the Premier and Treasurer of this State believes that the State will recover. Industrial land in Barmera has been sought by the district council for a number of years. Finally, the old railway land that belonged to the STA was made available.

The land has been subdivided and is now available—but at a price that no-one can afford. Consequently, no industrial development has taken place. People have been calling out for industrial land in Barmera, yet there is no way on earth they can afford the prices that have been put on that land by the STA. It is appalling that people are prepared to have a go, to try to establish a small business and to create employment in this State, particularly in rural areas, and yet the land is so highly priced that it is not available to those people.

That land is sitting on the edge of Barmera, subdivided but vacant, and people must look elsewhere to find an industrial site on which to establish their small business. Paragraph 16 of the Governor's speech states:

As part of the ongoing program to review water-related legislation, my Government will introduce three Bills covering the management of surface water in the South-East, the State's water supply and sewerage services, and irrigation services in private and Government irrigation districts.

Some months ago the Minister of Water Resources released a discussion paper relating to the amendment of legislation relating to irrigation on Government and private land. In that discussion paper, the Minister recommends that the Renmark Irrigation Trust legislation be repealed and that the trust be incorporated in the new legislation.

In my view, that would be absolute vandalism. The Minister is always talking about vandalism of one sort or another in relation to national parks. This would be legislative vandalism, inasmuch as the Renmark Irrigation Trust, which

was established under its own Act, has been in existence for virtually 100 years. It is the oldest irrigation undertaking in Australia, and there is no purpose in our repealing that legislation other than for the Minister to be able to stand up and say that she has removed two or three pieces of legislation from the statute book of South Australia.

That is out and out vandalism in the same way as the destruction of the Woolpunda tower between Kingston and Waikerie some years ago by the Dunstan Government was also out and out vandalism. On that occasion, the Government built a new water tower at Woolpunda and, rather than leave the old water tower there, it had to be destroyed. It was destroyed on the basis that the structure was unsafe but, when it came to the demolition experts trying to blow the structure to pieces, they needed about three attempts, as the structure was so solid. The vandalism to which I refer is the fact that that structure was the largest example of that type of construction in the Southern Hemisphere.

How on earth we will ever have any heritage items in this State, when the Government goes out time and time again and destroys single examples, such as the Woolpunda tower—which, as I said, was the finest and largest example of that type of structure in the Southern Hemisphere—is absolutely beyond me. That structure would have stood for another 200 years without any trouble at all. Engineers would come from all over the world to inspect it, and there was absolutely no reason to destroy it.

What the Minister is seeking to do through amendments to the irrigation legislation is to destroy that piece of legislation which created the oldest irrigation undertaking in South Australia. It was brought down during the time of the Dunstan Government, when Des Corcoran was the Minister of Works. I cannot recall the precise year, but I had ongoing discussions with the Minister of Works at that time to try to prevent it from happening. Unfortunately, I did not succeed. As I said, the removal of the RIT Act from the statute book of South Australia will be absolute vandalism.

I note from the Governor's speech that the Government is about to proceed with the final stage of constructing a water filtration plant on the Myponga reservoir. Fortunately, for the people in the northern part of South Australia, including those in the cities of Port Pirie, Port Augusta and Whyalla, during the term of the Liberal Government we commenced the construction of a water filtration plant at Morgan, which now provides filtered water to many of the northern and Mid North towns and to Yorke Peninsula. That is the only water filtration plant that has been built outside the metropolitan area, and it was commenced by a Liberal Government.

I venture to state that, had we not been in Government between 1979 and 1982, the people of Port Augusta, Whyalla and Port Pirie would not have filtered water today. It is time the Government gave serious consideration to providing filtered water to other centres in South Australia, particularly to the towns along the river. Because of their siting and because the water is pumped directly from the river, it has no time to settle in a reservoir or elsewhere; consequently, it goes straight into the mains and is distributed to household consumers. Thus the turbidity, the mud load, if you like, of that water, is the worst in South Australia.

The Minister cannot give any indication of when we are likely to see filtered water in towns such as those. I have indicated to the House that I have inspected small water filtration plants in Victoria. In Mildura, people get filtered water for approximately 40c a kilolitre. A town as small as Leitchville in Victoria, with a population of only 800, has a small water filtration plant supplying filtered water for

less than 50c a kilolitre. So, the size of operation is not an important factor.

We could have filtered water in the Riverland towns for less than the cost of water in the metropolitan area. Once again, the fact that these people live in the country and not in the metropolitan area is the decider. I come back to the 5 per cent of expenditure being made by this Government in the interests of country people compared with the expenditure on those living in the metropolitan area.

Finally, I wish to refer briefly to a decision of the Minister of Water Resources in relation to an approach I made to her on behalf of a constituent, Mr Stephen Freeman of Loxton. Mr Freeman paid his water rates on the last day and posted them on 31 October. Unfortunately, the cheque that he forwarded to the department was not processed until 5 November.

As a result, the department imposed an interest penalty. Mr Freeman protested, and I took up that matter for him with the Minister. Unfortunately, even in the economic times that presently exist, there was no suitable response from the Minister as far as relieving him of the penalty that had been imposed. Up until that time he owed the department nothing, and because he challenged the interest penalty Mr Freeman was advised by the department as follows:

Irrigation supplied to your property will be withheld on 1 April 1991 should payment of the outstanding interest not be made.

Talk about being heavy-handed! In these economic times with the situation facing country people, to have irrigation water cut off, which virtually means destroying the property, because you have not paid a penalty which resulted from the payment of the rate being four or five days late, is beyond belief. However, that is the way this Government is operating.

I realise that this Government is financially destitute and that it will go to any length to try to bring in every penny that it possibly can, with no thought about the resources or the ability of people, particularly those living in country areas, to pay. I support the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

Mrs HUTCHISON secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Hon. S.M. LENEHAN (Minister for Environment and Planning):** I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

**Mr ATKINSON (Spence):** Since I have been a member of this House I have noticed that it is common for members opposite to invoke in debate the Magna Carta, the Bill of Rights and the *sub judice* principle. Although I am genuinely interested in English legal history, I am amused that we cannot discuss the simplest Bill in this House, even a Road Traffic Act Amendment Bill, without a member opposite loudly discovering that it violates Magna Carta or the Bill of Rights, or that the debate infringes on the *sub judice* principle. The member for Coles is the main offender, but the member for Hayward sometimes cannot help himself, either.

In the 10 minutes I have I will examine the great charter, the Bill of Rights and the *sub judice* principle and see whether they have any relevance to the occasions on which members opposite have used them. I think that an examination of these three things is worthwhile for their own sake. The member for Coles told us that the retroactive

elements of the Wilpena Station Tourist Facility Bill were 'a breach of the principles of Magna Carta and the Bill of Rights'. She also told us, 'The Bill gives the Executive power over the ordinary citizen that Magna Carta and the Bill of Rights were intended to prevent.'

In relation to one of the Road Traffic Act Amendment Bills, the member for Coles accused members on this side of the House of taking away rights that were 'deeply rooted in Magna Carta and the Bill of Rights'. When the member for Coles first said these things, I doubted that King John and the rebellious barons at Runnymede had ever contemplated retroactive legislation, let alone a holiday resort in the antipodes. I doubted whether the members of the British Parliament, who so wrongly deposed His Majesty James II in favour of the usurper William of Orange, ever put their mind to police powers of search, let alone radar detectors.

There were no police at the time of the Bill of Rights. I voiced my doubts immediately and in a manner contrary to Standing Orders. However, I hold the member for Coles in high esteem. My mother tells me that the education provided at Walford college was almost the equal of that provided at Broken Hill High. Perhaps my doubts were unjustified. So, I resolved to read more history on these points. What I discovered was that the member for Coles and the member for Hayward are the latest examples of later generations reading into Magna Carta and the Bill of Rights the protection of their own threatened interests.

The members for Coles and for Hayward are part of the Whig or Marxist school of history that imposes its own theories on the past and ignores the consciousness of those who made history. Magna Carta, or the great charter, marked an important stage in our constitutional history, although it was not seen as such at the time. Magna Carta was granted to the barons by King John and, with some changes, ratified in the proto-Parliaments of Henry III and Edward I. It had 63 clauses in nine groups.

*Mr Brindal interjecting:*

**Mr ATKINSON:** The member for Hayward should listen. A replica is in the parliamentary library here. The first group of clauses granted liberties to the Church; the second was about land held directly from the Crown; the third was about tenants; the fourth was about towns, trade and merchants; the fifth was about the system of justice; the sixth was about the conduct of royal officials; the seventh was about royal forests; the eighth was about political topics, such as King John's mercenaries; and the ninth was about ensuring that the King respected the charter.

Not once is retrospectivity mentioned or anything resembling it. The notion of retrospectivity is impossible without the notion of the rule of law, and that came centuries after Magna Carta. In 1215 there was no separation of powers into legislative, executive and judicial arms of government. The leaders of 13th century England could not have objected to legislative or executive interference in a case before the judiciary because this separation did not yet exist.

None of the parties to Magna Carta intended, as the member for Coles claims, to stop retrospective enactments; nor do any of their words have that effect. I agree with the member for Coles that retrospective enactments are undesirable and a breach of the principles of the rule of law. I agree that the separation of powers is a good idea. The separation of powers is not, however, a central part of our British constitutional heritage, and retrospective enactments are permitted under both the British and Australian constitutional schemes. Our legal tradition has been based on the sovereignty of Parliament, which can override the separation of powers and the undesirability of retrospective enactments.

As to the particular court case that was affected by the Wilpena Station Tourist Facility Bill, I would say to the members for Coles and Hayward that the high court of the South Australian Parliament has adjudicated on some aspects of that matter. If the members for Coles and Hayward want to re-order our Constitution to prevent that, they are free to attempt it on Thursday mornings.

Magna Carta was irrelevant each time it was mentioned. What about the Bill of Rights? The Bill of Rights was passed by the British Parliament in October 1689. It limited royal power in seven ways. It said that the Crown could no longer suspend or dispense with the laws; that taxes could no longer be levied by the royal prerogative; that subjects had the right to petition the King without fear of prosecution; that a standing army could not be maintained in the kingdom during peace time, unless it were permitted by Parliament; that members of Parliament should be freely elected; that freedom of speech in Parliament should not be questioned in any place outside Parliament; and that Parliaments ought to be held frequently to redress grievances and to deliberate on the laws. There is no mention there of retrospectivity or powers of search. Indeed, the Bill of Rights is an affirmation of the supremacy of Parliament—a principle that the member for Hayward thinks ought to be diminished in favour of limits on law making and the removal of Parliament's power to adjudicate on matters before the courts, or at least that is what he would think if he thought about it.

I now turn to the *sub judice* principle. Here the offender is the member for Alexandra, a close and valued colleague of the member for Coles. This Parliament only has to approach a topic that has been the subject of litigation in the memory of the member for Alexandra and he is on his feet taking a point of order that the matter cannot be discussed or even mentioned because it is *sub judice*, that is, in the course of trial. Lord Denning stated the relevant law on *sub judice* in the 1974 English Court of Appeal case of *Wallersteiner v. Moir*, which was about a gagging writ.

**Mr Brindal:** What is a gagging writ?

**Mr ATKINSON:** To prevent discussion. In his judgment, Lord Denning said:

I know it is commonly supposed that, once a writ is issued, it puts a stop to discussion. If anyone wishes to canvass the matter in the press or public, it cannot be permitted. It is said to be *sub judice*. I venture to suggest that is a complete misconception. The sooner it is corrected the better. If it is a matter of public interest, it can be discussed at large without fear of thereby being in contempt of court. Criticism can continue to be made and can be repeated. Fair comment does not prejudice a fair trial.

Lord Denning's remarks about press comment have even more force as regards comment in the privileged arena of Parliament. Lord Denning concludes by saying:

Even if a writ has been issued and those affairs are the subject of litigation, the discussion of them cannot be stopped by the magic words *sub judice*.

Mr Speaker, let us hear no more of the magic words '*sub judice*', 'Magna Carta' and 'Bill of Rights' until those who take pleasure in using them have discovered their meaning.

**Mr OSWALD (Morphett):** This evening I want to discuss two matters: first, the increase in water rates; and, secondly, the question I asked the Minister of Family and Community Services this afternoon. With respect to the issue of water rates, I will put on the record a letter I received from one of my constituents. Let me say at the outset that I have been inundated with letters, telephone calls and queries, and I have been stopped in the street by people seeking an explanation. I thought I would read into the record just this one letter as a sample, but it goes without saying that I have received many others. Certainly, I will not take up the time of the House by putting them all on the record, because

that would be impossible. This letter comes from a constituent who lives in McFarlane Street, Glenelg North. My constituent states:

Dear John,

I feel it necessary to write to you regarding the new E&WS water rating system. I feel very strongly that it should not have been introduced because of yet another added charge to the already heavily taxed South Australian household. Once again the average Mr and Mrs South Australian is screwed in the back pocket to help prop up our Government system. Why have politicians lost touch with the voting public? After all, we are the people who keep you employed. As for Ms Susan Lenehan, her name should be 'Susan Lendahand'—

I like that—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! That is out of order. Members should be referred to only by their district.

**Mr OSWALD:** I am reading a letter, Sir. I will start that paragraph again.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! It is still against Standing Orders, if the honourable member is using that as a guise to use that name instead of referring to an honourable member by district or portfolio. If the name is in the letter, then to some degree it is allowable, but not as a form of subterfuge.

**Mr OSWALD:** I am not using it as a subterfuge, I am putting on the record what one of my constituents feels about this issue. I will read that paragraph again, as follows:

As for Ms Susan Lenehan, her name should be 'Susan Lendahand' to help pay our water rates. Also, if the new system will not cost any more to the average household why is the Government spending \$60 000 of taxpayers' money to convince the public?

If the Government wants to help the South Australian household, why did it not raise the average consumption minimum to 250 000 kilolitres with the standard excess system still applying? Also, why have tenants of the South Australian Housing Trust been issued with letters stating they also now will be paying excess water rates—what about the poor bloody pensioners, etc?

John, as you may gather I am quite upset with continual increasing State charges. I am lucky that at present I am still employed but I have recently had to accept a wage freeze . . .

I will not read the final two paragraphs, but the letter is duly signed. Constituents are saying two or three things to me. First, they believe the new water rating system is a wealth tax that perpetuates a tax on our properties. I have checked with two land agents in Glenelg and they are both of the view that 90 to 94 per cent of properties in the Glenelg and Somerton Park areas are valued at over \$117 000.

It is a system which is retrospective and which will affect elderly pensioners in my district. The member for Heysen has had quite a deal to say about it. As I have another matter I want to raise tonight, I will not add anything more other than to say that the sooner this piece of legislation is reversed, and the sooner the proposals put forward by the member of Heysen on behalf of the Opposition are put in train, the better. It is not a popular tax. The Minister in the Chamber tonight, the Minister of Water Resources, feels very comfortable with her proposals. However, I do not think it is a very popular measure for the people of South Australia, and it will haunt the Government up until election time.

**The Hon. S.M. Lenehan:** Time will tell.

**Mr OSWALD:** 'Time will tell', the Minister says. She is defending her water rating system and, indeed, time will tell, and the matter will be determined in the ballot box in due course. I want now to refer to a question I raised with the Deputy Premier this afternoon. Why is it that, whenever he is asked a question, and he obviously does not know the answer, he fudges the reply and demonstrates that he is not on top of his department? This afternoon I asked him:



Why is it that, when the Children's Court awards a bond with supervision which effectively places a child under the Minister's guardianship, the supervision of those children by the Minister is virtually non-existent?

I have done some quite thorough research on this subject with the courts, lawyers and foster parents themselves, and there is no such thing as supervision. The children are released and dropped off with their foster parents, but supervision programs are non-existent. Members should ask a foster parent how often they receive a visit from a social worker. In some cases they might receive 10 minutes in six weeks, or maybe half an hour a month in some cases.

At the extreme end of the scale (as was stated in the House this afternoon) one child had been in foster care since the age of four and moved out to the northern suburbs at the age of 14 to live next door to a foster mother with whom I spoke yesterday, and this child had not had any contact with a social worker. In fact, the child had a real problem about his status as a foster kid and felt that he was not part of the family. When this foster mother asked him why he did not raise the matter with his social worker, the kid did not know what a social worker was. That demonstrates that, on many occasions, there is no contact between social workers and the children concerned.

I have been informed that when the court orders a curfew, which may expire at about 10 o'clock, depending on the age of the child, the police have no idea which children are subject to curfew orders. When the children go out, the only time anything would happen would be if the foster parent reports the matter to the police. These children come out of institutions and may not get into a school. Some of them decide to leave school and roam the streets, but nobody in the department seems to care enough to follow up the case. I have had countless foster parents confirm these facts.

So, we have a Minister who is the legal guardian of these children, but he does not know whether they are at school or out reoffending—he just does not know. That is not part of the Act, which gives the Minister a clear mandate to be responsible for those children. It is one of the reasons why there is this turnover of children going through the courts. They are released from the courts, they get a bond with supervision, no supervision takes place, they reoffend and they are back before the court. The department follows its normal pattern: its pre-sentencing report recommends a bond with supervision.

In dozens of cases, bonds with supervision have been recommended for children who have been multiple offenders—who have stolen motor vehicles and worse. The public thinks that supervision takes place, but there is no supervision. This Government and this Minister are derelict, because this Minister does not know there is no supervision. We could see that from his response this afternoon.

Indeed, this will be a major public issue as this year progresses and as we unfold evidence to this House that the Minister is not on top of his portfolio, he does not know what these children are doing, he does not know why they are reoffending and he does not know the difficulties that foster parents have. Indeed, when all the evidence is out, maybe some changes will be made in the department when the man who is responsible for those children exercises that authority.

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

**Mr HOLLOWAY (Mitchell):** I refer tonight to the closure of the St Marys post office. I wish to express my disgust with Australia Post on the action it has taken in this matter. Earlier this week, I was informed by a letter from the controlling manager of Australia Post that the St Marys post

office will be closed from the end of business on Friday 13 September this year. I think that is a disgraceful situation.

In the two days since this has been announced, I have already received in my office a number of complaints from residents in the area who were disgusted, as I am, with this decision. It is not as though the post office is being closed to make way for some alternative service: in fact, there is to be none.

For some 30 years now residents of the suburbs of St Marys, Clovelly Park, Pasadena, Mitchell Park and Edwardstown have been using the St Marys post office. It has been established there for some time. That office is now to be closed. I wish to outline some of the background to this story, because I think it is a situation about which other members should be wary.

Earlier this year I received a letter dated 18 March 1991 from the Manager of Australia Post telling me about what it would do to improve its service. The letter states:

Australia Post's retail network—the post offices and post office agencies through which it services its customers—is to be progressively modernised. The reasons for adopting this program include: poor customer access to the retail network.

The letter goes on to relate other problems faced by Australia Post and continues:

Following a two-year study Australia Post has set out to address these problems by improving its service to customers. Senior managers and union representatives have visited Britain, Canada and other countries to investigate initiatives taken overseas, and retail and marketing consultants have been employed to assist in retail outlet design. The outcome will be improved customer accessibility to postal outlets offering an enhanced product and service range.

What will the residents of St Marys and Clovelly Park have? What will be their improved service, their enhanced product and service range? It is a street posting box to be placed outside the premises of the closed post office and the sale of small numbers of stamps from the delicatessen across the road. That is the improved service that we are getting from Australia Post.

I have a file of letters that go back over the past two or three years, ever since Australia Post was corporatised in 1989, telling us how things will be improved and how service will be enhanced. This is what it has come to. Australia Post is establishing what is called a 'business centre' at Rose Street, Melrose Park. It is intended that this business centre will provide a drive-in service for the many businesses in my electorate to pick up their mail and to deliver bulk mail. I certainly have no quarrels with that; that will help the business community. Australia Post will also at that location resite its postmen, that is, the people who deliver mail to the outlying suburbs.

Inasmuch as that improves the efficiency of deliveries and services and enables Australia Post to cut costs, I am happy with that, because at least it will not affect the service to the public, but what that new business centre will not do is provide any service for the ordinary customer. There will be no retail service at that new business centre. I think the conduct of Australia Post in this whole exercise is nothing more than a publicity stunt.

**Mr Atkinson:** What is the member for Hawker doing about it?

**Mr HOLLOWAY:** The member for Spence has mentioned the member for Hawker. I have a letter from the member for Hawker which she wrote to a constituent who also approached me. I do not mean to criticise the member for Hawker in this matter, because in fact the Federal member for Hawker was led up the garden path, as I was. The only reason I want to read this extract from the letter of the member for Hawker is just to confirm that she had the same impression from Australia Post that I had. Although

the St Marys post office might be downgraded following the transfer of the postmen to Melrose Park, at least some services would be retained in the area. What Chris Gallus said to her and my constituent was:

It appears the post office at St Marys will not close 'at this stage'. However, it is proposed to be converted to a franchise agency and relocated nearer the pedestrian lights just south of Daws Road. The current premises are only leased by Australia Post.

Mrs Gallus obviously had advice similar to that which I received, that is, although the post office, being a fairly old building, may no longer be required, other services would be provided in the area. However, we now learn that apparently this will not be the case.

As I said, all these developments in Australia Post have followed the corporatisation of that organisation in 1989. I had something to say about corporatisation in my Address in Reply contribution the other day. I said I certainly have no problems with attempts to make our public enterprises more efficient. Inasmuch as Australia Post is trying to cut its costs and improve its services, it has my support, but it seems quite clear to me that Australia Post also has some community service obligations. They are quite clear. There is nothing more basic or essential than a postal service, particularly for our elderly citizens, and Australia Post has an obligation to provide to all Australians a basic service.

**Mr Atkinson:** It is a basic function of government.

**Mr HOLLOWAY:** That is quite correct. I believe that that function should be spelt out clearly, and I call on my Federal colleagues seriously to examine Australia Post's behaviour in matters of this sort. I think we could probably compare the sort of behaviour we have seen from Australia Post with that of Australian National, which in recent times has been closing down some country rail services. We have seen there that, although corporatisation has split the two functions of statutory authorities—one to provide service and the other to be efficient—all the emphasis is on efficiency and cutting costs and not enough is on providing a standard of service. Perhaps we should set out our service obligations as well as financial objectives. As a matter of fact, I have written to the Federal Government on this issue. I believe that, as well as the financial objectives being set out, the social objectives should also be spelt out in legislation so that it is quite clear that Australia Post has

an obligation to provide a basic postal service to all Australians.

Related to this is that in recent times a bill-paying service has been added to Australia Post services, and I think it has been a very successful initiative. As a matter of fact, I asked a question of the Minister of Transport earlier this year about the payment of motor registration renewals and I believe that initiative has been very successful. That was the Minister's answer on that occasion. Yet, this service, which has been well accepted by the people of St Marys and the nearby suburbs, will no longer be available. It will be one of the services that will go. What has been forgotten in all this is that, in suburbs such as Clovelly Park and St Marys that were established shortly after the war, there are now many people who are getting on in years and who do not have access to vehicles. These people rely on basic services such as a post office.

Following my experience with the St Marys post office, it is now pretty clear that the future of Daw Park post office, which is in the electorate of the member for Mitcham, and the Park Holme post office, which is in the electorate of the member for Walsh, must now be in question. I certainly warn all members that if they get a letter from Australia Post telling them that it is looking at upgrading the efficiency of the post offices in their electorate, they should be wary indeed of what the consequences might be.

Another related matter is the question of street post boxes. I have had a number of complaints from people in my electorate about the diminishing number of street post boxes in the area. Increasingly Australia Post is removing them—bit by bit they are all going. It is becoming increasingly difficult for elderly people to post their letters. The behaviour of Australia Post in closing the St Marys post office is quite unacceptable, and I am sure the electorate of Mitchell will agree with me. I will certainly protest strongly to Australia Post about this matter and I will do everything I can to ensure that essential services are provided. The very least Australia Post can do at St Marys is provide an agency service for the people of that area.

Motion carried.

At 5.7 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday 20 August at 2 p.m.