

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 8 October 1992

The **SPEAKER (Hon. N.T. Peterson)** took the Chair at 10.30 a.m. and read prayers.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Adjourned debate on the question:

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

(Continued from 7 October. Page 702.)

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen): The lack of support given in this budget to family and community services and the aged is an absolute disgrace.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: It is an absolute disgrace, and the mirth on the other side would suggest how little the present Government understands the plight of non-government agencies working in the welfare area. I would suggest that each one of them go out and talk to the non-government agencies in their own electorates to find out how serious the situation is. I do not care what the other side says by way of interjection; the fact is that the current funding situation for family and community services, particularly as it relates to non-government agencies and the lack of funding for the aged, is nothing less than a disgrace.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I will be delighted in two years time to be in a position to get the situation right. The member for Spence can lie back in his seat over there and laugh about the situation, and so can the member for Napier.

The Hon. T.H. HEMMINGS: On a point of order, Sir—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. The member for Napier.

The Hon. T.H. HEMMINGS: Whilst your attention was distracted, Sir, the member for Heysen reflected on me. I was sitting quietly here, and the member for Heysen said that I was laughing at the plight of those people out there in the community. He said that only in order to get it into *Hansard*.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will resume his seat. The Chair does not uphold the point of order.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: There has been a considerable amount of mirth from members on the other side, but it is not appropriate for me to dwell on that at this time. I would suggest that if any member from the Government does not recognise the plight being experienced by non-government agencies in this State in the community services area, they should discuss the matter with a reputable organisation such as SACOSS (South Australian Council of Social Services). That organisation has reported to me that its members—non-government agencies and organisations—have reported a massive increase in demand for emergency financial assistance, far beyond what they can meet. I am very

pleased indeed that the new Minister of Health and Community Services is in the Chamber at the present time, and I look forward to taking up his offer to discuss a number of these issues with him in the near future.

During the Estimates Committees I asked the previous Minister whether he could advise what anti-poverty initiatives were being planned to address the needs of the disadvantaged, particularly as a result of the current recession. I was very pleased indeed with the way the now member for Baudin addressed questions put to him during the Estimates Committee and the information made available by both him and his departmental advisers, but on this subject he was not able to provide very much information. The delay in developing policy for anti poverty services is causing significant difficulties and restrictions in emergency financial assistance programs provided by non-Government welfare agencies. Funding for 1992 emergency financial assistance programs has been pegged at 1992 levels due to the fact that the Government's anti poverty policy is not yet in place, so we are told. In July this year FACS advised:

Because a discreet subprogram policy for anti poverty services is expected to be developed in the next 12 months, your organisation will only be considered for 1993 funding at this stage. Until this policy is complete, applications for an increase in funding cannot be considered. You are therefore invited to apply at your project's current level.

The effect of this ostensibly will be to make any increases in funding possible only in January 1994, despite the demand for emergency financial assistance and financial counselling increasing up to 100 per cent during the past 12 months. At this time also, due to the present recession, non-Government agency resources are being stretched to breaking point due in part to their private donor base shrinking badly. It is vitally important that the Minister address this matter and indicate as a matter of urgency just what steps have been undertaken or, more importantly, will be taken and when to enable agencies to continue providing adequate and sorely needed emergency financial services in 1993, without having to curtail other critical services to disadvantaged families and individuals. It is important that the Minister also outline the current state of negotiations between the Commonwealth and State regarding concessions and other areas of financial assistance. I look forward at a later stage to the Minister providing that information.

The change in the frequency of funding payments through grants from quarterly to monthly for all supported accommodation programs and all programs in this area is devastating news. The Federal Minister has advised through the Treasury that payments for the State for supported projects will be paid in future on a monthly basis instead of quarterly as at present. No doubt the State Government intends to do the same. I hope that it does not, but I presume that that will be the case if it has not already occurred. That will cause further burden and strain on agencies already stretched with their resources. I will refer to some of the detail regarding the stretching of resources at this stage.

Such a move will exacerbate cash flow problems, particularly with annual accounts to be paid in a given month. If the agencies are not funded for any administrative support, this will apply further pressure on the service to use paid staff time for the additional administrative and clerical duties necessary. Agencies will

not receive any worthwhile interest during such a short period. Currently interest is beneficial, helping operating costs in a budget that should show a deficit if it relied entirely on the funds granted. Further, with the prospect of a new award being introduced, agencies will be under increasing pressure as no additional funding will be forthcoming to cover the added wage costs.

Modest sized agencies have no back-up support—and I am sure that the Minister will be made aware of this—for payment of essentials such as salaries, should there be either any delay in funding payments or any other unforeseen urgent costs. I hope that the new Minister and, indeed, the State Government, will be protesting loudly at Treasury's announcement and pressing the case for maintaining funding payments on a quarterly basis in the interests of the clients who would suffer considerably under a system of monthly payments. I hope that on some occasion in the near future, perhaps through a ministerial statement, the Minister will indicate to the House what is being done to resist Treasury's move, because it is vitally important that that information be provided.

The Family and Community Development Program funds large numbers of non-government organisations. For some years the program has received no increases except for minor indexation adjustments. I must say that during the Estimates Committees I referred to the past five years: the information I have gained since that time suggests that it is more like 10 years since there has been any form of increase in the funds made available. SACOSS in its budget submission to the Government asked that the Family and Community Development Program be given priority for funding increases because of increases in demand for services, the introduction of awards in the services funded and because of what it referred to as the neglect of funding increases for so long.

I am particularly concerned that the Government has continued to ignore this extremely important area. As I have said previously and we all realise, non-government agencies are stretched to the absolute limit. I know that, when the Minister of Health and Community Services is able to go out and speak to some of the larger organisations as well as to the smaller ones, he will learn for himself the extreme pressures under which these agencies are working. Some agencies have reported to me and will report to the Minister that in the past 12 months they have seen an 80 per cent increase in demand; some agencies are turning people away. I referred to some of those agencies during the Estimates Committees, so it is not appropriate for me to do so again.

A number of agencies have told me that they must cut various programs, programs that they recognised previously as being essential in assisting in the provision of family support. It is a very serious situation and one that I hope the Minister will address as a matter of urgency. I assure the House and those who are affected by this devastating situation that as the shadow Minister responsible for these areas I will be making every effort to bring to the notice of the Minister on a continuing basis the concerns that are being felt and expressed by those non-government agencies.

I noted at the beginning of this contribution that the level of funding for both family and community services and for the aged was a disgrace, and I want to turn now

to the problems being experienced by organisations representative of the elderly in this State. I refer particularly to problems associated with the lack of appropriate funding through Home and Community Care. Members will be aware that a demonstration has been organised in Victoria Square for next Saturday, and I hope that members in the House will be present to learn first-hand some of the concerns being felt by the elderly as a result of the lack of funding.

Again this year, the South Australian Government is not matching the funding that is made available through the Commonwealth. Even Victoria has previously matched these funds more than South Australia, even though we have, on percentage, the largest aged population. The HACC services, in particular Domiciliary Care, are very much under-resourced. A review was conducted two years ago, when a committee spent many months looking at the problems of waiting lists, etc. It costed the needs of this body but, once more, we are the only State not matching funds from the Commonwealth; nor is the social justice question of user rights being resourced.

The Commonwealth funds the Aged Rights Advocacy Service on behalf of people in nursing homes and hostels, but the advocacy on behalf of people electing to stay in their own home, which is a HACC responsibility, is not being resourced. This scenario exists despite the fact that demands for advocacy are being made by older people on an ongoing basis. The impact of reduced real levels of HACC funding is substantial, given that South Australia, as I said earlier, is well behind other States in a real commitment to HACC services. During the Estimates Committees I asked the Minister whether he could describe the real impact of reductions in growth of HACC funding on crucial services, particularly Domiciliary Care, given that there were already large waiting lists. I also asked the Minister to provide information to the Committee as to when additional resources would be provided to HACC to remove the designation of no growth from the service areas of post acute treatment, rehabilitation, families in stress and palliative care.

Again, I was disappointed, to say the least, in the response that I received. The Meals on Wheels organisation is respected throughout this State and in other parts of Australia. I have been concerned to learn that Meals on Wheels estimates that the responsibilities it must assume to assist those who live in their own home will increase by a 5 per cent compounding figure each year for the rest of this decade. The fact is that no provision is being made for Meals on Wheels to meet capital funding requirements.

Meals on Wheels Incorporated has been able to hold meal prices at \$3 per three course daily hot meal for the past two years, which is an amazing feat. It can only do so while some degree of assistance is available to expand both its traditional hot meal kitchens and its cooked chill outlets. Meals on Wheels estimates that about \$3 million will be required over the next five years to build new outlets and increase meal productivity in existing kitchens. The fact is that provision has not been made to assist Meals on Wheels to meet this capital cost.

Currently, Meals on Wheels pays almost twice the domestic rate for electricity than domestic households. As

Meals on Wheels is a non-profit making charitable institution, why is it necessary for the organisation to pay more for power than a nursing home, for example, bearing in mind that Meals on Wheels exists simply to keep people in their own home, in which otherwise domestic power would be used by recipients or occupiers if they had to prepare meals themselves? From what I can gather, the estimates have not allowed for Meals on Wheels to receive consideration along these lines to thus enable meal prices to the aged, infirm and disabled to be held at \$3 per meal. It is one of the cheapest home delivered meal services in Australia, and I hope that that can remain.

A number of other significant issues need to be raised. What measures have been taken to ensure that older people being discharged from hospital are provided with appropriate supports in the community? The lack of clarity, as I said earlier, regarding Commonwealth-State aged care responsibility appears to be severely hindering the delivery of services to older people. The future of home assist programs is in doubt. Older people are severely disadvantaged by recent changes to STA services. When will a transport strategy for older people be developed to address these needs? In the light of the cuts to STA services, what measures are in place to protect and extend the Access Cabs scheme which provides a much needed service to disabled and older people?

The matter of the seniors card is one that I raised recently on the occasion of the International Day for the Elderly. I was pleased on that occasion that the Minister indicated he would be making a further statement in a matter of weeks, and I look forward to hearing what the Minister has to say about that. There is a very real need to extend that service in South Australia. I only wish that I had the time to refer to so many of the matters that have been raised. It is my intention to use other occasions to refer to the many issues that have been brought to my notice in recent times. In closing, I refer to the complexity of the funding system for all sections of aged care, particularly the nursing home funding arrangements, CAM, SAM, and OCRE. I would hope that this is one matter that the present Minister will take into account. The complexities that are affecting elderly people is a significant issue and it requires urgent attention.

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

The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE (Coles): During my second reading contribution on the budget I said that I hoped that it was the last budget debate in which I would participate. I said that in the knowledge that I will not be contesting the next election, but also in the absolute hope that South Australia does not have to endure another 12 months of this Government. Since then, of course, we have seen a new ministry and, with the exception of the appointment to that ministry of the two Independents, I see nothing whatever to encourage the State in any one of the changes that has been made in that ministry. I see nothing that will give South Australia any hope in any statement that the Premier has made. It has all been rhetoric, redressed and rearranged, but the same old rhetoric—'Trust us; we are going to set the State going.' Well, this Government has had 10 years to

do just that, and with each year that passes our position has become progressively more difficult to the point where we now face a catastrophic future.

The hard facts that underline that catastrophic future are seen in the simple statistical facts and the hard details, figures and percentages that are in the budget. The budget increases taxes by 10.4 per cent and that, of course, will increase our already shocking unemployment rate, which verges on 12 per cent. That 12 per cent has now become, in the eyes of the Government, just an unfortunate figure and, if we can keep it stable, we will be doing quite well, according to their likes. The reality is that getting on for 90 000 people have no source of income other than that which they receive by way of Commonwealth Government income support. Behind that figure is tragedy for countless families.

Those 90 000-odd individuals who form the unemployment statistics are in effect an iceberg, because there are many thousands below that figure who simply do not register, who have given up hope and whose families are affected by the same sense of despair that the individuals themselves are feeling. So, the 90 000 is a figure—but not in my opinion an accurate figure—and the suffering goes way beyond the individuals who are registered for unemployment. Yet the Labor Party, which was so active in espousing the rights and difficulties of the unemployed when it was in Opposition in 1982, is now rarely heard talking about the plight of the unemployed.

I have rarely heard speeches from members of the Government about the plight of the unemployed. There was, from the former Minister of Employment and Further Education, a lot of talk about Government programs for the unemployed. I regard those programs not as action but as activity. They simply remove from the list of unemployed, for a period of months, sometimes up to a year, a number of people who would otherwise be registered. They provide training, they provide jobs, but it is very rare for that training or for those jobs to lead on to permanent, long-term employment which is productive, which results in revenue for the State as well as for incomes for families and that helps to secure our long-term future.

Whilst I do not deny that many of those programs should be established, particularly the training programs, they are simply devices for taking people off the unemployment lists and placing them for a limited period on other lists of job enhancement programs. Why is that situation so bad in this State—and, in fact, South Australia is the worst State in the Commonwealth as far as unemployment is concerned? To find the reason we have to look partly at the State's debt and partly at the taxation policies that result from that debt. We have the highest financial institutions duties tax in Australia; the highest bank debit tax in the nation, the highest petrol tax in the nation, and the second-highest electricity charges. Of course, those charges are at the present level because the Government uses its electricity authority not only as an electricity generation and distribution authority but as a milch cow to obtain finance for general purposes for Treasury. Our electricity charges are considerably higher than they need be because of the use to which the Labor Government has put ETSA.

As I said, there has been a change of captain on this ship and not before time, but no real change of direction. I do not regard the creation of super ministries as a change of direction. Mr Speaker, the reason why I would most warmly have supported your nomination, had you been willing for it to go forward, for the position of Chairman of the Economic and Finance Committee of this House, notwithstanding your, in my opinion, justified arguments that it might have been a conflict of interest for a Speaker to be involved in that position, was that there is simply no-one on the other side whom I feel I could in truth support. I would not give any member of the Government a job as a checkout operator in a supermarket after the appalling record of the last term and the last several terms. There is no-one, with the possible exception of the new Ministers, the Independents, who are yet to prove themselves in that capacity, with whom I would entrust my money or my life. Look what they have done to the lot of us. Look what they have done to this State. They have brought us to the lowest point of any State in this Commonwealth or, I suggest, of any States way beyond this Commonwealth. The debt incurred by this Government—

An honourable member interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE: —is greater than the horrific savings and loans scandal and debt in the United States.

Mr Atkinson: What about Mozambique?

The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE: 'What about Mozambique?' asks the member for Spence. We have come to pass where debt and tragedy become trivialised when interjections of that kind are heard in this House. In other words, this State is regarded by the member for Spence as a third world country, equivalent—and it is getting to that stage—to a state in Africa which has suffered the most appalling deprivation and which is, of course, not in the same category for any democratic or economic purpose of discussion as South Australia. What about Mozambique? If we have come to that level, I suggest it is time that everyone on the other side retire gracefully and speedily and let a competent Party take over the reins of government.

I was referring to unemployment. The person who is now Premier of this State and who assures us that there will be a change of direction needs to be aware that under his administration of the trade and industry portfolio the State lost 38 000 jobs, of which 21 000 were in the manufacturing industry. In other words, while the Premier was at the helm of manufacturing industry and while he had the task of giving it leadership, incentive and a sense of direction, we went backwards to the tune of 21 000 jobs in the space of two years. It did not take long for those jobs to be shed with the aid of his colleagues in Canberra. At the same time our share of national exports fell to 5.6 per cent compared with our population share of 8.4 per cent.

It is also worth noting that that population share has dropped significantly since this Government came to office. There was a time when South Australia's share of most things could be determined by rounding off the figures at 10 per cent. That figure is now down to 8.4 per cent and dropping steadily. The Deputy Premier and new Treasurer, the father of the WorkCover scheme, has now

departed from the portfolio of transport under which he saw State Transport Authority subsidies blow out to over \$150 million a year or \$3 million a week. That, of course, stands in contrast or perhaps in keeping with our \$3 million a day repayment of interest on debt as a result of the State Bank collapse. That \$3 million a day is addressing interest only; it is going nowhere near repaying the capital.

That, of course, has contributed to the next catastrophe, which is the reduction in our credit rating twice during the term of this Government: we have now been downgraded to the point where our interest repayments are \$50 million a year more than they need to be, simply because we are regarded nationally and internationally as a bad risk. South Australia, which once could be relied upon to be soundly managed and pay its way, is such a bad risk that it is paying the price of an additional \$1 million a week in interest repayments. All those things mean that this Government should not remain in office. It should not remain in office because it has lost the trust of the people, it has brought unprecedented hardship and deprivation to this State and it has created troubles for the future that will take a very long time to solve.

I turn now specifically to the budget Estimates Committees on which I served, and I make particular mention of the recreation and sport Estimates Committee. The Minister addressed that Committee with an opening statement that reported on the very serious dereliction of duty by the Totalizator Agency Board. That board remains in place notwithstanding its refusal to advise the Minister or its neglect in failing to advise the Minister that its Chief Executive Officer had conducted his affairs in a way that was completely in conflict with public duty and with his obligations under the Act. I simply want to place on record again what I said during that Committee: a Minister who is prepared to let a board remain in office under those circumstances can hardly expect to have the confidence of the public in that organisation, namely, the TAB.

I regard the board members who participated in decisions to conceal the gravity of the situation from the Minister as having let him down very badly indeed. I am astonished and deeply dismayed that two of those board members should be former Deputy Premiers and one a former Premier of South Australia. Virtually everyone on that board had extensive experience in public administration and was fully aware of his political and statutory obligations. Certainly, Mr Wright and Mr Corcoran would know how they would have felt as Ministers if something were seriously amiss with a statutory body under their general direction and control and they were not informed of it. I believe that the Minister of Recreation and Sport was let down in the worst possible way. I think he is exercising a degree of patience which I do not believe is proper in the circumstances.

After all that has happened in this State with incompetence, corruption, cover up and refusal to acknowledge that the public deserve some degree of integrity—in fact they deserve the highest degree of integrity in the conduct of public affairs—I think the board, with the exception of its recently appointed member, should have been sacked on the spot. This Government should have made it clear to every statutory

board in South Australia that this kind of conduct will not be tolerated. As it stands at the moment, the board that neglected its duty is still there and presumably is still administering the affairs of TAB. I do not think that is satisfactory.

Another point I want to raise, and which I raised during the Estimates Committee dealing with the Department of Recreation and Sport, is the allocations, or rather lack of allocations, to the women's suffrage centenary year celebrations. Members would know that the Department of Premier and Cabinet has allocated \$220 000 to the celebrations. I contrast that sum with the \$5.4 million that was spent by this Government in an attempt to bring the Commonwealth Games to South Australia. That money was spent over a period of four years and certainly, had we been successful, there would have been considerable financial benefit as well as prestige for South Australia.

Mr Atkinson: That is a retrospective judgment.

The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE: It is not a retrospective judgment. The fact is that the women's suffrage centenary year has the potential to bring to South Australia hundreds of thousands of visitors from interstate and all over the world to recognise a constitutional achievement that is unique to this State. We were not the first, but we were among the first, to give women the vote, and that legislation was passed in 1894. However, we were the first democracy in the world to give women the right to stand for Parliament. That in itself is a distinction which warrants South Australia's promoting itself as the destination for women's conferences, conventions and major events on a world-wide basis.

How on earth is it possible to do that with a budget of \$220 000? I recognise that that is not the totality. I believe that other Ministers may be trying to allocate some funds from within their departmental budget to individual projects. However, if we want to do this and do it seriously and properly and bring credit to our forebears who pioneered these great constitutional achievements and focused attention on the nature and culture of politics in this State and on the achievements of women, we should be looking at the way in which money is currently spent and the way in which funds could be used as an investment in the future by attracting people to South Australia for this very important year.

I hasten to reassure the member for Spence, who seems to object to Government money being spent on this purpose but not on other activities—some of which are of extremely doubtful quality—that the committee members themselves, all of whom are volunteers and virtually all of whom are in full-time employment (and for many of us that involves much more than a full-time commitment) are having to raise at least \$100 000; and we are having to go to the businesses of South Australia to get that money.

I assure the honourable member that going to business to get money in this climate is not an easy task. It is to the very great credit of companies—and I would like to acknowledge some of them—that they see the value and the importance of the women's suffrage centenary year and are willing to commit funds to it. I nominate first, because I visited it first and it happened to be the first to say, 'Yes', Hills Industries. It has committed a substantial

sum, and that will be put to good purpose I hope for an exhibition which may or may not, depending on the planning, be entitled something like, 'One hundred years of housework'. Because, when South Australians realise the technology that has assisted and enabled women's emancipation over the past 100 years, it will give considerable food for thought as to what more can be done to enable women to play their part most fully and effectively in public life and in all aspects of the South Australian community. Much more can be said about this budget, but I simply conclude by saying that those who are administering it have had their chips. They should go; they are not worthy to govern this State. I repeat: I hope this is the last debate on a budget of this Government in which I participate and I hope that not for my own sake but for that of South Australia.

Mr MATTHEW (Bright): During this debate, I will primarily concentrate on the Appropriation Bill and the Estimates Committee deliberations relating to my shadow portfolios, but will do so in the context of the present predicament which is facing our State. The budget increased our taxes by 10.4 per cent, which will already worsen our already shocking 11.7 per cent unemployment rate. As of August, we now have 84 700 jobless in our State, the worst mainland State unemployment record; we have the highest FID and BAD tax in the nation; the highest petrol tax and WorkCover charges; and the second highest electricity charges because of this Government's rip-off of ETSA. That is the climate within which this budget is being framed, and no attempt has been made by this budget to redress those problems.

Mr Becker: It's called redistribution of wealth.

Mr MATTHEW: As my honourable colleague says, it is called redistributing the wealth, but this Government fails to recognise the opportunities for employment that can be generated by encouraging productivity and enterprise in this State. If the Government decides to do that through handing down a mini-budget under this so-called revamped Government with its revamped Cabinet, then we may achieve something in the future. Members of this Parliament know that the so-called revamped Government is merely a shuffling of some of the chairs and in reality achieves nothing at all in the way of a forward direction.

Much has been said about the value of the Estimates Committees, and it is well known that this Government would like to see the Estimates Committee process, as we have known it for some years in this Parliament, dispensed with. The reasons for that are quite obvious: Estimates Committees often embarrass the Government, and this year was no exception. They revealed the inaction by Ministers on particular issues and also revealed ineptitude on the part of some Ministers.

By way of illustration, I turn first to the Emergency Services portfolio. Looking first at the Police Department, which comes within the realm of that portfolio, I note that the budget was cut in real terms by \$3.8 million. That cut has manifested itself in the form of cuts, in particular in penalty rates and overtime, and first reared its head through the removal of the penalty payments to some Neighbourhood Watch police coordinators, and then more recently we had the public holiday fiasco for the just passed Monday public holiday. In both of those

situations the Government has now done an about-face, but what an absolutely disgraceful situation we have faced in this State, where the police budget has been cut to an extent where the Neighbourhood Watch program was threatened, and more recently where the public of South Australia would have been threatened had the cuts on the public holiday in our police staffing gone ahead as planned.

Last year there were nine deaths on our roads during the Monday public holiday in October. This year there were two deaths—thankfully, a reduction, but two deaths too many—and I dread to think what may have happened had the cuts planned by this Government gone ahead in their original form. Were it not for the Police Association's responsible action and the Opposition's speaking out about these cuts, we would have had fewer police available on that public holiday Monday than would normally be expected. Initially, some members on the Labor Party side of this Parliament criticised the Police Association for taking the stand it did. Certainly, it was a stand that had to be considered very carefully, and before speaking publicly I considered the implications of an Opposition's revealing that there would be fewer police on the road, but that had to be done to bring about the reversal of the situation, because otherwise we could have had some serious situations facing us indeed, with that lack of resources.

But, even though we have now turned that around, through this process we have still seen effectively an admission on the part of this Government that it cannot afford to maintain normal police services after 9 to 5 working hours. It is absolutely outrageous that we had a situation where traffic police, accident investigation police, country police and police across the board were reduced on a public holiday due to budget constraints. Only through last minute intervention was that avoided. Greater than normal pressure has always been applied to our police resources on public holidays and as a result it has always been regarded as essential that that greater presence was there. While we had intervention, which solved the problem for the last public holiday, we are still faced with the problem of a \$3.8 million shortfall that must be addressed by this Government so it can demonstrate to the people of South Australia that our police will be adequately resourced to provide the protection to our public that it quite rightly expects.

I revealed during budget estimates that what has transpired could come about and further pointed out that as a result of budget constraints there will be a reduced police presence after 5 p.m. in our State. This inevitably will manifest itself in longer than normal response times to calls from the public. More police officers will be working between 9 and 5, and that has a resource impact. That resource impact manifests itself through demand on vehicles and I have been advised through the department that in many areas there will not be sufficient access to vehicles for matters such as accident and crime investigations.

That is not an acceptable situation. Simply put, reducing the spread of our police officers across the 24 hour period at the coal face—the crime face—of our community is an admission that we cannot afford normal police services. I have called on the new Minister for Emergency Services to intervene, just as I called on his

predecessor. His predecessor chose to dismiss my claims but I look forward to the new Minister's reviewing the police budget and coming up with a constructive way of administering the police budget we have before us and, hopefully, finding an avenue to increase the amount of allocation that our Police Department receives.

Also during questioning on the police under the Emergency Services portfolio, two alarming things were revealed when looking at areas of information technology. One referred to a project known as Operational Systems Integration (OSI). It was revealed during Estimates that this project was originally planned in 1988 as part of the Police Department's information technology strategic plan.

In 1988, the Justice Information System development of police projects was well under way. I was absolutely horrified to find that the Police Department was considering axing that project (which has already blown \$30 million over budget to date) before it even got off the ground, and now the Police Department has prepared a confidential report, a copy of which I have in my possession, which reveals its plans to completely rewrite Police Department systems developed by the Justice Information System. I am also aware that the E&WS Department, which was using the same software as used by the Justice Information System (Cullinet Software), has abandoned that software and it is embarking on a \$39 million project to overcome it. The question that remains is what happens to the rest of the Justice Information System. It has developed systems using Cullinet Software for departments such as Family and Community Services, the Attorney-General's Department and the Industrial Courts of the Department of Labour.

The same software has also been used by the Courts Department for its computer systems. It will now be abandoned by the Police Department and it has been abandoned by the E&WS Department, and multi millions of dollars are at stake. While this money is being wasted, we cannot find an extra \$3.8 million to ensure that we have adequate resources on the road. Where on earth will this lead our State? Where is the priority being placed? Clearly, we have an information technology disaster afoot through our State through the incorrect assessment of the need to develop software and the type of main operating system and back-up software that is purchased in the first place.

Also, some attention was paid to another computing project that was developed by the Police Department, that of the police firearms register. I was interested to note considerable reference to the state of the police firearms register by the Auditor-General over three years. Naturally I posed the question during Estimates of why, despite three years of reference, the department has failed even to provide the staffing needed to get our firearms register up to date. The reply that came back to me from the departmental representative, after the question was handballed to him by the Minister, was:

At the time of the printing of the Auditor-General's Report we had put additional resources into firearms to at least contain the situation.

After three years of revelation by the Auditor-General and after coming back to the reply again I was told that it has been a matter of balancing resources between proceeding with the new system and keeping the old system up to date. While the resources have been

addressed with respect to priority, we have found that there are 16 007 firearm owners in this State who have failed to renew their licences and, of those, 1 231 of the owners had since become deceased and no-one knows where their guns are. A further 3 239 licence holders could not be located and no-one knows where their guns are, either. In total we have 6 844 firearm owners—and no-one knows where the guns have gone, so there is the potential for a black market in firearms in this State through the consistent failure of the Police Department and this Government to address the firearms issue in this State. That is not an acceptable situation.

Turning from the Police Department to other areas of emergency services, I refer to the situation facing our firefighting services in this State. I address the situation of the now infamous Bruce Report—the report prepared by the Government to address the firefighting future in this State, the report which to date has only been viewed by some privileged people, behind closed doors under the watchful eye of an adviser of the Minister. The senior people who have viewed that report have been told that they are not able to take any notes or photocopies or have any extract from the report, that they can simply look at it and can go away, but the report has not been released. I sought an assurance from the then Minister of Emergency Services that the report would be released. He told me he would look at it.

I also sought assurances about the continued existence of the CFS as a separate organisation from the MFS and the then Emergency Services Minister made an offer to me in the Estimates Committee, on the spot, on 17 September, that he would enshrine in legislation the separation of those two organisations so that they could only be merged through an Act of Parliament. I agreed on the spot, but raised the concern that the Minister would be removed from that portfolio in the reshuffle and I wanted the Government to match his undertaking. The Minister has been removed from that portfolio and I call on the new Minister of Emergency Services to do the logical thing, to release the Bruce report publicly and also to draft legislation to protect the separation of the CFS as an important separate entity, recognising the service provided by its 20 000 volunteers in our State.

I was concerned during the Estimates Committees to note that the Brukunga Training Centre, which has been developed by the CFS, will be utilised by the MFS but without any contribution at all through its budget line. The Opposition welcomes the sharing of training resources and, indeed, some other resources, between the two firefighting services, if it is to the mutual benefit of both organisations. But I am concerned that the CFS will need to meet the cost of developing Brukunga and disappointed to note that there has been no MFS contribution during this financial year. I was particularly concerned during the Emergency Services Estimates Committee process by the filibustering of the then Minister of Emergency Services and the need for the Chairman of that Committee to intervene by constantly protecting the Minister and even going to the extent of asking three questions of the Minister to take the heat off him. That does not add to the Estimates Committee process.

I turn now to the Correctional Services portfolio. I was alarmed at some of the things that came out of the

Estimates Committee. We have a crisis in our prison system and a crisis that must be addressed with priority by the present Correctional Services Minister, because his predecessor has certainly failed to do so. Our prisons have become violent centres of drug and alcohol abuse, where our prison staff are continually being attacked. That statement is very easy to back up, simply by looking at incidents in our prisons and the incidence of attack on prison guards. I note that the number of incidents in our prisons has increased by 387 per cent in just eight years from 115 incidents in 1982-83 to 560 incidents in 1990-91. Regrettably, the 1991-92 figures are not available, because the Minister refused to reveal them during Estimates. One can only make an educated guess that there has probably been an increase in those incidents.

The major contributor to those prison incidents, alarmingly, is drug and alcohol related incidents. During that eight-year period, drug and alcohol related incidents in our prisons have gone up by a staggering 1 314 per cent from a figure of 28 in 1982-83 to 396 in 1990-91. Again, I do not have the 1991-92 figures because, again, the Minister of Correctional Services refused to make those figures available during the Estimates Committee.

I also mentioned that our prisons have become institutions where prison staff are continually attacked. To support that statement I refer to the number of working days that have been lost through assaults on prison staff during the year ended 30 June 1991. Again, the latest figures were not available during Estimates. However, some 996 working days were lost during the 1990-91 financial year as a result of attacks on prison staff. Is it any wonder that the Minister refused to release the latest figures? Again, I am advised that there is a chance that that figure has gone up. I welcome the tabling of the Correctional Services Department's annual report to obtain those details in full.

Under the present administration we have also seen a staggering increase in escapes from our prisons. Prison escapes have increased dramatically from eight escapes in 1981-82—although the previous Minister would have us believe that escapes were somehow higher during the Tonkin Government—to 20 escapes in 1990-91 and 1991-92. A total of 139 prisoners have escaped from our prisons during the Labor decade. During that time we have also seen the average cost of keeping a person in prison skyrocket by a staggering 242 per cent, from \$19 000 in 1981-82 to \$65 000 in 1991-92.

During the Estimates Committees I was also alarmed to have revealed that videos portraying sex and violence are shown in our prisons to an audience that includes rapists, child molesters and violent criminals, and by the Minister's admission that no consideration is given to the nature of material shown or given to that audience. If we are to regard our prisons as places not simply of detention for punishment and public protection but also as institutions for rehabilitation, it is vital that the same material that may have contributed to their crime in the first place is not freely available to them.

The then Minister chose to dismiss my claims as being nothing new. I persisted in my endeavours to have something done about the material being shown, and my endeavours have been supported by groups such as the Offenders' Aid Rehabilitation Service (OARS), by the Police Association, by prison chaplains and by prison

staff. It is absolutely vital that that material is no longer available to our prisoners, and I call on the new Minister to ensure that censorship of videos shown to prisoners is put in place immediately. I have been further alarmed since revealing and airing these concerns publicly to find that prisoners are even obtaining X-rated material through Canberra and Northern Territory mailing houses, and that material is also shown freely in some of our prisons. That is not an acceptable situation: it is not what our public expects to see.

Time is not available for me to describe the numerous revelations of the Estimates Committees. Quite clearly the things I have highlighted so far, and others I will highlight in the future in this Parliament, reveal that we have a Government in chaos, that we have inadequate resources for the police, that inadequate attention is paid to computing projects, that our prison system is in chaos, and that the Department of Emergency Services has been providing inadequate resources and attention to our fire services. Something needs to be done.

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

Mr MEIER (Goyder): I had the pleasure of serving on various Estimates Committees during the two week period, including the Ministries of Labour; Occupational Health and Safety; Transport; Correctional Services; Industry, Trade and Technology; Agriculture; Fisheries; and Ethnic Affairs. I also had the opportunity to observe the Estimates Committees for some of the other portfolio areas. At the time I was serving on those Committees I was thinking that this would be the last time I would see many of the then Ministers as Ministers, because Premier Arnold had announced that there would be a major shakeup of the Cabinet. He said there would be a new era, a new direction. I thought that at least we would not have to put up with some of these same hackneyed answers or have to worry about calling for proper policies, because many of the Ministers would disappear.

Imagine my surprise when the Premier announced his so-called new look Cabinet last week, shortly after the Estimates Committees, when we saw the same old faces, with two additional faces from the Independent Labor group. No new Government Ministers as such. The former Premier (the member for Ross Smith) had stepped aside, as had the former Deputy Premier (Hon. Don Hopgood). Apart from their replacements, we saw the same faces in the ministry. I hope that the public of South Australia can see very clearly that this is not a different or changed Government, because the Premier has been the number three man for many years. He has presided over various activities and helped preside over others that the former Premier used to oversee. He has known all the time exactly what has been going on with the State Bank, SGIC, Scrimber and the many other failures over which this Government has presided. The tragedy is that, whilst this Premier has come in as someone new to that position, he has been quite happy to continue to push and promote the budget that former Premier Bannon handed down—a budget that was universally condemned by the media, the economic commentators, the Opposition and others who have some knowledge and regard for this State.

This budget increases taxes by some 10.4 per cent which certainly will worsen our already shocking 11.7 per cent unemployment rate. In fact, the new unemployment figure would have been released but five minutes ago. As at last month's figures, the recorded jobless figure for this State was 84 700, but we know that we have well in excess of 100 000 unemployed. In fact, this State has the worst unemployment figure in mainland Australia. We have by far the highest financial institutions duty and BAD tax in the nation, and I said a lot on that when we were debating the BAD tax Bill. Only the other day I was speaking with a very important financial firm in this State and in relation to financial institutions duty they said, 'We do most of our business through Queensland these days; we have for some years and will continue to do so.' This Government cannot see the disgraceful situation that is occurring, that our businesses have to go interstate—

Mr De Laine: What about the GST?

Mr MEIER: The member for Price interrupts and asks, 'What about the GST?' I do not know what that has to do with FID. I am talking about FID, the financial institutions duty—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I would ask the honourable member to address the Chair and not worry about interjections.

Mr MEIER: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The GST is part of a very important package—the Fightback package—the one package that gives some hope to this nation and State. The sooner it is implemented the sooner we will be able to start—

Members interjecting:

Mr MEIER: It is funny to hear the interjections from the other side, which I will ignore, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MEIER: They are interjections from people who have helped preside over the worst economic decline in the nation's history under their policies. The Liberal Party, with the new Fightback policy, seeks to reform and renew our economy, yet members opposite attack us because they want to see the State go down further. It is absolutely disgraceful. Under the policies of members opposite we have seen more people unemployed than ever before. We have seen industry go downhill. We have seen record bankruptcies. Yet, members opposite continue to hold on to those old, worn out, tired policies. Thankfully people are starting to see through their camouflaged tricks.

As I was saying, we have the highest FID and BAD taxes in the nation. We probably will have the highest petrol tax, because that still has to come before us—and I will not debate that issue now. It is probably one of the worst measures that this Government could think about bringing in. I do not know how many constituents have approached Government members, but I have had a huge number of people approach me saying, 'This must be an idiotic Government which would seek to introduce an increase in petrol tax.' Unfortunately this Government cannot see that it will do more harm to this State and in turn to this nation. We have massive WorkCover charges, and the second highest electricity charges in the nation because of the Government's rip-off of ETSA.

Mr Venning: It's a disgrace.

Mr MEIER: Indeed, and to top off the disgrace, as the member for Custance said, the new Premier has presided over the loss of 38 000 jobs, including 21 000 manufacturing jobs in the past two years—a Premier who has allowed our share of national exports to fall to between 5.6 per cent and 6.4 per cent compared to our population share of 8.4 per cent. He should be taking the responsibility. He should have resigned together with the Hon. John Bannon. If he had any courage, any semblance of self-respect, he would have resigned at the same time. But, no, he is quite happy to continue in his own particular line.

More and more the Premier is using Arnold-speak, as the paper has identified it, to try to run rings around anyone who dares question what he has done or what he is doing. Of course, he is aided in this shabby little deal by the Deputy Premier, none other than the member for Whyalla (Hon. Frank Blevins), the man who at the very outset said that South Australian employers are too stupid to cross the road. He is not scared to make his views known; he is not scared to say what he thinks about employers in this State. 'They are too stupid to cross the road,' according to Mr Blevins. What a way to go. What hope is there for this State when we have the Deputy Premier lambasting the very sector that could help to get this nation under way?

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: Sit down, John.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MEIER: The budget is, as was identified earlier, one of the worst budgets this State has seen and, unfortunately, Premier Arnold has not seen fit in his wisdom to change it at all. I refer first to labour and occupational health and safety. I have said in the House that something simple could be done to help overcome the many back injuries sustained in this State. In fact, members should realise that the incidence of new back injuries sustained in the workplace cost Australia in excess of \$4 billion a year in actual injury costs and loss of productivity, and for South Australia this translates to a \$344 million loss a year. That is a massive loss from back injuries that any Government, even this Government, would want to try to limit.

The Government identified in the Estimates Committees that it has spent about \$1 million in printing and distributing manuals on workers' safety. It is fine to distribute the manuals, and \$1 million has been spent on that, but has any real progress been made in actually eliminating back injuries? The Minister indicated, amongst other things, that the aim was to try to have workplaces redesigned so that the number of back injuries would be minimised, and I applaud that. However, how long will that take and, secondly, how many workplaces will be redesigned to minimise the number of back injuries? I think, for example, of those who work on the highways under the Department of Road Transport. We will not be able to change that workplace. We will not be able to lift roads up to a level where people can repair them at waist height: obviously, people will have to continue to bend over. I think of the E&WS Department employees and the work that they have to do.

It is in this regard that I highlighted to the Minister an invention patented both here in Australia and in New Zealand, that is, the Tolai back support, which is made in

Gawler by a constituent of the member for Light. This invention is easy to wear and has had loud approval from many different organisations. I refer in the first instant to the Institute for Fitness Research and Training, which strongly recommends the use of the Tolai support as a preventive measure in heavy manual handling work and as an aid to rehabilitation for those workers involved in manual work who have musculo-skeletal injuries, particularly to the back. The executive of the Australian Workers Union considers that this device could be a useful addition to safety equipment that may reduce injury to workers, and that union would encourage workers to test the equipment.

Mr Venning interjecting:

Mr MEIER: The member for Custance interjects and asks whether I have one, and the answer is 'Yes'; I have used it and I can give it my personal recommendation as well. The type of work I undertake is gardening, when I have a chance, and a little bit of so-called back-breaking work, but nothing compared with what many day-to-day workers undertake. If it helps me, I am sure it will help others. However, I am interested not in my personal opinion about this but in that of the experts. For example, the Australian Building and Construction Workers Federation says that it would recommend this harness not only to anyone with a back problem but also to anyone whose job consists of continuous bending and who does not wish to have a back problem. What a recommendation from the Australian Building and Construction Workers Federation!

There have been other statements from around the country to the effect that this is a magnificent item. It has been patented in Australia and New Zealand. I was terribly disappointed in the Minister of Labour, who could only say that he was not in the business of promoting one item versus another. I acknowledge that, but he spends \$1 million on printing and distributing manuals on workers' safety and, if he spent half that amount on trying a device such as this, not only would he help to reduce the \$344 million loss caused by back injuries but also he would help a South Australian company. Perhaps he wants this company to do what so many other companies have done, and that is to go overseas and have the thing made there.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr MEIER: I do not know that the price would be much cheaper.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr MEIER: If the device is cheaper, the price would be reduced, exactly. I had hoped that the Minister responsible for labour would be someone different, but we still have the same Minister of Labour. On looking at the front bench, we still see the same faces—nothing has changed. There have been a few changes in portfolios, but that is all.

The Hon. B.C. Eastick interjecting:

Mr MEIER: The member for Light asks whether I am suggesting that the Minister is inactive. I do not think it is necessary for me to suggest that, because the member for Light and my other colleagues would know that only too well.

The member for Bragg referred to an article in the *Advertiser* of 29 August headed 'Union warning over WorkCover spying'. In that article, Mr Paul Noack, the

Secretary of the Vehicle Builders Employers Federation, said that WorkCover investigators' powers were 'quite draconian' and that, if a member of his union spotted an investigator, the union would take matters into its own hands. He said:

We will be sending a car-load of VBEF members to confront them (the private investigators) and follow them to their homes.

What an outrageous threat!

Mr Venning: Gestapo stuff.

Mr MEIER: Gestapo stuff, exactly. When asked what he was going to do about this, the Minister said that it was none of his business and that people were allowed to make their own comments. We wonder why the number of work injuries has sky-rocketed in this State, why employers are not game to set up new industries here and why things are going downhill when we have that sort of intimidation. Surely, at the very least, the Minister could have asked the police to investigate this matter to ascertain whether those statements were or were not made and, if they were, to follow them up, because employers will not be impressed that that type of statement can be made without any retribution. I am unimpressed with the whole area of labour and occupational health and safety.

With respect to transport, unfortunately the 20 minutes allocated to me is all too brief. I was very disappointed that the then Minister, the Hon. Frank Blevins, the fellow who calls employers 'too stupid to cross the road', could not see any need for a north-south freeway or motorway. Country residents, particularly those of us who come into Adelaide via the northern entrance, despair when we hit traffic light after traffic light and heavy traffic and cannot get through to the southern suburbs. It is an indictment on this Government that it sold so much of the land for the proposed north-south corridor. I am delighted, therefore, that the Chamber of Commerce and Industry has published a pamphlet entitled 'A North-South Motorway for Adelaide'. The introduction states:

The chamber's north-south motorway proposal is a new concept quite different from any previous proposal suggested (and abandoned) by Government. Adelaide has magnificent roads in the new outer suburbs but these feed into congested roads in the established inner suburbs.

Time will bring chaos to that road system, making Adelaide less attractive for business investment. The chamber believes construction of the north-south motorway is essential for Adelaide to remain a viable city in the 21st century.

I applaud those comments. Indeed, we must have a north-south motorway. I urge anyone interested in this issue to contact the chamber and to study its proposals. It has my full endorsement.

I guess I am one of those people who gets more frustrated than the average person in stop-start traffic. I have travelled through many overseas cities where they have motorways or freeways crossing from one side of the city to the other, allowing virtually unrestricted movement over large distances in a very short period of time. This latest proposal is probably the best compromise we could arrive at given that the Government has sold off the millions of dollars worth of land that had been acquired over many years by previous Governments.

Many other areas have been covered by my colleagues. Correctional services issues were well covered by the shadow Minister, the member for Bright, and I endorse his remarks. There are many comments I would have

liked to make in relation to the agriculture and fisheries area, but hopefully people can refer back to the Estimates Committees and see just what was said there. We have had an interesting Estimates Committees session, but unfortunately it appears that the mistakes that were highlighted during the Committees will not be acknowledged.

The Hon. H. ALLISON (Mount Gambier): First, I offer you, Mr Deputy Speaker, congratulations upon your accession to that position. Looking at the Government benches and reading the budget and the Appropriation Bill, to which we are now speaking, one has to realise that on the Government benches we see essentially the same faces in different places. One has to wonder whether this is not in fact a deckchair-led recovery, probably based on the assumption that if the *Titanic* does go down—and all the signs are there that it will; we have been warning about the icebergs for the past six or eight years—at least the deckchairs will float.

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. H. ALLISON: We have a Government which apparently is ruled by Independents: when the Independents sneeze the Government thinks that it has caught influenza; when an Independent scratches his head the Government checks itself for fleas; and when the Independent tail wags the whole ALP dog seems to shake. The Independent rump is well and truly in control. However, my sympathy really lies with the Government back bench, which must be looking at the positions as they appear with the resignations of the Premier and Deputy Premier and wondering when it will be able to aspire to those positions, to which any ambitious member of Parliament surely wishes to aspire.

Mr Gunn: What about Ms Hurley?

The Hon. H. ALLISON: That is an interesting interjection from my colleague the member for Eyre. I was speculating on whether the member for Napier is still smiling, despite the fact that earlier this morning he said he was not; he seems to have a perpetual smile on his face. I wonder whether the honourable member is going to hand out two-sided how to vote cards—bi-sexual, non-discriminatory cards with a male on one side and a female on the other side. The mind boggles at what may happen, but that is down the track.

I suppose one could feel more sympathetic towards the member for Gilles, for example. He is a loyal and faithful servant who recently heard that Ms Hurley may in fact be given precedence when the next vacancy comes up in another place. One has to be fair and look after one's own colleagues. My sympathies lie with the member for Gilles, who has given loyal and faithful service and who, when he looks at the rapid rise to power made by the member for Hartley and the member for Elizabeth, must be wondering why he did not resign at the same time and he would have been sitting up there with them. However, the rewards for loyalty are not always just, and I simply hope he gets his just deserts in due course.

One generally looks at the large things, and everybody in South Australia (that is, every man, woman and child) would be aware that this budget leaves them with a personal debt of \$6 500—a debt which I am sure they would much prefer to go against a car or the mortgage so

that they would be paying it off for themselves. But what are they doing? They are paying off the interest—not even the principal—on the State Bank deficit, SGIC, Beneficial Finance—on a whole host of things.

Mr Matthew interjecting:

The Hon. H. ALLISON: Yes, \$25 000, as my colleague points out on a family of four. That would go a long way towards satisfying the mortgage in record time. Instead, they are paying off these deficits to the State Bank, and everyone in South Australia is aware of that. It is the magnitude of the debt which stands out. I thought I would have a look at what is termed in Canberra jargon as macro-economics and micro-economics. Nobody knows what they mean. If a poor man owes \$100, that is macro-economics.

The Hon. J.P. Trainer: Macro's had a furniture store in Hindley Street.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: Macro's had a furniture store in Hindley Street. There is a free plug. I am sure they will be very grateful for that. It may be the only trade they get from the Labor Party this year, but at least we got a freebie from the honourable former Speaker.

Yesterday, as an example of where this Government is going, four documents were tabled. The first one was a ministerial statement from the Minister for Primary Industries. We will forgive him more mispronouncing Parachilna: he said 'Paracilna', but he was probably thinking of paraquat, diquat and those insecticides and herbicides which were well and truly in his mind with regard to locusts—

The Hon. T.R. Groom: It is the Italian pronunciation.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: It's the Italian pronunciation. Very good! But, apart from that, he did not seem to pick up the four spelling errors—and I am sure *Hansard* will do a much better job with them. Juvenile was spelled with a double 'l': 'juvenile'; that is the French version, of course; locusts was in the plural when it should have been in the singular; cereal, as in grain crops, was spelled 'ceral'; and over on page 2, we finished up with commission with one 's' instead of two. Not bad for a first ministerial press release. Perhaps we should blame the staff or the computer. But a good tool always blames the workman—that is what I was always told when I was doing my carpentry apprenticeship. I have finished with that document.

The twentieth annual report of the Ombudsman was handed down. Every member received a copy. I looked at page 22 to see a photograph of a feedlot. The photograph was not a photograph: it was simply a caption. Obviously, it was a very vacant feedlot, because there is nothing on that page. As we move through the volume, we find page 28 photograph, nothing there; page 39, another caption, nothing there; and so on, pages 122, 145, and 146—even to the extent that the photograph of the delegates and that of Her Excellency opening the conference were certainly not in the volume.

On inquiry, I was advised—somewhat speculatively I believe by a member of the staff—that it might have been that sufficient money had not been provided to enable the photographs to go in. Penny-pinching indeed! This is an official document, an official Government publication. But that is not the end of it by any means.

We had the twenty-third Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference, and that was a great function to be held in

South Australia. The document itself is admirable; it contains very comprehensive reports, and I was expressly interested in three or four of the topics; I wanted to read them. So, I looked at the table of contents, only to find as I went through it that 15 out of the 18 items on the table of contents were wrongly paginated. Items on pages 1, 2 and 12 were okay, but then after the heading 'Independent speakership' on page 13 all the pagination is incorrect. So, we have to rifle through the book to find the correct pagination. It is another Government document, and it may be that the right button on the computer was not punched to change the pagination. My own computer does that.

Then, we get to the State Bank annual reports and accounts, a document one would expect to be absolutely true and faithful. Maybe I am nitpicking, but these are accounts of an organisation that is several billion dollars in the red. It has recently turned over a new leaf and we have the good and bad bank, and those are the combined reports but, as we look through them, we find inconsistencies in reporting. Sometimes losses are bracketed in the column to show that they are deductions rather than additions; sometimes, instead, the negatives are left as straight figures and the positives are bracketed, so that anyone reading through the document and thinking there is a standard form of setting out accounts would be disappointed. I refer to page 82, which refers to 'Elimination of inter-entity profit/(loss), relates primarily to inter-entity dividends, the charging of interest on inter-entity loans and is allocated to the following entities.'

It is good jargon, to start off with; reading it, one would need more than a passing knowledge of accountancy. Instead of the elimination of inter-entity being losses in brackets and the positives being the clear figure, the profit is bracketed so that the \$756 115 at the foot looks like a credit but in fact it is a debit. I would not mind if that were the consistent approach through the book, but we have debits and credits bracketed and unbracketed alternately in various sections of the publication. I have marked them and put comments on them. On page 81 we have notes ranging from lower case (a) down to (n) and on the same page we have a note for the very first item—'Elimination of inter-entity profit/(loss)' and we have a note (o). That is not included. I do not know what note (o) is; it is omitted entirely from the very page where it should appear, yet that is not available.

Another thing that worries me (and it is simply sloppiness, bad proof reading or something) is the page that shows the numbers of officers who have been retired from the State Bank over the past two years. There are dollar values, and one would imagine that at the top of a column expressing dollar values it would state 'dollars' and then show thousands or millions or whatever. I would expect that, at the top of a column that expressed numbers of staff, it would simply state that it was a numerical table instead of a dollar table, but on two successive pages in this presentation that does not happen and instead we have the number of officers who are being retrenched or who are still employed by the State Bank listed variously under (a), numerical columns and under (b), dollar (thousand) columns and, lower down on two consecutive pages we have a change from dollars being under numbers and just the converse of what one

found on the preceding page. One does not expect that sort of sloppy presentation from an organisation as reputable, even if it is having problems, as the State Bank.

There are a number of other anomalies or simply misrepresentations near the end of the book on page 92 where, under 'Executive incomes' we have a total of 38 employed by the bank at various salaries between \$100 001 and \$380 000. Immediately underneath it says, 'Total income received or due and receivable from the bank and its controlled entities by executive officers whose income exceeded \$100 000 and who still held office at 30 June 1992.' The first column says 6 173. Nowhere on that page does it say whether they are dollars, thousands of dollars or millions of dollars, and there are four columns. On page 93 the converse is true. At the top of the page we have the figure in thousands of dollars and then we have the number of executive officers who vacated office prior to 30 June. Obviously they are not in thousands of dollars but are individuals. At the bottom of the page we see figures that are supposed to be in thousands of dollars and represent the income received or due and receivable by those officers who retired. One might observe that there are still 38 officers receiving \$100 000 or more in the State Bank as at 30 June 1992, with 29 of them on salaries of up to \$200 000 and nine on salaries between \$210 000 and \$380 000.

I am not clear from perusing the accounts about the two figures relating to retirement. There is the consolidated number of executive officers who vacated office prior to 30 June 1992. Prior to 30 June 1991 there were 13 and the figure was \$4.782 million paid or due to them. On 30 June 1992 that figure had come down to \$3.219 million. Whether that is a consolidation so that you add the \$4.7 million and \$3.2 million and come out with a little short of \$9 million, or whether the \$3.2 million is the balance remaining to be paid and is to be deducted from the \$4.78 million under the 1991 column, I do not know. It is not clear.

I have been through this report quickly as I had to when preparing notes yesterday. I was far from satisfied with the presentation as one loses confidence in a report if one finds sloppiness. Having had four documents, including a ministerial statement, all of which I perused quickly yesterday as I thought that I would be speaking yesterday afternoon, I found that they all contained errors and wondered how many Government documents could be trusted. It means that one has to go through documents much more carefully and painstakingly than one should have to. We should be able to trust documents brought before this Parliament as they go out into the public arena and should be absolutely true and faithful.

I had intended to develop two further themes, first, on the railway services within South Australia with Federal and State involvement and, secondly, on the Mount Gambier hospital redevelopment. For the preceding 15 to 20 years we appear to have been more preoccupied with the construction of a new hospital or refurbishment of the old one than we have with maintenance of existing services on a par with services offered in other parts of the State such as the Iron Triangle. As time is running short, rather than develop the themes most ephemerally in

the couple of minutes left to me, I will leave it for a future occasion. I support the motion.

Mr GUNN (Eyre): I, too, wish to add my congratulations, Sir, on your assuming the role of Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees, and wish you well in that role. This debate allows members to address the responses by Ministers to various matters raised during the budget debate. This budget has been brought before this Parliament at a time of great economic uncertainty, when members of the community generally are concerned about their future.

This Parliament has a responsibility to ensure that everything possible is done to make life easier for the community, to give encouragement to those who want to invest and to those who want to get a job in order to maintain their family and to be productive on behalf of this State. We have had a great deal of debate and discussion in recent weeks about the policies the Federal Opposition may or may not implement in the year 2000, but we have heard nothing from the Ministers or from the Labor backbench about the economic policies the current Federal Government is pursuing, which will decimate various industries in South Australia.

The results of this budget and the mismanagement of the State Bank, South Australian Timber Corporation and a number of other enterprises have created a situation in which services in my electorate are being curtailed; facilities are being downgraded and employment is being reduced. The first example I cite to this House draws a comparison with what is happening today to farm incomes. I received a press release from the Federal Minister for Primary Industries and Energy, which stated that the deterioration of the economic situation for farmers over the past decade could be highlighted by comparing the replacement costs of new equipment in relation to income from farm produce in constant 1992 prices.

For example, an 84 horsepower tractor—which is a very small tractor; not too many broad acre farmers would have an 84 horsepower tractor—was worth \$24 000 in 1979-80 compared with \$58 000 today. This corresponds to the income earned from 158 tonnes of wheat in 1979-80 compared to 307 tonnes in 1990-91, to get the same amount of money. The figures for wool are similar: it would have taken 56 bales then and it now takes 93 bales of wool to gain the same amount of income. It can be seen how people's incomes have contracted although their costs have increased. They have improved their efficiency, but Governments appear to have failed clearly to understand what their decisions are doing to the community.

We are told that we must encourage tourism in South Australia, and I agree with that. There is great potential for tourism in the northern part of South Australia, but the Government has removed the Department of Road Transport gangs from Marla and Yunta, so fewer people will be employed to maintain and construct new roads in that part of the State. As well, the Government has got rid of all the casual staff. No casual staff are being employed by the Department of Road Transport. I quote from a letter I received from a constituent at Yunta, as follows:

I am writing on behalf of the members of Zone 16 of the South Australian Farmers Federation. Zone 16 comprises a large area of the State on either side of the Barrier Highway. We have recently learned that the roadwork plant that was based in Yunta and serviced our area has been withdrawn. There will now only be at Yunta a smaller grader that will do shoulder grading on the Barrier Highway and be available for some emergency work. It is intended that contractors will be engaged to do emergency work. The Flinders Ranges plant is to maintain the unsealed roads in our district but will provide a less frequent service. This arrangement would seem unrealistic since the previous plant scarcely managed to cover the district.

That is what is happening there. As well, as you would know, Mr Deputy Speaker, this Government tried to take away the primary producer registration concessions. It is interesting to see if it will try to do that again. I will remind the people of South Australia in those areas at the appropriate time about that decision because they should not be allowed to forget. Then we look at what is happening in places such as Coober Pedy, where more services are being withdrawn. I have received a copy of a letter from the Coober Pedy Area School addressed to the Director, Department of Motor Registration. It states:

Dear Madam/Sir,

We wish to express our great concern and a strong protest over the new arrangements regarding bus licences obtained at remote centres. The 300 km restriction will severely disrupt our programs. Many parents and teachers come to Coober Pedy, Marla, Mintabie and Oodnadatta with a car licence. The schools encourage them to obtain a bus licence to assist excursions taken in the school bus which are aimed at overcoming various effects of isolation on the students' education. This is at great extra effort for no extra pay by them. To introduce the restriction of requiring an additional test at Port Augusta to then perform these charitable deeds is further disadvantaging our students and will ultimately reduce the number of distant excursions they will be able to participate in. We suggest you consider four alternatives.

1. that the distance restriction on bus licenses be removed or increased to 1 000 kms.

2. that the bus licences obtained in the school bus be unrestricted in distance but restricted to driving for school purposes.

3. that a testing officer visit Coober Pedy and other remote centres once per month to upgrade distance restricted licences at no cost to the licensee.

4. that for school purposes, the distance is unrestricted when two drivers are carried and share the driving. We look forward to some positive action on this issue which will address this serious disadvantage.

Yours sincerely

Mr Wayne Ferguson

For The Country Areas Program Far North Local Action Committee.

That is just one other disadvantage my constituents are suffering. I have a number of other examples in relation to these difficulties.

I will now turn to what the Government intends to do about hospitals. My colleague the member for Chaffey has been concerned about hospitals in his area. Currently there is a proposal from the Health Commission to downgrade the facilities at Leigh Creek. People in these isolated areas should not be penalised because of the financial incompetence of this Government, but that is what is happening. Not only will the Government try to take away those services, but it is now trying to interfere with the independent operation of local country hospital boards. We will not be party to that sort of activity. More services will be taken away, and I will have more to say about that matter on another occasion.

People are expressing grave concern about other facilities in relation to education. I received the following

letter a couple of weeks ago from the Ceduna Area School:

The members of the School Council of Ceduna are most concerned at the lack of support our school gets from the Guidance officer, based in Port Lincoln.

The principal and staff of our school, have done their best to identify students with learning problems, only to be told that they are not a priority for special education support. As concerned parents, we believe in main streaming students with disabilities, both physical and mental, providing it is not to the disadvantage of students who have learning difficulties.

Present Education Department policy would appear to be only supporting 4 per cent of students with 'learning problems', those in the physical and mental areas, rather than the 11 per cent that is believed to exist in total and includes students who have learning problems.

At our school, parents have become so frustrated waiting to have their child assessed by a guidance officer that they have taken them to Adelaide to private clinics. This appears to exclude them from school support, as the feeling from those in special education area is: they (the companies like SPELD etc.) are a private group with no educational base and therefore don't know what they are doing in the educational arena! Therefore their findings are not valid and we still have to wait for the guidance officers assessment or validation of their findings, before anything can be done.

We don't believe our children should be penalised in this way, either through lack of service, or not filling the criteria (that is, if they can read or write, no matter at what level, then they are not a priority, for either assessment or a place in special education support).

We believe our experience at Ceduna is not unique, with some schools on the West Coast not having seen a guidance officer for more than three years. Our school so far has been visited once in the past two years, with a further appointed visit time made, which was not kept. This is despite the fact that 8-10 requests for guidance involvement with students have been made.

I call on the Minister to rectify this matter as soon as possible, and I will be providing him with this information. I received a further letter from the Ceduna school council which states:

Following our conversation . . . I am writing to you with concerns of school council on the staffing of our school as it appears it will be for 1993. Our concerns are as follows: it is presently being indicated that our Aboriginal education resource teachers positions, of which we have two, will be reduced to one. For a school of our size, I believe we need three AERTs to support Aboriginal students, based on a 1:50 ratio, not a reduction. It must be remembered that these AERTs do not work in classrooms with a full class but support Aboriginal students individually with personal problems and some limited school work.

We are getting no additional staffing for our transient and mobile students. As of the middle of the year our school had 201 transfers in and out of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. With a student population of approximately 570, that constitutes a turnover in excess of 30 per cent. This places a strain on the staff who are trying to develop programs for our local long-term students and yet are still responsible for developing a curriculum for the new students who arrive from widely ranging areas.

For this area our school urgently needs additional staff to cater for the transition of these students and to allow programs to be developed for them. Last year we were given a target of 3.5 extra staff (which was not provided) but I believe in discussion with the school principal we could get away with two (one primary and one secondary). Other schools (Carlton Primary, Lincoln South Primary, etc.) I am told were provided with additional staff to cater for their transient students, but Ceduna and Coober Pedy were told that due to the fact they were area schools they could accommodate their needs from their normal staffing—and so received none.

I find this objectionable because it means that 'the staffing section of the Education Department' are telling our Principal that a year 12 teacher or any of our secondary staff should pick up primary or junior primary, transition problems and

development programs that will allow them to fit into Ceduna Area School at a year R-7 level . . .

That outlines some of the problems that constituents in my current electorate are having. In relation to future employment, I have had drawn to my attention—and I have spoken about this before—that the State and the Federal Governments have been unable or unwilling to accept that there will be drastic reductions in the number of people who are employed in the railways in South Australia, in particular in Port Augusta. It is clear that there is grave public concern and agitation in Port Augusta and its surrounding areas about the policies of the National Rail Corporation. It appears that the State Government has not taken notice of the information that it has been provided with or that it has not been willing or able to assess the problem and do anything about it.

The real problem is that unless something is done Port Augusta will end up like Peterborough. Peterborough was a viable railway town, but the railway workshops have been closed and the facilities downgraded and the town has suffered. It would appear, from what has been put forward publicly, and by reading the documents that have been provided to me with the corporate plan of the National Rail Corporation, that Port Augusta is heading down the same track. An article in the *Transcontinental* of 23 September under the heading 'NRC enterprise agreement soon' states:

The announcement has been welcomed by CRU spokesperson Mr Rodney Simpkins, but Mr Simpkins was sceptical of its benefit to Port Augusta rail workers. 'Obviously some things will fall in place as a result of this (enterprise agreement), and we might be a lot closer to knowing what our future holds,' Mr Simpkins said. 'But it remains, as we've heard from fairly sound sources, that we are looking at a total Port Augusta work force of 300 to 500, and 500 is being generous. So, while we can welcome that its (enterprise agreement) going ahead, I don't think it is going to bring us (Port Augusta work force) much joy.'

No one has contradicted that statement. I want the State Minister of Transport to find out what is the future of AN in South Australia. What is the future of places like Islington? What is the future of the railway workers at Port Augusta? What is going to happen to centres like Tarcoola and Cook? Do they have a future and what are the job prospects?

An interesting letter appears in this week's *Transcontinental*, and obviously the people who are mentioned are not particularly happy. It says:

Unions demand ALP support. Once again the rail workers of Port Augusta are indebted to Mr Alex Alexander for his recent efforts on our behalf. Mr Alexander has been prepared to take on the ruling Labor Party, of which he himself is a long-term member, in an effort to highlight the sorry state regarding the likely future for rail workers in Port Augusta and indeed the shaky future of the city of Port Augusta. The tragedy of the current situation is that our local politicians have not shown a similar measure of commitment in their efforts on our behalf.

Most would remember the rally held earlier this year to bring the subject of increasing job losses in Port Augusta to the attention of the authorities. Approximately three weeks after the rally the Combined Rail Unions brought the local representatives of the three tiers of Government together in an attempt to tackle the employment problems of Port Augusta. At the conclusion of the meeting it was agreed a series of follow-up meetings should take place to outline progress made in attempting to arrest the decline. And what of the follow-up meetings? They have not taken place!

It appears the whole thing has become too hard for our local politicians. We have not heard from them, perhaps they are dead or have retired. Which begs the question who is collecting their

more than generous pay packets? In any event, we can only echo the sentiments expressed by Mr Alexander, namely that the Governments, both Federal and State, would need to really pull something out of their hats to regain the support they have lost amongst the rail workers of Port Augusta and they should be aware that time is rapidly running out for this to happen.

The letter is signed by Mr Scharenberg (AWU), Mr K. Woolford (ASU), Mr D. Hamp (MEWU), Mr R. Grimes (ETU), Mr G. Elliot (P&GUE), Mr J. Brown (FIMEE) and Mr R. Simpkins (ARU). It is an indictment of the lack of action by this State Government with respect to the future of that city. I would pose the question to the Government: what will happen to those people if the National Rail Corporation is successful? I believe that there is nothing wrong with either State or Federal Governments being involved in ensuring that people have long-term employment contracts because the best social welfare that anyone can have is a job. No matter how much money the Government pumps into social welfare, unemployment, training or other support facilities, at the end of the day there is only one thing that matters, that is, if you have got a job. If you do not have a job it is not very satisfactory and will certainly not do anything for the future of the local community or the young people living there.

I am particularly concerned about the future of northern and regional South Australia. I have already demonstrated in the course of my speech that the services in rural and regional South Australia are declining, whether it is in the field of education, transport, or health facilities, and the people of this State are paying a very heavy price for the Government's financial incompetence. There is a very simple solution: if the people of South Australia want more of the same they should vote for the Labor Party. In the electorate of Eyre if they vote for the current member for Stuart they will get more of the same. If they want a change they can vote for the Liberal Party, they can support me and they will have a change and they will get some sound representation.

I can say to the people in the northern part of South Australia that I will not be sitting on the back bench nodding my head and saying yes to whatever the Government does. I give a solid undertaking that as their member I will make sure the Government of the day gets off its backside and stands up for the people in the isolated areas and the regional centres. I will make sure that the Government tells the Commonwealth Government what we need, like Sir Thomas Playford used to do when he put South Australia first, no matter who the Prime Minister was. We all know how Sir Thomas stood up to the then Commonwealth Government when he refused to sign the Snowy Mountains agreement because it was not in the interests of the South Australian people and he won.

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

Mr VENNING (Custance): I, too, would like to congratulate you, Mr Deputy Speaker, on your elevation to office. However, it is a bit of a pity, because I think you ought to have been on the front bench as you are a very loyal and hard working member with great capacity. I feel sorry that, the way things happened, you have got the booby prize, but at least you have been recognised.

At this time, nothing could give me more pleasure than to stand in my place and be positive about my response to the Appropriation Bill following the Estimates Committees. I hope I am judged to be a naturally positive person, but it is nigh on impossible to be so when we see the situation in South Australia. In fact, I think it would be a dereliction of my duty if I did not stand in my place and say my piece for the people whom I represent, that is, the people in the Mid North of South Australia in the wider electorate of Custance.

I will begin on a positive note. I welcome the change of premiership at last. The new Premier has had a victory or two over the Caucus. I welcome the two new faces on the front bench. As my colleague the member for Mount Gambier said, the two Independents are having a lot of influence over the Government; he also said that, when the Independent tail wags, the whole Government dog shakes. There could be no more appropriate words to describe the position.

Rather than having two new faces on the front bench, there should have been five and you, Sir, should have been one of them. There are three well-known and obvious non-performers on the front bench, and I am sure that the Premier—and, indeed, the former Premier—would have loved to move those people out. However, he was not able to do that because the powers behind the scene do not allow the Leader to choose a team. I think that is quite wrong. It is probably partly the cause of the problem with budgeting in this State, because the best team should be picked. However, when it is done from outside, and when a person is not accountable to the House or to his Leader for his/her position, the system does not work, and it certainly does not work when it contains passengers such as the ones we have. I am sure the Premier would have been much happier to make a clean sweep and to bring five new faces to the front bench. To frame a budget in these times, we need the best team, not one that has the numbers in the back room. We are in a crisis, and we need crisis management, not soft soap or the appeasing of cronies or factions within the labour movement.

As I said yesterday, I welcome the new Minister of Primary Industries. His style of being a fearless fighter is well known throughout the State, and I think people in the agriculture industry will appreciate that. He has already intimated to me that he wants to be very quick off the mark and to get into the portfolio because of his interest in agriculture. I am very interested in this new super ministry concept. However, I wonder why the Premier did not include lands in the Minister's portfolio and whether he will consider doing so, because I think that area goes naturally with that portfolio.

I also bring the new Minister's attention to a problem that exists in the department because it does not have a 'market analyst'. Until a few months ago, the department had a very good market analyst in Mr Robert Reese, but South Australia has lost him to ABARE in Canberra. I hope that the Minister when he settles in will address that problem, because what we need at the moment is independent market analysis. Mr Reese was a professional in his field, and he is very sorely missed. Farmers are not born marketers: they need advice and the department has supplied that in the past. So, I hope the Minister will consider this problem.

I congratulate the member for Elizabeth, the new Minister of Health—a very good portfolio for a new Minister to get his teeth into. The Independent member for Elizabeth occupied many parliamentary positions until yesterday, when he had to resign them, but I welcome him to the area of health, particularly as some tough decisions need to be made.

As a rural member of Parliament, my first question relates to the issue of country hospitals. Rural people are very concerned. I hope that the new Minister will solve or give us some help with the Blyth Hospital problem very shortly. The hospital needs to remain open; the community wants that hospital to be retained. I note that people from the Blyth Hospital were in the House today distributing an excellent submission. Their commitment is noted, and I hope the new Minister will make a decision quickly and in favour of retaining the Blyth Hospital.

To refer more particularly to the budget, which increases taxes by 10.4 per cent. One would think that, given the situation we are in today, this is not the way to go; it is quite ridiculous. It is not what a normal economist would do, nor is it what you, Sir, would do privately—that is, increase costs for everyone in this State. The figure of 84 700 jobless in August reflects the worst mainland unemployment level in Australia. That is a terrible figure. To top it off, we have the highest FID and BAD tax in the nation. This will transfer business out of the State; it is as easy as that. In these days of modern technology and facsimile machines, I can operate a bank account in Queensland just as easily as I can in Adelaide. It is a very bad situation. I will not be doing it, but I know of plenty of others who have and will. It is not a good thing for South Australian business at all.

We have the highest petrol tax and WorkCover charges and the second highest electricity charges because of the Government's rip-off of ETSA. It is deplorable to see, when we consider where South Australia used to be under the Playford Government—it was the most attractive place in Australia to do business; there were incentives for anyone to have a go. However, we see today that the wheel has turned full circle; it is completely the opposite now.

I have not yet fully comprehended myself that, of every dollar that every South Australian pays in tax, 63c goes in interest. I am waiting for someone to tell me that that is not right and that we have the calculations wrong, that I am dreaming or having a nightmare. That is frightening; it is staggering; and it is an indictment. If one were in business, one would have no choice—the banker would be calling; one would be out of business and the assets would be sold.

State assets that could be sold have already been sold; we no longer own the power stations, and our railways are being ripped up or sold off. What assets do we have left? Much of the land that was acquired for the MATS plan years ago has been sold. What assets have we left to put money back into the coffers? We have seen no real change since the member for Ross Smith left. As I said before, we have the same tired and failed old Ministers with a bit of window dressing of changed portfolios and two so-called Labor Independents.

Premier Arnold, as the Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology, presided over the loss of 38 000 jobs, including 21 000 in the manufacturing area. I was

involved in trying to stop that, but we were unsuccessful. Under that Minister we lost 21 000 jobs in his particular portfolio area of manufacturing. He allowed our share of national exports to fall to 5.6 per cent compared with our population share of 8.4 per cent. So, we are down the gurgler by 3 per cent in relation to other States. The Premier should take responsibility for criticism in the A.D. Little report that there was no industry policy in the past decade, except trying 'to shoot any bird that flies past'.

Deputy Premier and Treasurer Blevins was, of course, the Minister of Labour who introduced the disastrous WorkCover scheme; he was the Minister of Transport under whom we saw subsidies to the STA blow out to over \$150 million and patronage plummet; and he was the Minister of Finance responsible for the serious problems relating to public sector superannuation.

He has been Minister in charge of finance for the whole period of time of the State Bank debacle. To see him today as Treasurer is just a joke. Other ministerial non-performers—and it should not be very hard to realise who they are—who are still there include, Mr Klunder, who was involved in the Scrimber and New Zealand timber debacle; Ms Lenehan, the water rating and lack of development Minister; Gregory, the workers compensation Minister; and there are other lesser failures.

The State debt has increased from \$2 600 million when the ALP was elected in 1982 to \$7 300 million. I want to attack that first figure of \$2 600 million, which was supposedly inherited from the Tonkin Government. I checked that figure, and it is most unfair to say that the Tonkin Government left a legacy of \$2.6 billion, because it spent it on roads, and a large sum of that money was spent paying off Dunstan's debts; they cleaned the slate. It was the total debt of the State.

In those three years, they paid off \$100 million of Dunstan's debts, so on top of that they have borrowed only \$200 million in the following two years—\$100 million each year. That average is nothing; they borrowed that over the three years. In the three years after that, Mr Bannon borrowed \$1 billion, comprising \$300 million, \$400 million and \$300 million. How can one compare the figures? It is absolutely ridiculous for them to say that the Tonkin Government left us with a problem, because that Government was cleaning up their act. It left us with a lot of infrastructure; it built a lot of things. It got Roxby Downs and Port Bonython going. In those years that it was in, the Tonkin Government achieved so much more than this Government has achieved since. It makes me very cross just to hear that criticism.

As I said, the Tonkin Government took over a \$2.6 billion debt. That figure will rise to about \$8.8 billion by the end of this budget, and the total State liabilities are an horrendous \$13 billion now. Given our population and our industry base, I cannot see how we can ever pay it back. We are told by our industrious Federal Leader that this is the worldwide recession, the recession we had to have. But what about States such as Queensland? We should compare our performance with that of States such as Queensland. The architect of that was Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, and we know of the so-called problems that were there with the ex-Premier of Queensland. But he knew how to run a State. He was a shrewd businessman and he had shrewd businessmen in his

Cabinet. Look at Queensland today. They could always come down here and, in a firesale, take us over completely.

With all the so-called faults of the ex-Premier of Queensland, he knew how to run a State. When you look at our Government in South Australia, look for the expertise; look amongst the ranks for those with any experience in business; look amongst the ranks to see whether anyone has any Treasury, accounting or budgeting experience—it is absolutely bereft. It is absolutely bereft of any expertise in that area. This is what makes me wonder, when you have a complete system breakdown, how and why it should happen. Any Government purporting to govern a State or country, any management body, must have on board people who know what they are talking about, and this Government does not have any. I am waiting for any Government member to volunteer a name of one Government member who has had experience in any of these fields: nobody interjects and nobody offers me any names. It makes me so cross and so frustrated.

Other key points include hospitals in crisis. We have 9 000 plus on waiting lists. As you, Mr Speaker, would know, our education system is in crisis, and I refer members to a speech I made in this House three or four weeks ago. We have a new Minister of Education. Let us see what the new Minister is made of. She has been a fiery person and can be very strong willed. Let us see what she can do with the education portfolio because the arteries in the education system are completely blocked up. The previous Minister was not able to get the message through, and I tried several times to highlight problems. Let us see what the new Minister Lenehan can do with education, because she takes on a real problem there. More than anybody else, I will offer my cooperation and help to assist the Minister in getting hold of her portfolio and trying to arrest the crisis. We have other problems; we have increasing crime and little or no progress with the MFP, and that list goes on and on.

I want to direct my attention to the biggest aspect of the budget that will affect rural people, and that is the fuel tax increases. The Government is hypocritical. This 'born again' economic developing Government has just foisted on us the highest cost increase for everyone in South Australia. It affects business, private producers and every consumer in South Australia. We now have the highest tax on petrol of any State in Australia as well as higher costs for petrol and fuel, which then means higher costs for freight and higher costs for goods and services with a freight component built into them. Where is the extra money going—to local government, according to the budget papers, and also to the Environment Protection Authority. I am very concerned about the local government aspect in the Bannon budget speech, and I will quote as follows:

The other significant change concerns the establishment of a new tax base for local government by way of an increase in the rates of duty payable on petroleum products, the revenue from which will be made available for local government . . . In 1992-93 an estimated \$32.1 million will be raised and set aside for these purposes; the full year amount is \$42.7 million.

Will all the money go to local government? Who will be responsible for distributing it? Is the money guaranteed in the long term? What grants will local government lose?

My greatest worry is the special purpose grants that will probably be lost, and that implies a big impact on road building and maintenance in country areas, particularly at the moment with all the rain we have had, and we have lost or are losing our country road services. Local government is in crisis maintaining its roads, particularly with the court case we had a few weeks ago which handed down a very heavy penalty against local government because a person had an accident on a road that was judged to be substandard. We have many roads like that. I think that roads might have to be closed if this judgment is allowed to stand.

I am very concerned that local government will lose out in the end; it will be buying a pig in a poke. The State Government is renowned for passing responsibility for things on to local government and then withdrawing funding a year or two later. Local councils are left holding the baby. In the second reading explanation of the fuel Bill, only a passing message was made of this, namely, and I quote, 'additional levies for local government purposes'. That is all that was stated in the second reading explanation of that Bill. It does not sound like a major commitment or a significant move for funding for local government. I am very worried about local government being conned.

With regard to money for roads, the Government cares little about country roads. The fuel excise introduced by the Liberals in 1979-80 was to go into the Highways Fund, and right up to 1982-83, 100 per cent of that tax collected was spent on roads. When the Bannon Government came to power in 1983-84, it froze the amount earmarked for the Highways Fund at the 1982-83 level of almost \$26 million, and ever since then the tax revenue from fuel has gone up and up, with less than \$26 million going to the Highways Fund and our country roads. The figure has not even been adjusted for inflation.

This year, a projected \$129.9 million will be raised in fuel tax, and that means that only 19.8 per cent, or less than one-fifth, will go to roads. That is highway robbery. It is making the motorists of South Australia, particularly country motorists, pay an unfair burden of tax. It is absolutely disgraceful. It is a blatant grab for cash to bail out the Government's disgraceful debt. The South Australian voters are paying hand over fist—more for petrol, more for produce from country areas, more for all goods with freight components in them. It is an aggressive tax, taxing poor people more than the rich and, even if they do not drive a car, they still pay a higher grocery bill.

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

Mr LEWIS (Murray-Mallee): I congratulate you, Mr Deputy Speaker, on your election to that office, and immediately direct the attention of the House to the matter before us, namely, the debate on the Estimates Committees consideration of the budget, such as it was. It was a Clayton's exercise, as you would know, Mr Deputy Speaker, because it was an examination that we have of what departments propose to do with the funds being appropriated to them when we are not having any scrutiny in effect. The Government knew at that time, as it had known for several weeks, that it intended to rearrange not only the ministry but also the entire

structure of the Public Service, yet none of that was disclosed through the Estimates Committees to the House. That is a gross deceit: there is no other way of describing it.

Whole divisions of departments have been transferred from where they were originally allocated to other departments. The entire ministry has been rearranged and the exercise was deliberately orchestrated to suit the convenience of the Labor Party's political fortunes. The Labor Party took itself into damage control and decided on the course of action that it must pursue to avoid the kind of problem with which it would otherwise be confronted. It determined that the Premier had to go, following which the election of the new Premier would result at the same time in the Minister of Health also resigning from the ministry, given that he had announced his intention to do so, and rearranged the entire Cabinet. Of course the Labor Party knew that if it were to avoid the ignominious consequences of utter devastation at the next election it had to get cooperation with the Independent members who were sitting on its side of the House.

In the process of so doing the new Leader and Premier, the member for Ramsay (Hon. Lynn Arnold), was given the task of orchestrating the establishment of a coalition, with both the Independent members being incorporated into the new ministry. Had that not happened, the Ministers then and now would have continually been embarrassed by the very careful, professional, incisive approach being taken by those Independent members in the way in which they exercised their prerogatives, not only in this House but also on the committees of which they were members.

The Minister currently at the bench, the member for Hartley, being one of those members, was forcing the Government into embarrassing positions with our support day after day by exposing, in concert with the member for Elizabeth, the inadequacies of administrative procedures within a whole range of Government departments. That exercise undertaken at the time by him and the member for Elizabeth was commendable, and that is why it was supported by the Opposition. That is what the Parliament is supposed to be about, and I draw attention to it because it was suggested prior to our debate of the budget and scrutiny through the Estimates Committees that the budget itself in future ought to be referred to those committees.

I was anxious about that proposition and now have good cause to point out to the House that my reservations were well-founded. To refer the budget to those committees is to make a mockery of the process of appropriation, not only because it would not get appropriate scrutiny but in most instances those committees will be controlled by a majority of Government members. Accordingly, there would not be the appropriate scrutiny. Secondly, and more importantly, this process of examining the appropriations department by department has always been the responsibility of the Lower House in a bicameral Parliament. We have a bicameral Parliament, and it should remain the province and responsibility of the Lower House.

However, those committees are partly comprised of members from the other place and it is not, therefore, appropriate for the members of the other place to engage

in examination of the appropriation and, finally, recommendation that the appropriations be granted. It is simply not appropriate, if for no other reason than that. Any suggestion in future that the budget appropriations be referred to the Standing Committees of the Parliament should be dismissed out of hand.

But back to the other reasons. In this instance, it might have seemed appropriate, given that the two Independent members were willing to examine matters arising in various Government departments and to report to this House on those matters and to do it competently and thoroughly in a way that gave the public a great deal of confidence that the new committee system was beginning to work far more effectively than the old one. That will no longer be so. The Government has resumed control of those committees and now has a clamp on any damaging examination or disclosure and, because the Government has the majority of members on those committees, almost without exception the Government members of those committees will move to prevent any examination of any sensitive matter that could cause damage to the Government.

Given that that is the case, there is a need for us also to examine other things that are occurring in this damage control mode in which the Government has cleverly placed itself. By restructuring the departments and the public servants in them, the Government is able to shake out members of the public servant work force who are not members of the Labor Party from their top management posts and replace them with Labor Party sympathisers and members. Let us make no bones about this: people such as Lew Owens and Bruce Guerin are the people I am talking about.

Members interjecting:

Mr LEWIS: They are members of the Labor Party. Bruce cried when the Labor Party lost Government in 1979 and made no bones about the fact. Likewise, the man who runs WorkCover has been a long-time supporter of and participant in Labor Party activities.

Mr Atkinson: And that's more important than—

Mr LEWIS: My word, it is more important, because it means that their objectivity cannot be relied upon. In the event that the people of South Australia elect an alternative to a Labor Government, their sympathies will not be with the tradition of public service. I seek leave to continue my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

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

PETITIONS

FISHERIES DEPARTMENT

A petition signed by 515 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to maintain the Department of Fisheries on Kangaroo Island was presented by the Hon. Dean Brown.

Petition received.

BLAIR ATHOL PRIMARY SCHOOL

A petition signed by 88 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to restore the post of school counsellor at Blair Athol Primary School was presented by the Hon. J.C. Bannon.

Petition received.

DRUGS

A petition signed by 175 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to increase penalties for drug offenders was presented by Mrs Kotz.

Petition received.

TEACHERS

A petition signed by 28 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to employ more teachers per student enrolment was presented by Mrs Kotz.

Petition received.

QUESTIONS

The SPEAKER: I direct that the following written answer to a question without notice be distributed and printed in *Hansard*.

GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT BOARD

In reply to **Mr OLSEN (Kavel)** 7 October.

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: Early in the 1991-92 financial year the Business Operations Review sub-board of the Government Management Board, in development of its program of reviews considered whether or not a review of WorkCover would be warranted, and the matter was raised with the then Premier. It was noted that there was a review of WorkCover in progress by a joint parliamentary committee of inquiry. It was accordingly agreed that it would be inappropriate to have two overlapping inquiries in progress at the same time, and it was agreed that no review of WorkCover by the sub-board should be carried out. As no review was agreed or commenced, the implication conveyed in the question that a review was scrapped is incorrect.

WORKCOVER

The Hon. R.J. GREGORY (Minister of Labour Relations and Occupational Health and Safety): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R.J. GREGORY: During Question Time on 10 September this year, the member for Eyre claimed he was 'reliably informed' that WorkCover board member, Mr Les Birch had sent a proxy to the last six consecutive board meetings. Once again, the Opposition has got its

information hopelessly wrong. The honourable member was 'unreliably informed' as Mr Birch has attended 10 meetings out of the past 11. This is just another example of union bashing by the Opposition.

I resent the implied slur on employee board member absenteeism. WorkCover inform me that attendance at meetings is equally attended by employer and employee representatives. In fact, WorkCover board members, either employer or employee representatives, have regularly attended board meetings, with each attending at least 25 board meetings and subcommittee meetings a year. Might I suggest that the honourable member stop wasting important parliamentary time by making accusations based on inaccurate gossip.

SAMCOR

The Hon. T.R. GROOM (Minister of Primary Industries): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. T.R. GROOM: I believe it is necessary to clarify the current state of the South Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation's economic position. In August this year two events occurred which seriously affected SAMCOR's operations; from 17 August T&R Pastoral (50 per cent owned by Metro Meat) announced it would direct all its beef and sheep slaughtering to Metro Meat Abattoirs at Noarlunga and Murray Bridge. On 20 August Holco Ltd (100 per cent owned by Metro Meat) announced it would withdraw from its arrangements to lease a boning room at SAMCOR in favour of Metro Meats Noarlunga Abattoir. Metro Meats is a subsidiary of Adelaide Steamship.

In the short time since these announcements, the SAMCOR Board has responded promptly and positively and is looking to make up lost ground quickly. Through the efforts of the restructured board, an initiative of the former Minister of Agriculture, I can report that SAMCOR is showing strong signs of recovery. Through positive management this most recent challenge is being met. Although throughput volume is still down after the T&R and Holco withdrawals, already beef and pig operations are back to four days a week. Sheep operations are also expected to improve.

The SAMCOR Board is setting out to develop new strategies and measures to ensure that despite the loss of important business they will still break even by the end of this month and will be looking for improvement in stock numbers in the near future. I believe proof of the board's dedication to the job at hand is evidenced by SAMCOR's turnaround from an organisation having a \$1.7 million loss in 1989-90 to one with a \$786 000 profit for 1990-91 and an audited \$1.379 million profit for 1991-92.

The SAMCOR Board is clearly responding to its current business difficulties in a commercially oriented way—by having immediately looked for new clients, improved business opportunities and positive ways to ensure that operations and profitability are maintained.

QUESTION TIME

STATE BANK

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Treasurer. Will he direct the State Bank to stop using Government indemnity money to underpin threats of excessive litigation which are intended to blackmail customers into paying unreasonable sums of money to avoid being bankrupt by huge legal costs, and will he give the House a full report on Pegasus Leasing?

Pegasus Leasing was originally a Beneficial joint venture bloodstock leasing company and its operations are connected with former Beneficial executives. State Bank assumed management control of Pegasus on 1 July 1991. A copy of a letter dated 25 August 1992 from a bank executive acting in his capacity of General Manager of Pegasus Leasing states that, due to the indemnity from the State Government, Pegasus does not operate like other financiers and does not settle cases. It claims the surest way Pegasus has of getting its money back is to bankrupt each of the partners.

I have a second letter dated 28 September 1992, so it is very recent, which states that Pegasus has an incentive to bankrupt borrowers irrespective of the consequences so that it can gain access to Government indemnity money. The former Treasurer promised this House a detailed briefing on Pegasus last year but it still has not been provided.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: I will take that up with the bank to see what they have to say about it. It seems to me they are acting in a top commercial way. Whilst that may be a bit belated I would have thought it was something the Opposition would applaud.

The Hon. Dean Brown interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. Dean Brown interjecting:

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: If the Leader of the Opposition is alleging that executives of the State Bank are acting in some way illegally there is a procedure. It seems to me that if he is accusing people of blackmailing that is a criminal offence and the Leader, of course, as a responsible person, would know where to take that information. However, I will have the question investigated and I am sure the Government would not want to act in any way that was illegal, but nevertheless we are talking taxpayers' money here and—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: I am absolutely certain that the State Bank or GAMD would be condemned, quite properly, by the Leader of the Opposition if it did not with the utmost vigour pursue money owed to it. I am sure the State Bank would be doing nothing that Westpac, ANZ or any other banks that are having the same difficulty are doing. Nevertheless, I will have the question examined and bring back a report to the Parliament.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING DEPARTMENT

Mr De LAINE (Price): My question is directed to the Minister of Education, Employment and Training. Can the Minister advise what effect the cut of 25 per cent in the public spending would have on the delivery of services and remuneration to employees in her department? Yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition proposed a reduction of between 15 to 25 per cent of labour cuts and stated:

With enterprise bargaining throughout the Government they could save, still with exactly the same work force, between 15 and 25 per cent of labour costs, particularly in the hospitals and the education system.

The Hon. S.M. LENEHAN: I thank the honourable member for bringing this very important matter before the House. The honourable member was quoting the very words of the Leader of the Opposition, because I also heard these words where he actually targeted education, health and transport. It is interesting to note that the Leader of the Opposition makes this statement at a time when the community recognises the priority which must be given to employment, education and training to meet these requirements in our community. I would like to provide the House with some of the details of such a cut in expenditure as proposed by the Leader of the Opposition. To be fair to the Leader, he did talk of a cut—

Mr Ingerson interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader is out of order.

Mr Meier interjecting:

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

The Hon. S.M. LENEHAN: —of between 15 and 25 per cent. He said that it might be as low as 15 per cent, but knowing the Leader of the Opposition I think we should adopt the scenario of a 25 per cent cut in what employees in the largest employer in the public sector would take home.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. S.M. LENEHAN: What would this cut mean to a teacher on step 11? It would mean a reduction of \$181 from a weekly salary of \$723 to \$542.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. S.M. LENEHAN: They don't like it—

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. S.M. LENEHAN: —because the facts of the matter really hurt. TAFE lecturers on the top level of \$39 000 a year would suffer a reduction of \$187 a week from \$750 to \$563. Let us look at child care workers and school assistants. I will not go into the various step details, but a third year level 2 school assistant receives a weekly take-home pay of \$469.90, and that would be reduced by approximately \$117 to \$352.40. If the Leader of the Opposition does not propose to cut the take-home pay of the largest group of employees in the whole of the public sector—that is, in the broad area of education, training and employment—let him tell the people of South Australia exactly how he will achieve the 15 to 25 per cent reduction in terms of the costs of running these departments.

Mr D.S. Baker interjecting:

The Hon. S.M. LENEHAN: This is very interesting. I thank the honourable member for the interjection. I am delighted with the interjection, although I know I should not be. It is interesting that members on this side of the House believe that the Opposition Leader may not, with the wisdom of looking at the situation, actually go down the path of cutting thousands and thousands of hard-working and dedicated employees in South Australia out of their jobs. The Leader of the Opposition may well choose to cut the number of people working in our schools, child care centres and TAFE colleges. I am sure that at a future date we will be able to take up this matter—

Members interjecting:

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

The Hon. S.M. LENEHAN: —and clearly indicate to the community what it will mean if the Leader goes down that second path. However, in the meantime we eagerly await the Leader of the Opposition's telling us how he is going to achieve this particular cut when we are talking about a work force that does not have overtime or over-award payments, because that was the way in which he said he would achieve it. I would like to see how he will achieve it in the biggest area of employment in the public sector.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mitcham.

STATE BANK

Mr S.J. BAKER (Mitcham): Will the Treasurer explain who approved the State Bank's committing itself to a 99 year lease deal for \$2 180 million; what property is covered by the lease; and what cost could taxpayers be liable for as a result of this deal? The State Bank annual report tabled yesterday lists a commitment for expenditure on an operating lease 'payable but not provided for'. The commitment for \$2 180 million 'relates to a 99-year rental obligation on a property development that is subject to a work arrangement by the Group Asset Management Division (GAMD)'. The GAMD or 'bad bank' as it is called is under the control of the Treasurer.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: I am sorry to disappoint the member for Mitcham, but that particular note in the State Bank's annual report relates to the land on which the Remm-Myer development is built.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader is out of order.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: The lease is for 99 years, which works out at approximately \$20 million a year. The purpose of having that lease is that the company that owns that land, which at the moment for technical reasons is not available for purchase by the Remm-Myer people, when the technical difficulties are worked out—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader is out of order.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I have cautioned the Leader twice, and I have cautioned the Deputy Leader twice. The

member for Mitcham is a cleanskin but is getting close. Members all know the consequences of their actions if they carry on with interjections.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: The provisioning for the Remm-Myer building has been detailed to the House. It is now under the management of GAMD, and this note makes no difference to it. It is not a further commitment of \$2 billion or anything like that. The State Bank is not alone in expressing transactions of this nature—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: How many times has the honourable member been warned? Transactions of this nature are not unusual. I draw the attention of the House to other companies that have similar transactions on their books.

The Hon. Jennifer Cashmore interjecting:

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

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: The Western Australian bank, \$1.7 billion; the ANZ Bank, \$2.8 billion; Westpac, \$1.1 billion; and News Corporation, \$1.2 billion. That is a—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer will ignore the interjections and let the Chair worry about them.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:—normal procedure. In summary I can only state that the member for Mitcham must have been very disappointed when the financial press showed total disinterest in this overnight. The reason was that they contacted the State Bank and the State Bank went through it with them, at which stage they no longer held any interest because it is not new, it is not novel, and it is not news to anyone but the member for Mitcham.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

The Hon. J.P. TRAINER (Walsh): In the light of changed circumstances will the Premier renew his request to the Leader of the Opposition to join him in signing a letter to both the Prime Minister and the Federal Opposition Leader, urging no further reductions in tariffs in the automotive industry?

Mr S.J. BAKER: On a point of order, Sir, this question has been asked.

The SPEAKER: If the member for Mitcham will wait a moment until the Chair can hear what he has to say, I will take the point of order.

Mr S.J. BAKER: This is repetition. The wording implies that it is repetition and I ask you, Sir, to rule the question out of order.

The SPEAKER: I am not sure when the question was asked previously. The member has given me no reference point. However, the question was prefaced with the words, 'In the light of changed circumstances'.

Mr D.S. Baker interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Victoria is warned. I will listen to the explanation and see what these changed circumstances are.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! And the member for Hayward is warned.

The Hon. J.P. TRAINER: On 9 September the Leader refused to join the Premier in signing a letter to Mr Keating and Dr Hewson urging no further reductions in tariffs for the automotive industry. However, in an interview yesterday, the Opposition Leader criticised Dr Hewson and his South Australian Federal colleague Ian McLachlan for being wrong and intransigent on the issue of tariffs for the industry and for trying to introduce tariff reform too quickly.

The Hon. Dean Brown interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Leader.

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: I am certainly happy to quote the Leader's words back to him, but I will come that that in just a few minutes. First, in relation to whether or not I will renew the request, that depends on the real intent of the Leader and as to whether or not he genuinely has a concern for the automotive industry, and that is still not certain, I might say, despite his varying comments.

There were some press reports before the Victorian State election that said, 'Worry not about the silence of Kennett and Brown on the car industry tariff question, because there is a big plan, a game plan.' Apparently they have had secret talks and they have agreed that, after the Victorian State election, they will come out very strongly and attack John Hewson's policies on the car industry. We understood that until that time they had both been heavied by their Federal Leader, who forbade them from saying anything on the car industry. Of course, they towed the line. They are not like members on this side in South Australia; for example, the member for Ross Smith, quite happily, in defending the car industry, was able to speak up for the industry and say that we believed that tariff reductions were going far too fast—and even make those comments to our Federal colleagues, as I have done as well.

However, the Leader of the Opposition was cowed into silence on that matter until the secret meeting took place. So, we waited with great interest to see what would happen after the Victorian election. We were waiting for this great big bang to come, when both Kennett and Brown would come out and speak on behalf of the automotive industry of this country and the many tens of thousands of people who rely for their jobs, welfare and economic wellbeing on that sector. What we had was not a bang but very much a whimper.

The whimper came yesterday in the Keith Conlon program. I would have thought that this was such a big story that they would try to run more effectively with it than to have it as just a bit of an aside during the radio interview yesterday. In the process of that, the Leader of the Opposition waffled around a lot and Keith Conlon tried to bring him back to the main theme. Mr Conlon asked, 'It basically means you're telling Ian McLachlan and Dr Hewson that they are wrong in being intransigent, in being absolutely unshifting?' Then, in the hesitating manner in which he handled things yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition came back and said, 'I have told them that, and I have always made statements that there is very little difference between the Federal Labor Government policy and the Federal Liberal Party policy.' I will tell the House what is the difference: the difference is a 15 per cent tariff policy as opposed to a zero or negligible tariff policy.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: It has occurred to me that this 15 per cent is something of a magical figure to the Opposition. It just keeps coming back time and again. Yesterday we heard how public servants' wages will have to be reduced by 15 to 25 per cent—and that is the second reference to the 15 per cent figure. Of course, John Hewson has also plucked this 15 per cent from the air. That is the tax rate he will impose.

Members should just imagine the scenario with the election of a Federal Liberal Government and if, by hapless chance, the Leader becomes the Premier of this State: the public servants of South Australia will have to cope with not only 15 per cent of their pay packet gone because the Leader will cut it out but also 15 per cent gone because of the goods and sales tax.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will resume his seat.

The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. I believe the Premier is debating the question, contrary to Standing Order 98.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order and I ask the Premier to draw his response to a close.

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: I take your ruling on that, Mr Speaker. As to renewing the request, I am always happy to approach the Federal Government and the Federal Opposition in defence of workers in South Australian industry and on behalf of the South Australian economy, and to add a strong voice. If the Leader would like to join me in that, I would certainly be happy to have him do so. I take this opportunity to ask whether he will stand up publicly and make these comments firmly, not in the funny way that he did so yesterday. Will he take the real opportunity given to him by the reports before the Victorian election?

REMM-MYER

Mr INGERSON (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Treasurer. What are the technical reasons why the Remm-Myer property is not for sale? There is a technical reason why no-one would want to take on the arrangement of the \$2 180 million lease, or \$20 million a year.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: I hate to have to go through it again, Sir, but it appears that I am being forced to.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton interjecting:

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

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: It is not possible at this stage for the State Bank to purchase that land. It is expected that it will be, at some stage in the future—

Mr S.J. Baker interjecting:

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

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: The arrangement that has been made, which is being disclosed at all levels to all people, is a 99 year lease at about \$20 million a year. At the appropriate time and in the appropriate circumstances the bank will make whatever arrangements

are necessary to take over that company. This is not another \$2 billion—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: The member for Mitcham says this is another \$2 billion; the member for Mitcham is talking absolute nonsense. I suggest that the member for Mitcham, rather than putting out a press release, which everybody quite properly ignored or the financial press treated as a joke, telephone the bank and they will go through it step by step.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: Well, I am trying to be kind to Parliament—

Mr Becker interjecting:

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

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: —because I happen to have the complete answer here. It is three pages long. What I will be forced to do, if I have another question on this, is to read it. I will not read it now, in deference to the Chair, because I can see that the Speaker is looking at me. But I will read it out.

POWER SURGE

Mrs HUTCHISON (Stuart): Will the Minister of Public Infrastructure provide the House with information on a high voltage power surge which caused serious damage on Tuesday to a house in the Wellington area? This incident was reported on the television news services last night and, given the public concern that these reports would have engendered, there is an obvious need for more information on the circumstances and what follow-up action is occurring.

The SPEAKER: Order! Before calling on the Minister, I ask members on the Government side of the House to come to order, as well.

The Hon. J.H.C. KLUNDER: I have, indeed, received from the Electricity Trust a preliminary report on the incident at Wellington, and I am advised that ETSA's Murray Bridge office was first notified of what it quaintly called 'a disturbance to the electrical system' near Wellington at about 2.30 p.m. on Tuesday afternoon.

An ETSA crew was despatched and established that an 11 kV conductor had separated from an insulator and had fallen onto the cross arm. After burning through the cross arm, the conductor then fell onto the low voltage mains. As a result, three properties experienced a high voltage injection and one of the properties suffered quite serious damage as a result.

While the initial cause of the incident was outside ETSA's control, the protective devices which were designed to interrupt power in these circumstances failed to operate correctly on this occasion. As a result, what would otherwise have been a very brief incursion of 11 kV into the 240 volt system turned out to be a much longer one; in fact, it was not interrupted until the ETSA crew arrived and disconnected the supply. ETSA has established a committee of inquiry to investigate all aspects of this incident, particularly the failure of the operating system to cut into the supply. I have been advised by ETSA management that the trust will be reimbursing the property owners for their losses in this

case because of the failure of the protection equipment to clear the fault.

STATE BANK

The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE (Coles): My question is directed to the Treasurer. In view of the very depressed property market, will the Treasurer stop the fire sale auctions of at least six major properties controlled by the State Bank? The State Bank will put at least six properties to auction on 28 October. In Queensland, there is the \$20 million Raptis Olympic Towers site, the \$32 million Gordon Pacific Currumbin Palms beachfront site, the \$8 million Trikon Group site in Surfers Paradise and the Aquamarine property on the Southport Broadwater. In northern South Australia two large grazing properties, Woollana and Etadunna, are for sale. I also understand that the State Bank has been trying to sell Kern Corporation property, on which approximately \$100 million is owed, including the Waterside Office Park on the Gold Coast, and possibly the MacArthur Chambers site in Brisbane and 101 Collins Street in Melbourne. During the Estimates Committee, the Treasurer said there would be no fire sale of non-performing State Bank assets.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: That question has been asked already by the member for Mitcham. Are there no ethics on the other side? Does one member steal someone else's question? However, leaving that to one side, the impaired assets in question are being worked out to a very simple set of principles. The assets will be—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Leader is out of order.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: The maximum amount of return to the taxpayer will be achieved. The people in charge of that particular operation are experts in the field.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: I have offered the House—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Goyder is out of order.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: I have offered any member or any grouping of members in the House a full briefing by the people who are organising these workouts. It is a fairly simple equation. In the judgment of those who are skilled in this area, it is a question of whether the holding costs are higher than you would get in any given market, and there is nothing novel or new in that: that is the way all impaired assets are worked out. If the decision is that it is appropriate to put these particular assets on the market at this time, it is because the judgment has been made that it is appropriate in the light of all the circumstances. But, if the member for Coles or any other honourable member wishes a briefing on these questions (the offer has been made; members opposite to date have chosen not to take up that offer, and I cannot understand why), I am sure that the member for Coles or the Deputy Leader would have the opportunity to go through the principles with the GAMD people and ascertain precisely what they are doing. They are very welcome to do that. In summary, the

principles are clear; they have been spelt out on a number of occasions, and if these particular assets are on the market they are on the market after being tested against those principles.

WORKCOVER

Mr FERGUSON (Henley Beach): I direct my question to the Minister of Labour Relations and Occupational Health and Safety. Can the Minister please advise the House of the findings of Mr Ian Sinclair (Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the Workers Compensation Board in Alberta, Canada) on the WorkCover scheme? I understand Mr Sinclair, an internationally regarded expert on workers compensation, addressed a meeting in Adelaide recently on the topic 'Why WorkCover works—an international perspective'.

The Hon. R.J. GREGORY: Mr Sinclair spoke very highly of South Australia's workers compensation scheme and said he believed that WorkCover is undoubtedly one of the best managed workers compensation schemes in the world, avoiding many problems of other schemes. Let me quote some of the areas where he believed WorkCover was excelling. While worldwide levy costs are rising, WorkCover's levy costs are declining. Workers compensation unfunded liabilities are rising, yet WorkCover's unfunded liability is decreasing, and might I add that it has been slashed by 28 per cent in this financial year. WorkCover's fraud identification and control is one of the best in the industry. Overall, private insurers and self-insurers face rising costs and operating losses. WorkCover faces declining costs and operating profits.

Workers compensation institutions are constantly under pressure to keep levy rates at an adequate level, or to administer benefit levels in an appropriate fashion. In contrast, WorkCover's practice of extensive negotiation with both management and unions can lead to negotiated compromises. Whilst workers compensation industry investment returns remain median or average, WorkCover's investment returns are superior.

Finally, Mr Sinclair said WorkCover has few peers in an industry generally facing very difficult times. These statements must be very painful for the Opposition—an Opposition which is hell bent on continually knocking what is internationally recognised as one of the better compensation schemes in the world (a scheme which would have even been better to the tune of \$40 million, involving a reduction of .2 per cent, had the Liberals and Democrats agreed to amendments to the WorkCover Act earlier this year). Given the achievements mentioned by Mr Sinclair, I would like to commend the WorkCover Corporation for the good work it has been doing, often in hostile and difficult circumstances. The staff are a credit to the corporation and the people of South Australia.

Dr ARMITAGE (Adelaide): My question is directed to the Minister of Health and Community Services. What action will he take to ensure that the vital community health work such as that undertaken by Orana is not jeopardised by escalating WorkCover costs? Over the past two years, the new Minister of Health has made a number of public statements calling for major reform to

WorkCover. This issue has now been taken up publicly by Orana, which provides opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities to reach their full potential. In Orana's just released annual report, the President, Mr Stanley, states that Orana's workers compensation premiums have more than doubled since the introduction of WorkCover. In 1991-92 WorkCover premiums cost Orana more than \$138 000. Mr Stanley states:

[This] is now resulting in serious disadvantage to Orana and injustice to people with intellectual disabilities and their families in South Australia. Clearly, the increase in WorkCover costs has had a direct and serious effect on the society's finances in recent years. It has been an extra cost which has added directly and significantly to our expenditure without any scope for offsetting increases in our income.

The SPEAKER: Before calling on the Minister, I indicate that the question seems to be more appropriately addressed to the Minister of Labour. The Minister of Health and Community Services.

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: As you have indicated, Mr Speaker, I can cover those aspects of the question that relate to the health portfolio, and I am happy to do that. Quite clearly WorkCover is one of those costs which organisations such as those referred to by the member for Adelaide are required to bear as part of their operating expenses. Obviously, where the Health Commission can assist them to reduce those costs, officers will be pleased to speak with them to try to work out ways in which the management of these organisations can more effectively deal with their operating costs, including WorkCover.

WorkCover costs can be related to many factors. The House will be well aware that the extent of the levy which any individual organisation pays relates very much to a number of issues such as its own safety performance, the classification in which it falls and a number of other issues that are more appropriately dealt with by the Minister of Labour. However, where management issues and the internal operation of the organisation are involved, if they request assistance from either of the departments—Family and Community Services or Health—in both cases we will be pleased to assist those organisations, to work through those issues with them and try to reduce their operating costs, including WorkCover where possible, in accordance with the law. Any other issue in relation to that matter will obviously have to be addressed to the appropriate Minister.

STATE BANK

The Hon. J.P. TRAINER (Walsh): I direct my question to the Treasurer. What is the nature of the \$2.4 billion operating lease payable but not provided on page 68 of the accounts of the State Bank in its annual report, how did it arise and does this constitute an additional \$2.4 billion bail-out of the bank?

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: I thank the member for Walsh for making the question clear. Operating leases payable but not provided for are required to be disclosed in the financial accounts of material—under Australian Accounting Standard AASB-1008 section 52 and Corporations Law schedule 5 22 (1) and 22 (2). They arise in circumstances when the company has entered into a lease agreement over a period of time for the provision of services, for example, rental of a building, etc. The

amount disclosed in State Bank of South Australia accounts for the year ended 30 June 1991 on page 68 refers to:

	\$'000
Myer Centre	2 297.8
Export Park	23.0
State Bank Centre	46.3
Other	47.2
 Total	 2 414.3

To enable the State Bank of South Australia to secure its position with regard to the Remm-Myer project, the bank paid \$1 000 on 21 April 1992 to acquire 'X' class units in the Myer Centre Unit Trust which gave SBSA effective control. (This trust must be consolidated per AASB-1024.) MCUT owns the Myer building. In addition to acquiring MCUT, the bank exercised options to acquire other entities within the Remm-Myer project on 21 April 1992. (I refer to page 83 of the accounts.)

At 30 June 1992 the bank did not have an option to acquire the land holding company, Myadel. It had an option to purchase the land at 30 June 1992 plus mortgages over the land. Subsequent to 30 June 1992, SBSA negotiated an option over the shares in Myadel. It is the intention of SBSA to exercise either of these options. SBSA is in the course of determining whether to exercise the options over the land or the shares. MCUT, through its trustee Pazadore Pty Ltd (controlled by SBSA at 21 April 1992), has an operating lease of the site of the Myer Centre from Myadel. The rent provided under the agreement is variable, based on interest rates. Myadel receives the rental per annum but pays interest to other SBSA controlled entities (Pazadore Finance Pty Ltd controlled 21 July 1992) approximately equal to the amount of the rental stream. Therefore, there is no cash outflow to the SBSA Group.

TECHNOLOGY PARK

Mr OLSEN (Kavel): Is the Premier aware of an agreement between the New South Wales and Federal Governments that will see \$25 million over the next four years injected specifically into a high technology park in the Sydney suburb of Eveleigh, and does he consider this agreement represents a threat to the viability of the multifunction polis proposal which has yet to receive any substantial investment commitment for hi-tech research and development? The technology park agreement reported in the *Financial Review* of 30 September involves 1 600 square metres of space for research and development and is a joint venture between the Sydney University, the University of New South Wales and the University of Technology. The New South Wales Minister of Planning is quoted in the *Financial Review* as saying that the project will give New South Wales 'an extra competitive edge in attracting high technology industry to the State'.

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: I am not aware of the specific details of any agreement that may have been entered into between the New South Wales State Government and the Federal Government. However, I

have read press reports about the matter and I am also aware of other arrangements that have been entered into by universities in South Australia, for example, with State Government support and with the Federal Government to receive funds in various areas for research and technological excellence. For example, I cite the information technology facility at Flinders University which is a jointly funded project between the Federal Government and Flinders University and for which the State Government was able to provide some bridging finance. Likewise, I can advise on the Signal Processing Research Institute which has Federal Government funding along with State Government support and support from the University of South Australia.

Likewise, I can advise of CRCs, or centres for research, that are in every part of the country, including South Australia. They attract support from the Federal Government and other sponsors and, where appropriate, from the State Government. I am not sure exactly how the New South Wales situation fits in with that general array of things that have received support from the Federal Government, State institutions and State Governments.

With respect to the MFP, BHP has announced that it is actively interested in its information technology facilities being located as part of the MFP. Likewise, we saw press reports last week about interest in this area from Japanese investors but, as the honourable member well knows, we are in the final stages of bringing together the board, the new chair and the new chief executive officer.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: The honourable member asked about this during the Estimates Committees and I indicated that we were within a few weeks of doing that. Those few weeks will expire in the middle of October, so we will have it some time next week or the week after. The honourable member seemed happy on that occasion, but he is being a touch churlish today. When that happens we will be in a much better position to see things up and running in respect of the various aspects of the MFP, the core site and other facilities within South Australia.

I hope that the member for Kavel is indicating his full support by his question, that he believes that things should be happening in the MFP and related sites in South Australia. I am encouraged by that sentiment that may be lurking behind the cynicism of his question. Now we have the legislation in place, the environmental impact statement and the board about to be appointed, we will see action over the next 12 months, and I am confident that 12 months from now the honourable member will have the courage to say, 'Yes, you were right; you actually have these things in place.' The honourable member just needs to be a little patient.

The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE: I rise on a point of order Mr Speaker. I believe that the Premier is debating the question again, in contravention of Standing Order 98.

The SPEAKER: I believe the Premier has completed his response.

POLICE FORCE

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): Will the Minister of Emergency Services say what would be the effect on South Australian police of the Leader of the Opposition's proposal to cut the Public Service salary budget by 15 per cent to 25 per cent?

The Hon. M.K. MAYES: I am very pleased to be able to respond to the member for Spence's question because it is very important to put on the record what the Leader said. We talk about making policy on the run—boy, was this policy on the run on radio! I will quote what was said by the Leader of the Opposition on the 5AN radio program with Mr Conlon. Mr Conlon said:

And in doing that you are in fact saying to the workers, 'You, if you're not going to lose your job, will be taking up a 25 per cent pay cut'.

Mr Brown replied, 'Where the cuts occurred in the Festival Theatre Trust was in their overtime rates—because they were paying a lot of overtime—and in their very high penalty rates.' Mr Conlon responded, 'But that means basically their take-home pay packets will be cut by 15 to 25 per cent, doesn't it?' Mr Brown replied, 'It led to a cut but in fact I understand they were working a shorter week.' I will quote further from the interview and then return to the issue of the police. Mr Brown stated:

Keith, this Government will not undertake the fundamental industrial reforms within Government which could save millions and millions of dollars. I have talked to you about it before. With enterprise bargaining throughout Government they could save, still with exactly the same work force, between 15 and 25 per cent of labour costs.

We must bear in mind a couple of points, and the first is that it is the same labour force and it must take a 15 to 25 per cent cut in overtime and penalties. In the police area, the total budget for salaries is \$196.831 million including overtime and penalties. Of that, overtime represents \$2.3 million and penalties represent \$16.16 million. That is just over 9 per cent of the budget. If we were to achieve the savings that the Leader has suggested, we would have to take out at least an additional 16 per cent to reach his figure. Of course, that means that we would have weekends without police. If we take out the penalty rates and the overtime payments, those people who are investigating serious crime, who are involved with traffic or who are servicing the community in other ways at weekends—perhaps writing reports that are essential to prosecutions—will not be able to complete that work.

When they complete their fixed, standard hours, that is it. There is no overtime; they cease work, irrespective of the urgency or the need in relation to the prosecution or investigation. So, any one of the branches of the Police Department would face a sudden end to that aspect of prosecutions. We are talking about those people at the coalface—the investigators, the prosecutors and those people who pursue others who commit illegal acts in the community. If we remove the penalty rates, what do we have? We have a five day a week, Monday to Friday, police operation: on the weekend it closes down. That is good luck for those breaking the law, because on the weekend there will be no police.

If we look at the policy that the Leader of the Opposition is promoting in its total sense, we see that it

is absolutely absurd. He is saying that there will be a 15 to 25 per cent cut with the same work force. Those people take home a cut in pay. What do we take from that? It means that police officers will also suffer a direct cut in pay, because built into the pay of operational staff are penalty rates for doing those jobs. Some people in this place probably would not like to do those really hard jobs out there at the coalface. Those people who are actually doing the jobs will suffer the cuts. This is the policy that the Leader of the Opposition made up on the Keith Conlon program. It is extraordinary.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume his seat. There is a point of order from the member for Hayward.

Mr BRINDAL: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. I believe that the Minister is in contravention of Standing Order 98 and is debating the question.

The SPEAKER: The Minister is certainly straying into that field, and I ask him to bring his response to a close.

The Hon. M.K. MAYES: I simply draw the attention of this House and the community to the outrageous policy that is being promoted. Of course, it will mean that we will see a cut in policing and a cut in the quality of service provided to the South Australian community. I suggest that the community listen very carefully when the Speaker starts pronouncing his policies on radio again.

The SPEAKER: I assume the Minister meant 'the Leader' and not 'the Speaker'.

The Hon. M.K. MAYES: Yes, sir.

POLICE FORCE

Mr MATTHEW (Bright): What decision has the Minister of Emergency Services made following his re-examination of the police budget? Will the Police Force receive more funds to maintain its policing functions, or will services be cut and, if so, what services? On Friday last week the Minister said that he would re-examine the police budget after an administrative decision had been made and later withdrawn to reduce police on duty on the Monday public holiday to save on overtime and penalty payments.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MATTHEW: Earlier, another administrative decision—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will resume his seat. As the Chair cannot hear the explanation, I ask the honourable member to repeat it, and I call the House to order.

Mr MATTHEW: Thank you, Mr Speaker; I will repeat the explanation. On Friday last week the Minister said he would re-examine the police budget after an administrative decision had been made and later withdrawn to reduce police on duty on the Monday public holiday to save on overtime and penalty payments. Earlier, another administrative decision to reduce or remove overtime payments to police coordinators attending Neighbourhood Watch meetings had also been reversed. These two reversals still leave \$3.8 million in savings to be made, either by cutting back on something else or by increasing the budget allocation.

The Hon. M.K. MAYES: I really do thank the honourable member for his question, because he was obviously handed the list, he was put on it and, irrespective of what happens, he will read the question anyway. I suggest that the honourable member ask his Leader what his plans are for the Police Department and what he proposes to do with overtime and penalty rates. I suggest that the impact of community safety and the well-being of the community would be devastated, given his Leader's statement, so I suggest the honourable member direct his question to his Leader.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! When the House comes to order, we will continue with Question Time.

BED TAX

Mrs HUTCHISON (Stuart): Will the Minister of Tourism advise the House whether the Government is still considering the option of introducing a bed tax in South Australia, either in the near future or at some later stage? In the Arthur D. Little study, it was suggested that an accommodation tax, which is imposed in many parts of the world, could be used in South Australia to raise revenue to put towards marketing. Many small tourist operators in the north of the State have expressed concern to me that this will reduce demand for accommodation and will further erode their profit margins.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I have been having discussions over the past few days with a number of representatives, individuals and groups from the tourism industry, and I have been given the very clear message that they consider a bed tax would have a significant negative impact on tourism in this State. I know that the Premier has also had submissions, and we have both listened closely to those submissions regarding the impact of such a tax on tourism in this State.

It is vitally important that the tourism industry be absolutely clear about the intentions of the Government in this regard. Therefore, I am pleased to announce to the House that the bed tax is dead—not just put to bed but absolutely dead. It will not be introduced during the life of this Government which, of course, is a darn site longer than the life of this Leader of the Opposition. The study done under the Arthur D. Little report identifies tourism as one of the key industrial sectors that should be promoted as an export industry with huge potential. However, it also highlights that a concentrated effort is needed to realise this State's tourism potential which, of course, is considerable. Certainly, I am keen to harness the commitment and expertise of our tourism industry and ensure that it and the Government move forward together, because that is very important for the future of this State and the future of industry.

Members would be aware that yesterday I approved and announced the State Government's decision to commercialise the \$6 million Government Booking Service, and other announcements will be made in the next few weeks following consultations with the industry. But our killing off this bed tax issue will send a clear signal to the industry, in which many are small operators, some of those in the honourable member's areas, that this Government will continue to listen and respond to their

concern. However, I await a similar commitment by the Federal and State Oppositions in response to the major concerns of the tourism industry about the devastating impact on tourism of a GST—particularly on small business tourism operators and in rural areas. I certainly would like to know where the Leader of the Opposition and his tourism spokesperson will stand on this policy, which tourism does not need and which would damage the industry severely in this State.

NUCLEAR WASTE

Mr D.S. BAKER (Victoria): My question is directed to the Minister of Health and Community Services. Now that the Premier has stated his opposition to the storing of nuclear waste in land around Coober Pedy and Roxby Downs, is the Minister still seeking a report on the proposal?

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: Quite clearly the information which the Health Commission was able to provide to the Government were it required was in relation to the professional expertise that the commission has on radiation health and radiation protection. If the decision is ruled out on other grounds, that expertise will not be required in this instance.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION

Mr HERON (Peake): Will the Minister of Primary Industries clarify the future departmental location of the soil and water conservation functions within the Department of Agriculture?

The Hon. T.R. GROOM: I appreciate the question from the member for Peake because I am well aware of his long-standing interest in waste management and soil contamination. I know that he went overseas in June this year, particularly to look at waste management and soil contamination problems, and that he spoke with Government departments and private enterprise to gain further expertise in this area. There was some suggestion floating around that the soil and water activities of the Department of Agriculture might be transferred to another department because of the restructuring that has taken place. That is simply not the case.

There is just too close a nexus between farming practices which improve productivity but at the same time meet the Government's and community's expectations and goals of sustaining land and water resources used in agriculture. Furthermore, integration of soil and water conservation programs with other extension activities carried out by Department of Primary Industries officers across the State is another significant reason. I am reinforced in my view by the input already given to me by rural interests, that the soil and water activities properly belong with the Department of Primary Industries, and I am pleased to say that is where they will be staying. I am sure that will be met with approval by the rural community.

DEAN RIFLE RANGE

Mr OSWALD (Morphett): My question is directed to the Minister of Recreation and Sport. Considering it was the Government's decision to site the MFP at Gillman, which has resulted in the proposed closure of the Dean Rifle Range, will the Minister advise the House what the Government is doing to find a new home for the South Australian Rifle Association, which has had occupation of that site since 1890, and will the Government instruct the MFP officials that the Dean Range is to stay in use until after relocation has been effected?

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTY: The short answer is that the Government is doing a great deal to assist the group to which the honourable member refers. A very substantial sum of money has been provided for the relocation of the association located at the Dean Rifle Range. It appears that a great more has been done than the association is aware of or is prepared to admit publicly, and that is a great disappointment to the officers involved in this relocation process. As I understand it, funds are provided and the process is in place in order to relocate that association, and that will be effected in due course. The honourable member may be wishing to circumvent what are appropriate and proper processes. Time lines have been discussed, they are negotiable and that process will be pursued.

GAWLER RIVER

The Hon. T.H. HEMMINGS (Napier): Will the Minister of Public Infrastructure provide information on a news statement that the Gawler River will flood again today? On a recent visit to Willaston I was shown by worried residents vivid examples of damage and erosion resulting from the heavy rains over the past few weeks. I am concerned that the persistent rains which have occurred over the past 15 hours can only exacerbate the situation.

The Hon. J.H.C. KLUNDER: The Bureau of Meteorology has in fact issued a warning today that moderate flooding is anticipated along the Gawler River. The bureau advises that floodwaters are expected to reach low lying areas around Angle Vale, Two Wells and Virginia overnight. Rainfall in the upstream catchment area over the past 24 hours ending at 9 a.m. today has been recorded as being between 16 mm and 28 mm. Rain is expected by the bureau to continue during the day and into the night. Water is spilling from the South Para reservoir at a rate which is less than the water from watercourses flowing into it.

E&WS Department officials have therefore notified landowners directly downstream of the reservoir of the likely increase in the flow. The major contribution to flows in the Gawler River is coming from the North Para River which joins with the South Para River at Gawler. E&WS personnel will be in attendance at the junction of the North and South Para Rivers on a continuous basis throughout this period of high stream flow, and they are providing information to assist in flood warning activities by the Bureau of Meteorology. Whilst rainfall has been widespread, the Gawler River is the only focus for concern at the moment. Monitoring of rainfall and stream

flow is continuing in all major catchments and streams. While I acknowledge that this particular question has not been asked, I can assure the House that the floodwaters are not expected to reach the extensive rural holdings of the member for Napier.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

The SPEAKER: I put the question that the House note grievances.

Mr QUIRKE (Playford): With the ministerial reshuffles that have taken place since the last time this House sat, I would like to put on the record my sincere thanks and appreciation for the services of many of the Ministers in this House in their previous portfolios. I mention one in particular, the former Minister of Education, and I would like to thank him for his diligence in looking after some of the problems of the schools in my electorate. I have also indicated to the new Minister of Education that we look forward to a similar standard of service, and I am very pleased to have the assurance of the honourable Minister that we will get it.

I have addressed this House on numerous occasions on the problems of the burnt schools in my electorate—the problems of arson with the restructuring and rationalisation and, in fact, the necessary refurbishment that follows. Indeed, in each instance I have had to seek the assistance and the intervention of the Minister to bring all those matters to a conclusion. The Education Department, where it was concerned, provided the answers to many questions that were raised in this place, but it took the active intervention of Minister Crafter to ensure that justice was done to schools.

Mr LEWIS: I remind the member for Playford of the usual courtesy of acknowledging the seat represented by a member, the way in which members are known in this place, or otherwise by the portfolios they hold.

The SPEAKER: The Standing Order, the custom of the House, provides the term of address to be used; either the seat members represent or the post they hold in the Parliament.

Mr QUIRKE: I must apologise to the House for that omission and, in fact, it is a very bad one when the member for Murray-Mallee has to correct me for my manners. While the comments being made here this afternoon are obviously being taken by some people as cheap jibes, the reality is that a lot of good work was done out there in my electorate by the former Minister. I want to put this on the record, because I do not think he got the credit in many instances for a lot of the things he did. In fact, the major refurbishment of the four schools in my electorate would not have gone ahead had he not taken an active interest in the whole exercise.

In terms of the number of students whose lives will be affected—approximately 2 000 children and their parents in my electorate—I am sure that the gratitude for the work that has been done in the past couple of years will be recognised in the streets of Playford. Local members have a greater responsibility to ensure the best standard of education for our children, the new constituents of the

future, the building blocks of our society. I think it is rather poor that some members take that responsibility so tritely and wish to take cheap shots at it. In conclusion, I wish the Minister well in his new portfolios and I thank him again on behalf of my constituents—in particular, my young constituents—for his active interest.

Mr MEIER (Goyder): Recently, I had the opportunity to visit a somewhat isolated part of my electorate, namely, Wardang Island. It was with a great deal of remorse and sorrow that I noticed what had happened to that island, which is now a disgrace to the State of South Australia. In fact, I was appalled by the wastage and ruination that has occurred to a formerly attractive and potentially vibrant tourist attraction. Last week, I wrote to the new Minister of Aboriginal Affairs pointing out the many problems that are clearly evident and asking him to come immediately to see the problems for himself and, in turn, to act and hopefully rectify this State disgrace. This is an opportunity for the new Minister to show whether he is simply a Minister in name or whether he can act.

Infrastructure worth millions of dollars of taxpayers' money has been left to rot on the island. I say that because of the deterioration and waste that I observed personally. It was a great shame to see rotting in the grass the original trolley car that operated in the 1960s and, I dare say, in the last decade, to take tourists around the island. It is a great shame, because it was the last remnant of a private development that occurred on the island. For many years, Wardang Island was a BHP limestone and sand mining area. BHP vacated the island in the early 1960s.

The Hon. R.J. Gregory: It was BHAS.

Mr MEIER: I was informed that it was BHP, but BHAS is a subsidiary company in any case. Many people will be aware that the jetty, the airstrip and the town houses were constructed by BHP. In the late 1960s, the then Dunstan Government decided that the island should be turned over to the Aboriginal community to run tourist attractions. The tragedy is that various machines that were once worth tens of thousands of dollars lie right where they stopped. A fairly recent model John Deere front-end loader and back hoe now sits rusting away. The hydraulic rams are badly pitted, the brakes are seized solid, the instruments have been smashed and the floor pan is fast disappearing.

There is also a Holden tray-top utility with smashed windows and other deliberate damage that sits, otherwise intact, on the main street of the town, obviously left where it last stopped and a brand new engine head which lies under cover, whilst the Chamberlain tractor for which it was ordered sits in the open with its engine block exposed, rusted out and so much of the rest of the tractor deteriorating rapidly. The hi-tech equipment that was set up for the water desalination plant is completely exposed to the weather and elements, and bullet scars mark the water tank.

Obviously that was a luxury that was provided some years ago, but inside the town houses things are much worse: smashed stoves, walls and fixtures are a common sight. Other items such as washing machines, fridges and lounge suites are rusting or rotting away. Most houses have been taken over by pigeons, rats and mice, whilst rabbits frequent the foundations. There are even brand

new items on Wardang Island that have never been used, including countless numbers of PVC pipes and fittings, hundreds of Hardie planks and even a brand new air-conditioning system. Wardang Island has enormous potential but it needs to be entrusted or sold to a development syndicate or company as soon as possible. I hope that the new Minister of Aboriginal Affairs will act and go and see the problems for himself and will seek to rectify—

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

Mr HOLLOWAY (Mitchell): Last Thursday I visited the Mitsubishi motor vehicle assembly factory, which is in my electorate. That visit confirmed to me what lunacy are the policies put forward by the current Federal Opposition. Those policies will totally destroy the car industry in this State. The problem with those policies of the Federal Opposition is that they are all so unnecessary and ill-thought-out. What disgusts me even more is that, although one can understand this ideologically bound Federal Opposition putting forward such policies when it is appealing to the whole of Australia, I cannot understand the South Australian Leader of the Opposition and other members opposite not standing up for South Australia when it is required that they do so. Their gutless compliance with the Fightback policy of the Federal Opposition is a disgrace. When they are needed to stand up for this State they are not there.

The policies of the Federal Opposition towards the car industry are reckless and extreme and will offer nothing but the destruction of the car industry in this State. It is all very well for those in other States such as Queensland and New South Wales. They will not care very much if tens of thousands of jobs in the car industry in this State are lost and if this State's manufacturing industry is devastated. They will have tens of thousands of people flowing across the border from this State to provide cheap labour in their States.

They do not have the manufacturing base that we do, but for South Australia that base is vital, and every member of the Opposition should be standing up to defend it. Members of the Opposition have had a lot to say in recent weeks about the State Bank and its impact, but the loss of the car industry in this State is equivalent to that—not just once but every year.

Mr Ingerson: What a lot of nonsense!

Mr HOLLOWAY: I will be happy to provide the figures to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. At least 20 000 people are directly employed in the industry and thousands more have jobs related to it.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Mitchell will resume his seat. The Deputy Leader has been spoken to several times today. The Chair has had occasion to warn him once for continually interrupting. I caution him for the last time about his conduct.

Mr HOLLOWAY: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is clearly embarrassed by the exposure of his inaction and the inaction of his Party in not protecting the car industry in this State because he and his colleagues must know what the impact will be. If the Deputy Leader does not know how much the motor industry is worth to this State he ought to visit some of these factories and

talk to some of the people involved. He ought to add up the number of people who work in the industry and the number of dollars they pay in payroll tax in this State. He ought to add up the amount of money the workers in that industry pour into the economy of South Australia. If he did he would realise how stupid his comments were and how stupid the policies of his colleagues are in not supporting the car industry. If he wants to look at what happens to a regional economy when a major industry is pulled out of it through tariff changes, let him look at Whyalla. What replaced the ship building industry in Whyalla when it was taken out years ago? The population some 20 years later is still thousands less than it was during its peak.

That is exactly what will happen to a regional economy like South Australia if we lose a key industry. The Leader of the Opposition has been a great one in this place to talk about incentives for business, but here when one of our fundamental industries and biggest employers is threatened, what incentive is he offering those companies to stay here and provide employment? None at all! He is keeping quiet because he is under pressure from his Federal colleagues, who have some insane ideological commitment to their Fightback policy. Their attitude is insane. Mr McLachlan, is the main architect and a South Australian—what a disgrace to this State he is—and his policy is that Fightback will not change and is not negotiable. I quote from a recent *Bulletin* article as follows:

'They keep saying they want more information,' said a senior Toyota executive. 'Mr McLachlan has had more information than any shadow Minister in history. He says that he does not believe the figures, but when he is asked for proof he cannot refute it'.

They have this ideological commitment at the Federal level, and their colleagues in this State are too gutless to stand up for South Australia when they are needed. They are buckling at the knees. They are a disgrace to this State and their complicity in the destruction of a key industry in the State should be exposed for what it is.

Mr VENNING (Custance): I wish to highlight to the House the appalling water quality in the Barossa and mid-North. The water coming through the taps in those areas at the moment is an absolute disgrace. It is because the Government never has any money for rural residents. The Barossa and Mid-North residents have been waiting patiently for decades for properly filtered water. Every time it rains heavily, as it has in the past couple of months, the mud is stirred up in the Warren reservoir and the water runs out of the taps looking darker than beer and smelling of compost, and I do not exaggerate.

A filtration system is planned but not until well after the Myponga system is completed in 1993-94. That could be 1996 or 1997, which is ridiculous. Switching filtered river water into the system when the water from the Warren reservoir has deteriorated stirs up sediment in the pipes and makes the situation even worse. Residents of Owen who are on the end of the line, are a long way from the Murray and have about five weeks supply of muddy and smelly water in the trunks mains before they are likely to see water of a reasonable quality, that is, water that they can drink and wash in.

It is just not good enough. Why are the country people always on the wrong end of the stick? I have written to the Minister and asked him to fast track the filtration

system and to reduce charges to users who are enduring such a dreadful water supply. I have a letter from a constituent that illustrates this even more effectively that I have. The letter is addressed to Mr Mayes and it states:

This letter is to express my disgust at the colour, smell and taste of the water available in this town [Owen] and into my home. I fully realise that we have had unprecedented rain and that this can account for the fact that mud has been churned up in the reservoirs but I see no reason why I should have to have this mud coming through my water pipes. This is 1992 and it should, in this day and age, be possible to have drinkable and useable water because this is, of course, a basic need.

The E&WS say they know about the state of the water but they also say there is nothing they can do at present other than keep flushing out the pipes. What a waste of water—no wonder it's so expensive. This is fine but it does not completely clear the water and when they do the flushing, the water gushes down the road and causes a mud pool at the end of my road which I must then drive through before going anywhere.

Last week I had a visitor from interstate and the water was so bad in colour that when a glass was filled it was impossible to see through it and leaving it for a while caused a thick sediment in the bottom of the glass. Boiling the water did not help either colour or taste and for a week I was unable to use tap water for drinking, cooking or washing because of the smell, taste and colour. This was a really good advertisement for tourism.

Yesterday after the E&WS had again flushed out the pipes I just had to do the washing, I was running out of clean clothes to wear. I did not wash any whites but some of the light-coloured items that I did wash I had to rewash by hand trying to get the brown stain out. In some instances I was unable to remove all the marks.

I am a very trusting person and believe that quality control is being maintained but this does not help the damage that is being done to water pipes, hot water service, washing machine, kettle, clothes and household items which use/retain water. Sediment build up must be damaging to the above items because I can see the damage which has been done to my toilet bowl—it is badly stained and I am unable to remove the rim at the water level or the mark at the bottom of the bowl.

As a consumer, if I'd bought such an item in a shop I would have returned it and with the knowledge of having recourse to the law I would have been able to obtain a refund because it is not of sufficiently good enough quality and does not do what it is supposed to do, that is, clean.

My constituent is sick of the sad story about the local water and is sick of being fobbed off. I make a plea to the Government: people in this day and age have a right to expect clean water and they should not be expected to pay—and pay very high prices—for the mud coming out of their taps. This issue applies in the Barossa Valley as well. Many people live in this area and they turn on their taps and get mud. To drink the water, they have to let it sit over night in the glass. Members can imagine the cost of the damage caused to hot water services and as result of blocked valves. To say that nothing can happen until Myponga is completed in 1993-94, or perhaps in 1995, 1996, 1997 or 1998, is just not good enough.

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

Mrs HUTCHISON (Stuart): Yesterday, and again today, this House was subjected to a diatribe by the member for Eyre with regard to railways. It makes me think that it indicates his extreme concern at having to contest the next State election with me as his opponent. Having said that, I point out that the member for Eyre's interest in railways seems to be a very recent phenomenon. It smacks of political opportunism, because his Party's policies in the past and for the future offer no support whatsoever for railways.

Mr Ingerson interjecting:

Mrs HUTCHISON: I think that the Deputy Leader had better be very careful; these words might come back to haunt him. The Opposition has clearly stated that it will not be subsidising railways in any shape or form. In fact, the State shadow Minister of Transport, the Hon. Diana Laidlaw, quickly moves to distance herself from railways. In an article in the *Border Watch* she stated:

There is a lot of confusion about the whole fate of country rail lines in South Australia . . . Because the Federal Government really has responsibility for both the National Rail Corporation and Australian National.

She is moving away from taking any State responsibility, whereas members on the opposite side are quickly saying that it is a State responsibility. I suggest that perhaps they should talk to their own shadow Minister, because she is clearly saying it is not a State responsibility.

I would also like to quote another article in the same newspaper. This statement is attributed to the Federal shadow Minister for Transport and Communications Support, Mr David Hawker. I would like to ask the member for Eyre whether he agrees with what his Federal shadow Minister says. The shadow Minister said:

Why does the Government remain so heavily involved in railways? After all, the Government is getting out of airlines. Governments are moving out of providing bus services.

Why are they staying involved in railways? I would like to ask the member for Eyre whether he agrees with that. It clearly smacks of privatisation, and that is something that the member for Eyre has not been saying. He said:

Railways should direct their efforts towards their reason for existing—to service the customer. That should be the prime reason for the existence of a railway.

Again, that is a clear move towards privatisation. I would like to ask all members on other side whether they support that and whether they also support what their shadow Minister is saying, that is, that this is clearly a Federal Government responsibility, and will they lobby the Federal Government and the Federal shadow ministry and ask them to subsidise railways, to create jobs for rail workers?

Members interjecting:

Mrs HUTCHISON: This is obviously upsetting members opposite, particularly the member for Eyre, because they are now braying about what is happening.

An honourable member: He is shaking in his boots.

Mrs HUTCHISON: He should be shaking in his boots and I am glad that he is, because he is being very realistic. I would also like to quote something that the member for Light, the Hon. Bruce Eastick, said yesterday in order to clarify something about which he was obviously under a misapprehension. The member for Light said:

The honourable member showed only too well her abhorrence of private enterprise when she suggested that she was concerned that some of the work will go to private enterprise interstate.

The member for Light obviously did not read what I had said. What I was saying about the railway workshops at Port Augusta was that, if the Morris and Knudson work had gone to Sydney and not to Whyalla, there would be no possibility of jobs for workers at the Port August railway workshops—

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs HUTCHISON: —and that was the reason why I was not approving of what was going to happen there. It

is obvious that my concerns lie with the workers in the railways at Port Augusta. Mine is a longstanding interest, not a recently acquired interest, as is the interest of the member for Eyre. The member for Eyre's interest in unions is well known. He has absolutely blasted them many times in this House. But he has suddenly become very interested in unions as well, and one must wonder just how long that interest will last.

Mr Ingerson interjecting:

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

Mrs HUTCHISON: Will it last just until the next election?

Mr BRINDAL (Hayward): It would be well known to members of the House who enjoy the recreational pursuit of shooting that one of the bravados performed by rabbits is that they come out of their warrens in the middle of the day and, if there is any danger, they thump their feet rather vigorously, metaphorically thump out their chest and then disappear down their burrows. One is led to conclude that, at this time of the day in this Parliament, the Ministers act very similarly: they come in here to Question Time, come up with all sorts of diatribe, cant and hypocrisy and, the minute Question Time is over, disappear back down their burrows like the rabbits that some members on this side of the House suggest they are. We had wonderful examples today, in particular from two Ministers—

The Hon. H. Allison interjecting:

Mr BRINDAL: I am sorry; the member for Mount Gambier suggests it might be an insult to rabbits. So, to those people who like rabbits, I do apologise. The two particular examples today were the new Minister of Education and the new Minister of Emergency Services. I understand that the new Minister of Education in a few days cannot be expected to understand a department as complex as is the Education Department—a big and complex department. We on this side of the House sympathise; we have asked her only one question. We do not expect somebody of her ability in such a short period to come to grips with her portfolio. Indeed, some of my colleagues on the front bench have rather uncharitably suggested that, if we give her three or four years, she might still not come to grips with her portfolio, but we will give her time and we will see.

Nevertheless, the Minister got up here today—and so did the Minister of Emergency Services—in what can only be described as an appalling and thinly disguised attempt to hoodwink a rather gullible section of the media. We heard again about the Leader of the Opposition's saying yesterday, as he did say on the Keith Conlon program, that he would cut the cost of public service in this State by 15 to 25 per cent. The Premier was on the radio, and the Premier, rather ingeniously in his good debating style, said, 'Well, if you are not going to cut numbers and you are going to cut costs, it means you will cut salaries.' That is the biggest load of tripe that I have ever heard. It might be a clever argument, but it is what it is—tripe.

Mrs Hutchison interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BRINDAL: The Minister of Education then compounds that and insults the intelligence of South

Australians by coming in here and telling us chapter and verse what it will cost and how much will be taken from the pay packets of all these poor people. To compound it all, the member for Playford gets up in a grievance debate and congratulates the ex-Minister on the wonderful job that has been done in education in the past 10 years. To members opposite who do not have the privilege of sitting on the education select committee, I say to them that they might revise their attitudes quite substantially if they were accorded that privilege.

I would also suggest that they wait until that committee reports before they pontificate on the achievements of this Government in the area of education. The Minister, in answering the question today, neglected that award restructuring is going on within her own department, that there will be different bandings for principals, and that the Government itself is closing and rationalising schools and looking again at the reorganisation which it did. It decentralised the organisation at a cost of \$8 million, and it is now recentralising it. If our Leader says that we can create—

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BRINDAL:—efficient and effective government and, in creating an efficient and effective government we can save between 15 and 25 per cent, as did the Victorians on Saturday, every South Australian will approve. We will not cut people's salaries, especially when the Minister at the table knows that those salaries are granted through an arbitration system that everybody must abide by.

The Hon. J.P. Trainer interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BRINDAL: We will not cut salaries; we will not throw people on the streets; and we will not rip the houses from over their heads. So I suggest that the Government come out of cloud cuckoo land and treat the people with the honesty that they deserve, instead of feeding them the absolute tripe that we get dished up to us daily as intelligent debate by Government members opposite.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Hon. R.J. GREGORY (Minister of Labour Relations and Occupational Health and Safety): Mr Deputy Speaker, I congratulate you on your recent appointment. It is most pleasing to see you there. By leave, I move:

That the Minister of Education, Employment and Training be appointed to the committee in place of the Minister of Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations.

Motion carried.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Adjourned debate on the question (resumed on motion).
(Continued from page 718.)

Mr LEWIS (Murray-Mallee): The importance of the remarks I have made to date is that they draw attention to the fact that all Government members deliberately deceived this Chamber during the process of consideration of the estimates, because they knew that the Ministers who sat at the table to answer questions about the lines as provided to us in the documents we got were completely irrelevant to the structure which would be put in place immediately after the Estimates Committees were over. The departments were immediately re-organised and renamed, and whole slabs of departments were moved from one portfolio to another, such that the difficulty which we now face as a Parliament in commenting upon the veracity of those answers is that we do not know what will happen. The appropriations as made will not be spent in the name in which they were allocated. So, we had Clayton's Estimates Committees.

The Government had also worked out who would be doing what after the procedure was over, such that Ministers giving assurances on the Estimates Committees are now absolved of any responsibility whatever for breaches of those assurances. By that I mean that promises were made by people and the new Ministers will renege on those promises. I bet that is the case. I hope I am wrong, and I give the new Minister responsible for water resources the opportunity to prove me wrong; a promise was made by the then Minister that the problem on the urban fringe of provincial towns where there is no water supply for those who moved into—

Mr Venning interjecting:

Mr LEWIS: That was the other promise that was given. A commitment was made that the water supplies of provincial towns would be filtered, particularly in the Lower Murray.

Mr Venning interjecting:

Mr LEWIS: Well, whether they are to be broken or not, I do not know, but the Minister gave a commitment to deal with both matters, whereas the previous Minister, the Minister once removed, refused to do that. The Minister (the member for Mawson) refused to provide any commitment to filter rural water supplies where the water drawn from the Murray River—as the member for Custance has said—looked like beer and tasted like compost. If it tasted like beer and looked like compost, we would have known it was stout or port, but that is not the case. It is absolutely atrocious water quality. Here we have a Minister who has given a commitment, and I now call on the new Minister to keep that commitment.

I will now comment on the proceedings in that Estimates Committee. With reference to page 200, in one instance the Chairman simply took over the time of the Committee and gave us the benefit of his understanding of Standing Orders, without any provocation to do so. The Chairman's job is simply to ensure that the Committee conducts its business, and if in his opinion a member is not behaving in an orderly fashion, the Chairman has the means at his disposal to deal with that.

However, the Chairman did not do that. He chose to give us homilies on a frequent basis throughout the entire proceedings as to how good he was, how good he had been, and what were the deficiencies (as he perceived them) in our understanding of what ought to be done. At one stage he even apologised to the Committee, when in fact I thought he was intending to apologise to the witnesses appearing before it, for what he said was my bad behaviour. Now that the Committee is over, I can tell him that I think his performance as Chairman was absolutely atrocious. I hope I never again have the misfortune to have to sit on another Estimates Committee chaired by him.

Mr Venning interjecting:

Mr LEWIS: That was the member for Napier. He really is the pits when it comes to that sort of performance. He loves the sound of his own voice. If one looks at the *Hansard* of Estimates Committee B on 16 September, one will see the columns occupied by his homilies to the Committee about how it ought to be conducting its business, none of which had anything to do whatever with the Standing Orders and the way in which those Committees took over the job of scrutinising the budget as part of the Committee procedure of the House as a whole.

Mr Brindal: Are you being charitable to him?

Mr LEWIS: Very charitable. I would be quite happy to talk to him privately, of course, but he has declined my invitation. Notwithstanding that, I now wish to place on record some plaudits to the Government and to the people of the State more particularly for the way in which we are achieving something here in South Australia. Last year in the Mallee there were thousands upon thousands of hectares of drift, stretching for kilometres across the landscape. That arose as a consequence not of any irresponsibility on the part of the people who owned or managed the land but of the absolutely devastating policies—devastating in their impact on the people I represent—of 10 years of Labor Government, the dirty float on the dollar and other punitive measures taken in economic mismanagement by State and Federal Governments which have impacted adversely on people's incomes.

With a meagre amount of money provided under Landcare and through the Murray-Mallee Soil Conservation Board—and I pay tribute to both groups in the Mallee area for the way in which they have cooperated with that meagre amount of money to provide some monoammonium phosphate and biammonium phosphate as fertiliser and to meet the cost of seed, and so on—those thousands upon thousands of hectares of drift have been largely stabilised this year. It is a credit to those people and to their own voluntary efforts in their organisation that they have established to deal with that matter. It would do members of this place—particularly members of the Government—a great deal of good to go and talk with the people who have been involved in that program and look at what has been achieved. I have some photographs which they may wish to examine. I will certainly make them available.

In addition to that, they have undertaken a number of trials of suitable species of vegetation, particularly the salt bushes (atroplex) so they can determine which plants suit what localities and soil types to provide permanent

vegetation on those sites and nonetheless provide very valuable high protein grazing for sheep, cattle or any other animals that may be paddocked wherever that vegetation has been established. I had the good fortune very recently to be able to participate in a day-long examination of those programs right across the Mallee. Again I pay tribute to the people involved and place on record for posterity's sake my appreciation of the great effort and sacrifice they have made in accepting responsibility for the land in which they live and bringing it back under control in a sustainable way.

I also want to pay some attention to the necessity for volunteers to be sustained in rural communities. Welfare agencies of the type referred to by the member for Heysen in the course of his remarks today, such as the Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul and the Central Mission, and any other of the church groups involved, are being starved of funds, yet the Government continues literally to squander funds through its own agencies. More money needs to be put into meeting the increased welfare burden which we have as a consequence of the 'recession that we had to have', according to Prime Minister Keating, and the incompetence and economic management of this Government under the former Premier and largely the same ministry that we still have. A greater call is being made on the resources of these agencies in the volunteer or semi-volunteer domain, and less and less funds are being provided to them. I wish the Government would wake up. Indeed, it must wake up. Easily the best and most efficient way to get benefit for its welfare dollar is to provide the necessary funds to those volunteer agencies.

Mr BRINDAL (Hayward): In speaking to this Bill, I will touch on a number of issues and bring together a number of areas of Government. I will refer to the attitude of this and other State Governments (and the Federal Government) towards the indigenous or Aboriginal people of this country. I for one stand in this place to say that it is about time that Governments in this country adopted a more mature attitude to the indigenous peoples of this country. Some time ago Governments were saying that it was time to get rid of the missionary mentality. Perhaps in many ways parts of that mentality were wrong. Missionaries often went out to sooth the dying people and to watch the passing or the genocide of a race which they believed could not be stopped. Some of those missions were established on the principle of smoothing the pillow for a dying race. The Government said that it did not want that sort of mentality for the indigenous people, so it decided to take over. I would suggest that, both at Federal and State level, the missionary mentality has been replaced by the cargo cult mentality.

We have, as Parliaments and as Governments, developed a cultural cringe towards the indigenous people and believe that the only way to solve the problem is by throwing ever increasing amounts of money in their general direction, basically hoping that the problem will go away or pretending in fact that the problem does not exist. Any member (and I notice one of the members who has a seat in which Aboriginal people live is in the Chamber—she knows what I am talking about) who has had anything to do with the Aboriginal people knows

there are some real and significant problems which we have to assist them to work their way through, but assist them to work their way through is not throwing money at them or hoping that they will go away; that is what I object to. I, and I am sure every member of this House, acknowledge that previous generations of our forebears did not behave in the way that they should towards fellow human beings.

Much was done that was wrong and much was done for which our forebears and we have a responsibility and should make atonement. However, you do not make an atonement by throwing money at people: you make atonement by being genuinely concerned and making a genuine effort for the indigenous people. Indeed, my colleague, the member for Goyder, touched on the essence of this issue when he spoke about Wardang Island, because Wardang Island was a successful tourist operation, compulsorily acquired in the halcyon days of the Dunstan Government and given to the Aboriginal people as something that they did not necessarily want, but something which would be good for them and which they could develop and try.

However, it showed a lack of understanding of what those people needed and wanted, because we will now criticise them and they will be criticised on the media tonight, quite rightly, for all the waste that Wardang Island represents; but whose fault is the waste? Is it the Aboriginal people who did not necessarily want it, and did not know what to do with it, or is it the Government that lumped it on them, gave it to them and said, 'Here, make it work'? I believe the answer is quite clear: it is Government, when Government gives them something and says, 'This is what you need.' What is that if it is not a missionary or cargo culture mentality? It is us, sitting in this Chamber saying, 'We are God. We know what you people need; therefore we will give you a prescription and, when it does not work, it is not our fault for getting the prescription wrong; it is their fault'. If one goes to Victoria Square any day of the week when it is not raining and one looks at people who are under the influence of alcohol, and the criticism is of the people who are under the influence of alcohol; it is never of the society which reduces them to that state. I put to this Chamber that that again is the result of Government mentality.

One of the best examples that I can give (and I am sure the honourable member opposite may know of this example) is in the Pitjantjatjara tribal lands, and if there is one set of people (and I do not lump all teachers in this) who become pseudo-missionaries when there is no religion available, it is teachers. Some teachers are great at adopting a holier than thou attitude. In the tribal lands the teachers decided that Aboriginal children needed to imbue their own culture.

Somehow teachers thought that the tribal elders, who for 20 000 years managed quite well without us to pass their own culture to generations, were going to be better at it than the tribal elders. So, what did they do? First, they took an oral language, the Pitjantjatjara, and said, 'We cannot teach it if it is not written down'. They turned an oral language into a written language which by any study that any member opposite has ever done must be granted to be one of the biggest attempts to change a culture: to take an oral culture and turn it into a written

culture is the most massive change one can make to a culture.

They therefore invented a written Pitjantjatjara. They then applied to the Federal Government, through the Country Areas Program and the State Government, and they received massive assistance to set up a beautiful printing facility in the North-West tribal lands, and they manufactured and produced all these wonderful Pitjantjatjara books, everywhere except Kenmore Park. The community there was strong enough and vocal enough, and they had a teacher who was strong enough to listen to the Aboriginal people who said basically, 'You keep out of it. This is our culture; we will teach our culture; we want your schools to teach us what your culture can give to our people.'

The Hon. B.C. Eastick: Who was the teacher?

Mr BRINDAL: I do not remember his name, but I wish I could for the sake of the member for Light. I think the member for Light would agree that that teacher deserves some sort of commendation. As a result, all the other schools did it, but Kenmore Park did not. However, if the member opposite (and I think I heard her interject that she has seen the printing facility) has been there recently, she will know that it is no longer in use because the Aboriginal people have used Kenmore Park like a seed, and that seed has grown until the whole of the Aboriginal people in the tribal lands have said to the white educators, 'We are not having a bi-lingual program; we will teach our language. You teach your language; you teach your schools in English; and you let us teach our culture.' So we have a classic example of our culture intervening in theirs; telling them what was good; and throwing good money after bad until such time as Aboriginal people stood up for themselves.

Again, I would like to tell this House of a unique experience I had with an Aboriginal lady who had come down from the centre of Australia when the Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory were applying for a licence which they have now got for the Imparja television station. I asked this woman why they wanted a television licence and she said to me—

Mr McKee: Do you want to bring back the ID card? That was one of your policies.

Mr BRINDAL: I wish the member opposite would listen, because I am trying to contribute some intelligence to a debate and I am not trying to play Party politics, because I am the first to admit that Liberal Governments have been equally as guilty as Labor Governments. It is a fault of all Governments and it is a disgrace perpetrated on the Aboriginal people that I am trying to record, not score some petty points. Anyhow, this lady said, 'Do you know what the second biggest industry in the Northern Territory is?' I said, 'No, what?' She said, 'It is Aboriginals. There are lots of bureaucrats, lots of white people, getting very comfortable livings from Aboriginal people. The disgrace is this: they say they want to help us and they appear to want to help us, but every time we look like standing on our own feet somehow or other we get kicked in the ankles or we fall down again.'

The truth is that when we stand on our own feet, when we do not need the help, an industry will disappear from this nation. So it is not really always in their interests for the industry to disappear.' I see that the member for Price is here, and I think that that will strike a chord with him

and also with the member for Henley Beach. One of the things that worries me about the whole social justice issue, not in terms of what this Government is doing—it is not in Government terms but in bureaucratic terms—is that once one creates a bureaucracy it seems to need to exist.

Mr Such: It has a life of its own.

Mr BRINDAL: Yes. Once one creates social justice as a concern of the Government one creates a whole set of bureaucrats whose real interest it is to see that there continue to be disadvantaged people. In essence, once the disadvantaged disappear they have no reason to exist, and so, while they will try to help the disadvantaged, the answer in private is, 'Never too much, because we still want them.' I remember a conference in Toowoomba of coordinators of the Disadvantaged Schools Program where they were in a beautiful, elegant setting; they had had dinner and were having ports after dinner and then somebody ordered a glass of champagne to toast the disadvantaged child. The irony of that has never escaped me: middle-aged, middle-class bureaucrats being paid by the Government to help the disadvantaged and toasting them in champagne. That irony has never escaped me and I know the member for Price well enough to know that that irony would not escape him.

However, in relation to the lady I was talking about, she said that the Aboriginal people could best benefit by having their own role models and that one of the best ways to do that in 1989-90 and into the 1990s was through the mass media and television. They got the Imparja licence, much to the chagrin of several of the would-be media moguls in the Northern Territory, and they have kept that licence and, I believe, like many TV stations it has had its vicissitudes. I think that the member for Stuart will again agree with me, because I am sure that she has seen Imparja. The Aboriginal people have on their station some of the best ads I have ever seen on television. Imparja has a promo, which is a spear going along a rock and it flowers into a tree, and that is very good, and they have some wonderful ads.

One of the ads that I particularly remember is an education ad where the child is in school, is set some homework, goes home and there is brawling, fighting and a disruptive home environment. The child is trying to do the homework and cannot and ends up being frustrated, sitting out on a tree, and the scene then cuts to the next day back at school where the teacher says, 'Why haven't you done your homework?' It is a wonderful ad. It does not condemn; it shows things as they are in some homes, and not only in Aboriginal homes but in white homes. It should be a message to every teacher who teaches those children as to what those children sometimes go through. But, equally, it is a message to the parents of those children about the requirements of our society if they want the children to learn the values of our society. There has been a number of ads like that.

I have nothing but praise for Imparja television and the work it is doing and that sort of attitude towards Aboriginal people. That is why I rise in this House to address this matter in the context of the budget speech. While I believe that an investigation into Aboriginal deaths in custody was perhaps appropriate, I am appalled at the amount of money that it cost for the value which Aboriginal people have received from the investigation. I

am sure that there are some very wealthy lawyers as a result of that investigation and I am equally sure that none of them have any quantity of Aboriginal blood in their heritage.

Again, some white lawyers got very wealthy. But where are the programs? There was a number of recommendations. I put to you, Sir, and to some members opposite who understand the problem—and I include the member for Price in that because I understand that he has a sizeable group of urban Aboriginals in his area, and also the member for Napier would have some—that if we sat down and seriously considered this matter in a bipartisan way I am sure that for much less than \$30 million we could come up with an equally valid set of recommendations. What is more, we could then use the change, which would probably be \$29.75 million, to institute the programs in TAFE, in schools and in social welfare—and note that I said ‘programs’ not ‘handouts’—that would help the people. In that—

Mrs Hutchison: We spoke about some yesterday.

Mr BRINDAL: Yes, in that area I acknowledge that the Government is making some developments. I think that one of the most exciting innovations in recent years—and I believe it is coming to the Port Adelaide area—is the Aboriginal aide program of the Police Department. One of the problems for the Police Department is, if you like, the racial game. If the police arrest an Aboriginal person they must be scrupulously careful, as they should be with us all; but they are conscious of the fact that with Legal Aid and all sorts of things they might need to be a little bit more careful lest they be accused of racism.

There is a simple and effective solution, which this Government has implemented and which I hope it will develop, and that is quite simply to train Aboriginal people who understand their own race to help with the policing of our laws within the context of the understanding of their culture and their law. It works, and it works well. I have yet to see a case of an Aboriginal aide being hauled before a police disciplinary tribunal on the ground that he treated a fellow Aboriginal in a racist way. So, it is a logical, sensible and cost effective solution. Many of the other things that we have implemented have, as I have said, been neither cost effective nor logical. They stand as an indictment to all Governments in this country through the 1970s, 1980s and into the 1990s, because they have been a way of assuaging our conscience by throwing money at a problem and hoping it will go away.

I think Governments in this country over the past two decades have been guilty of creating their own particular form of apartheid—it has almost been a bureaucratic apartheid—and they have created that apartheid not only for the Aboriginal people but for many of the disadvantaged in our society. So I finish where I started by saying that it is high time that this Parliament said to the Government—and that other Parliaments said to other Governments throughout this country—that we must now adopt a more mature and sensible approach to the Aboriginal people of this nation. They are equal partners with us and equal inheritors of our heritage. I say ‘equal’ quite deliberately, because the problems that were visited upon the Aboriginal people were visited by previous generations.

As I look opposite, like me, many of the members who proudly sit in this Chamber are fifth, sixth and even longer generations Australian. In a sense, this too is our dreaming. Clearly and unashamedly, it is their dreaming, but it is also the dreaming of our culture and heritage. So, we must sit down with the people and not apologise for being here, because it is historic fact, but say, ‘We are here, you are here, we are part of a new nation and a new partnership.’ I do not believe that we should forge that partnership through treaties, because a treaty makes separate. We should not be making separate, we should be joining together into one nation, indivisible from sea to sea. That might be rhetoric, but I believe it sums up what this country should be about.

Mrs Hutchison: We should be one people.

Mr BRINDAL: Yes, I thank the member opposite. We should be one people together sharing one common aim, a set of common aspirations, but acknowledging in each a diversity of culture and not imposing our own wishes and whims upon them. I believe if this Parliament adopts that mature attitude it will be a light to the rest of this nation and the Aboriginal people of Australia will be the better for it.

The Hon. B.C. EASTICK (Light): Mr Deputy Speaker, I congratulate you personally and publicly for having reattained your office of Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees. The proposal before the House is to note the proposed expenditure that was referred to Estimates Committees A and B and to discuss the results of those deliberations. The Estimates Committees have been in place for a number of years. There have been brickbats and bouquets from time to time, and this year would be no exception. However, I have to say that the attitude of some Ministers is disastrous when compared with other Ministers. The two Committees that I attended, both chaired by the member for Napier when he was there, and that was most of the time, involved two Ministers from the Upper House: the Hon. Anne Levy and the Hon. Chris Sumner. One could not dispute the cooperation and the attempt at assistance given by the Hon. Chris Sumner, but the proof of the pudding will be in the eating, and the eating can only take place when the supplementary copy of *Hansard* becomes available.

We have had the unfortunate experience over a number of years of hearing great promises from Ministers that they would provide the information within a two-week period (in fact, they were challenged to have the material available) and that it would be circulated to the members who had asked the questions and it would subsequently appear in the supplementary *Hansard*. We have seen the supplementary document coming out as late as seven months after the event. Indeed, some of the answers have never been circulated prior to their publication in that supplementary *Hansard*. There has been rightful criticism in this House relevant to that circumstance, and in no way do I reflect upon *Hansard*, which I know in the past had prepared the material but, for a variety of reasons, the material has not been printed and distributed.

So, I would say that I look forward with great interest to the information which the Hon. Chris Sumner promised but which is yet to be made available, and I am quite sure that other members in this and the other place will look forward to those answers to advance their

knowledge of the administration, the programs and the projected expectations of the various departments under that Minister's portfolio responsibility. I would have to say, however, that the other experience was not quite so productive. The answers were long; they were not always according to the questions that had been asked, but they were directly associated with a theme or a source of information that the Minister wanted to get across. It was mainly the Minister who sought to get it across, albeit that there was a long conference before the Minister gave the information; therefore, the examination in total was a much less effective activity than it had been with the Hon. Chris Sumner.

The other point I want to make about the committees on this occasion is the disaster that they were for the Government, in the sense that on many occasions and for long periods of time Government members did not even attend. They were signed in but they had other things afoot. The bovver boys were about. There was a preoccupation with other activities that were taking place around the Parliament at that stage: who was going to get the job and whether the members for Hartley and Elizabeth would get up in the ministerial stakes. So, a number of members who ought to have been giving attention to the committees were not even present. That was excellent for the members of the Opposition, because it gave them a greater opportunity to question, albeit that we did not get short answers from some of the Ministers. However, as a result of those antics that were taking place, it was possible to get a fair idea of who is the gang of six, and I have a fairly good idea of who is the Chairman of the gang of six; I believe it to be the member for Napier.

Mr Meier: The member for Napier?

The Hon. B.C. EASTICK: Yes; I think the member for Napier is the Chairman of the gang of six. He is not denying it; he is smiling at the accolade that is being given to him.

The Hon. T.H. HEMMINGS: On a point of order, Sir: I have no wish to abuse Standing Orders but, in the vein that the member for Light is taking, namely, that I am the Chairman of a committee of six that voted against a coalition, and his suggestion that, by not denying it or agreeing with it, I am accepting it, my only recourse is to take a point of order.

The SPEAKER: Order! I suggest to the honourable member that perhaps the best medium for resolving the situation may be a personal explanation rather than a point of order.

The Hon. T.H. HEMMINGS: Thank you, Sir; I did not think of that.

The Hon. B.C. EASTICK: All is said. I just say to the member for Napier, 'Go and read Shakespeare: methinks he protesteth too much.' It is interesting to note that I did not even indicate what I believed he was the leader of: he was just the leader of the gang of six. It might have been a bagatelle group, the Hills libbers, or anything at all, but the honourable member knew to what I was referring.

In relation to these committees, I will pick up a point that was made by the member for Murray-Mallee, namely, that there was no clear indication that the answers given, in most cases genuinely, would necessarily point to the manner in which the programs

and projects will be carried through because of the change of the persons at the top in relation to the various departments.

Whilst one can postulate and conjecture on this, time alone will tell, but I believe from some of the statements made by the various Ministers that the postulation made by the member for Murray-Mallee is correct. Already, the agenda have changed to try to give that new look to fit into this new program of the new Cabinet.

I was interested to read the *Leader* Newspaper, circulated at Angaston, of 7 October 1992 under the heading, 'Through my Eyes', a regular column that is presented by Tony Hurn, a well-known person in the Barossa Valley. He is a football umpire, a community worker, was recently appointed to the Angaston hospital board, and has written extensively for newspapers and has promoted youth sport over the years. Under the heading, 'The people decide', he said:

I have said it before and I will say it again . . . changing the team captain does not necessarily mean that the players will perform any better than they have in the past, especially if they have been given plenty of opportunities to do so. Our new Premier has changed every position bar one in his new team and it is to be hoped that new life will be breathed into our economy to give us the kick start that everyone is looking for.

He was gracious enough to suggest that that is vitally important to the South Australian community. It is vitally important if the disastrous unemployment figures that we have at present are to be addressed. It is most important for people in all walks of life, whether rural or city, to give inspiration and leadership. However, he went on to say:

The people of Victoria gave Joan Kirner the bullet in no uncertain terms and in a similar fashion took over from an incompetent and tired Government. I guess she and her Ministers did their best but it was an exercise that a majority of Victorians felt had gone on for long enough and Jeff Kennett was seen as the best person to hopefully lead them out of the wilderness.

South Australia is in exactly the same position to that of Victoria . . . the new team captain, a rehash of the same old ideas, and bringing back into the fold two Independents no-one wanted to know a few months ago.

That is an interesting point. Nobody wanted to know the Independents in the last Government between 1985 and 1989: they were not even given standing room; they were not important. They did not have a vote that counted, but suddenly, as we know from the activities of the 1989 to 1993 or 1994 Parliament—whatever it might be—those Independents have a place in the sun. He went on to say:

. . . simply to protect their backsides from sniper fire.

All of those Independents in their own way were providing plenty of sniper fire. They were getting things done for the people of South Australia, which large volumes of discussion had failed to obtain over a long period previous to their activities. It was not always on the floor of the House that the deals were done, but by virtue of their pivotal position they were able to achieve results that were good for their electors and the electors of other members. Suddenly we had a Parliament that was responding to community desire, albeit with some notable exceptions, WorkCover coming foremost to mind. The story continues:

The Premier may have pulled a few aces out of the deck, but they certainly are not the winners he would have us believe. The real win will be when we see the WorkCover issue resolved to the satisfaction of both the employers and the employees and not backing off because some union leaders will not bend one iota.

The union leaders must realise that if they do not bend a little, then there will be very little opportunity left for our youngsters to procure a job as industry will leave the State, leaving us as little more than a backwash.

Many of my colleagues have been able to identify to the House most regrettably where jobs are going interstate. I referred only yesterday to a position put forward by the member for Stuart in relation to the railway workshops at Port Augusta. The member for Stuart decried the fact that work in respect of the restoration of locomotives was going interstate and, horror of horrors as far as she was concerned, it was going to private enterprise. It is going interstate to private enterprise because there is a cost benefit. For too long not only in this State compared with other States but in this whole country of Australia we have been exporting jobs because of the manner in which we have allowed the union movement to constantly put down the best benefits of a balanced approach which would see many of those jobs now overseas back here in Australia. I only have to repeat very briefly the circumstances relating to General Motors-Holdens. It used to export vehicles—

Mr Ferguson: It's exporting vehicles now.

The Hon. B.C. EASTICK: Yes, we are back into the fray, but look at the lost opportunities. Look at the thousands of young people who have been without a job in the meantime. Look at the fact that, while we used to send complete Holden cars, it reached a stage where we were told to send them without the engine, without the panels, and without the transmission because in the countries north of us they could produce them at a much lesser cost.

Large numbers of the textbooks used in our primary schools, high schools and universities are written and proofed here, but they are produced overseas and shipped back into Australia because it is cheaper to do it that way. Quite recently we had an example where it was cheaper to manufacture a product in New Zealand, even though it had to be shipped or flown to Australia. We must address those matters. I do not know that the new regime will necessarily do that, even though the Premier and several of his Ministers have claimed that this is their desire. They have had the opportunity over past years to undertake a number of initiatives that have been offered to them at election after election by members on this side. They have been presented to them by members of the commerce and business industry and the manufacturing area. They have continued to support the Manufacturing Centre at the old Holden works at Woodville.

Many an opportunity put forward by that organisation has fallen into a hole because of the increase in the cost of FID, WorkCover and even the various licences to operate. Until such time as the Government, under its new management and with its recycled Ministers, comes face to face with the reality of why we are losing job opportunities and why we are not able to provide work accommodation for our young people, we will not progress. Talk is cheap. Some will say that what I am saying now is cheap, but I refer particularly—

Mr Ferguson: I would not say that.

The Hon. B.C. EASTICK: I am glad the member for Henley Beach would not say that. I believe he is quite genuine in his statement; I give him the benefit of that doubt. Comments have been made by the new ministry to

try to change the complexion of the same people, all of whom are tainted by the activities of the State Bank, SGIC, the Timber Corporation, Scrimber and so on. All of them have had a failure against their name in relation to every one of those activities and yet they stand up and say that they have turned over a new leaf and that they will achieve this, that and the other thing. I suggest that that will not happen unless there is a very marked change of attitude on the part of the new ministry. I have not yet seen that in anything portrayed either during the Estimates Committees or by way of answer to questions that have been put to the Ministers in the past two days.

The South Australian community desperately needs a better run than that experienced over the past five to seven years. Members of the Opposition have consistently offered their assistance and support to achieve better legislation, new ideas, and well-researched and well-considered policies by the Government, but it has been spurned. The opportunity for assistance from commerce and industry has been spurned on many occasions in the past. I would like to think that, although talk has been cheap up until now, the Government will start to think and act according to the best interests of South Australia.

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

The Hon. T.H. HEMMINGS (Napier): I think members will recall that I spoke quite vigorously against an amendment to the resolution that set up this year's Estimates Committees. You, Sir, will recall that, in effect, the amendment said that this House would consider quite favourably the suggestion that all future hearings in relation to the budget documents go before the four standing committees. In my defence of the Estimates Committee system I said that, in order to ensure that Estimates Committees continue in their present form, members should lift their game considerably if they wanted the present system maintained and built upon. Therefore, I was quite shocked to hear the member for Mitcham say in his contribution that he thought that this year's Estimates Committees were quite a success. To the credit of other members who have spoken in this debate, no-one has gone quite as far as to say that the Estimates Committee hearings were a success.

They may have some criticism of individual Ministers and of me as one of the Chairs, but they have not gone overboard and indulged in the magic mushrooms and said that the committee hearings were a success. Despite my warnings to the Parliament about what to do if they wanted to maintain the system as we know it today, no-one took any notice on the day. Of course, some did take notice, but, in the main, it was allowed to develop into the same tired old exercise that members have allowed in the past. Although I can speak only for Committee B, I think that what I experienced would have been happening in Committee A. Indeed, I spoke about this to my colleague the member for Henley Beach, and he confirmed my fears that was happening in this Chamber during those two weeks was also happening in the other place.

I have always taken it as a privilege to chair Committee B. It is well known that there is always an awful bun fight in our caucus as to who will eventually get the guernsey. By picking up advice from some of the

factional heavies in my caucus, I have learnt how to use the numbers game and each year I have been able to have my name given to the House as a Committee Chairman. Be that as it may, if anyone on this side of the House wishes to become a Committee Chairman I will show them how it is done. Anyhow, I digress.

The Ministers, as usual, were prompt and diligent in their efforts to provide answers; they were concise and brief in their replies. There were no long boring answers; it was to the point all the time. They were eager to keep the flow of questions coming. Despite the fact that the Ministers are members of my own Party, it made me proud during those two weeks to be part of those proceedings and to see democracy in action. I think that the 13 Ministers, from what I can gather, excelled themselves in the delivery of their part of the Estimates proceedings.

Of the committee membership I cannot say the same. Occasionally there was a light on the hill, a beacon shining through the fog, but I will deal with that at a later stage. This year I will give some accolades to members from the Government side. There was not one question in the whole of committee B that I could, in effect, place in the Dorothy Dix category. I was watching as each committee member came into the proceedings to see whether we were going to have a question from that member that could be classed as a Dorothy Dix. It gives me great pleasure to say that there was not one.

We have already heard complaints that Ministers' staff have prepared questions which they dish out to Government members to ask and the Minister gives a long reply which, in effect, is designed to take up the time of the committee. This year there was none of that whatsoever. I must admit that I was pleasantly surprised at the in-depth understanding of members.

When I say 'pleasantly surprised', I do not mean that I feel that my colleagues on this side do not have any in-depth understanding of the parliamentary procedures and the budget process. It was as if you, Sir, had given some form of tuition to all of them, because all the Government members were there with a complete understanding. For example, the member for Henley Beach was outstanding and the member for Stuart was very concise. I refer also to the members for Mitchell, Peake, Price and Spence. I could go on. Those were the members who mainly served on my committee. In the main, they put the Ministers to shame sometimes because they had this deep understanding of the wider issues that needed to be looked at, apart from those figures and words that are in the budget estimates or in the financial papers. That went right through for the whole two weeks.

The ability that they had to extract information from all the accompanying documentation and to produce pertinent and hard-hitting questions, followed by the correct use of supplementary questions, was to me a memorable lesson. It was the cut and thrust of parliamentary life in action. It was a pity that you, Mr Speaker, were overseas (suffering in Canada at the time) and did not have a chance to see it. All I can say is that if you, Mr Speaker, are a fan of *Rumpole of the Bailey* that is the kind of thing that you would have seen here in the Chamber. Members had the ability to actually question a Minister on all areas of their portfolios. In fact, it was a joy to see.

What about some of the others? I have mentioned only the Government members here. I am not here to rubbish members opposite. I have never done so before, and while I am in this Parliament I will not start now. There is so much playing the person not the ball in politics today not only in this Parliament but interstate and overseas, and I will be damned if I am going to do that. I am here in effect to pay tribute and give credit where credit is deserved. I will continue to do so, despite the fact that when I do give credit to members opposite, I know that I do get it in the neck from the leadership and from my Caucus colleagues. But I will continue to give credit, and I will give credit later in this contribution.

So, I will just limit my comments to those who I think deserve praise, although, at the same time, it grieves me that there are so few to whom I can give praise. I will not blame the rest of those members opposite as individuals, because it is not their fault—it is the Liberal Party preselection system that produces the rednecks, the wallies, the wimps who come into this Parliament. So, really if someone is a fortunate beneficiary of such a preselection system, who am I to accuse them of being inept and not having the ability to represent their Party or their constituents in this Parliament. So, really it is the Liberal Party's problem, not yours and not mine.

Although, if it were yours, Mr Speaker, given the way you have been able to fix up things in the past two weeks, it would take you only a couple of days to have their preselection system up and running and well-oiled so that in the next election they would be able to produce at least a reasonable team to face the talent we have on this side of the Parliament. I have given three awards: the most improved, the most patient and the ultimate winner. The most improved member is the member for Newland. The member for Newland, with her performance over the past two years, has been what can only be described as magnificent. Her ability to follow through in her questioning was a joy to behold, and again it is a pity you, Mr Speaker, missed it. Why, with all that came through in this Estimates Committee hearing, was the member for Newland dropped as a shadow Minister? You, Sir, shrug your shoulders, and that sums it up.

Mr Ferguson: Because she's a woman, that's why.

The Hon. T.H. HEMMING: The member for Henley Beach says that it is because she is a woman. But the member for Coles became a Minister. The member for Coles could never become a Leader, but she became a Minister. But when there is so much latent talent within the member for Newland, why is it not brought to the surface, nurtured and allowed to blossom so that the member for Newland can become an opponent worthy of the front bench of this side? The mind boggles! I will never know and I am sure that you, Sir, when you shake your head along with me, will never know. Anyway, all we do is ask the question and all we get is a barrier of stony silence. If people disagree with my award to the member for Newland, I advise them to read the *Hansard* of the Estimates Committee B hearings and they will agree with me.

My award for most patient member goes to the member for Flinders. Whilst he was never a formal member of Committee B, the member for Flinders was there for most of the hearings, from 11 o'clock in the morning until 10 o'clock at night. He sat there taking

notes and following the line of questioning, and at times when I offered him the chance to get into the debate he deferred to other Committee members, because they were whingeing on the other side that there was not sufficient time for questioning. On behalf of the members of my Committee, I thank the member for Flinders and give him the award for the most patient member. Members will all be wanting to know who was the ultimate winner.

Mr Meier interjecting:

The Hon. T.H. HEMMINGS: I described the member for Goyder during my description of the preselection system, but I will tell him who was the ultimate winner. I give you a clue, Sir, if you can make the connection: the member is keen, able, valuable, excellent and likeable. When you take the initial letters from those words, we have the member for Kavel. The member for Kavel was the ultimate winner. He outshone every other honourable member in this House—even the member for Henley Beach. It is well known that I consider the member for Henley Beach to be one of the most capable parliamentary performers but, for these two weeks, the member for Kavel outshone even my colleague the member for Henley Beach.

The member for Kavel's grasp of his area of responsibility can only be described as awesome. When we think that the member for Kavel has been back with us for only a very short time and that in that short time he has had to go through the trauma of a leadership battle and through the trauma and emotional problems of being ditched by six of his colleagues, being stabbed in the back, we recognise that he has still been able to put the other members in this Parliament to shame. I exclude you, Sir, and me because you, Sir, were overseas and I was in the Chair, so that is two of us out of the way.

For those who had the pleasure of watching him, the member for Kavel's style of questioning was strictly in the QC league. He was there, straight to the point with rapier-type questioning, and I saw more than one Minister shift uncomfortably in his seat when the member for Kavel gave that Minister a bit of curry in regard to a particular piece of budget information. All I can say to members opposite is the same as I have said about the member for Newland: why is there a tendency by members of the Liberal Party that, whenever they get anyone who is worthy of leading and worthy of nurturing, they kick them in the guts? I do not know why they do it. I am sure in the remainder of the time I am a member of this Parliament I will not find out the answer. Anyway, the mind boggles at such stupidity portrayed by the Liberal Party.

The final award is for the best Chairman. There were only two contenders, although I do understand that the member for Stuart did take the Chair on one day. It has always been my position to be reasonably humble—in fact, very humble—so I will not give out the award. If I work on the criteria of someone who is firm but fair, compassionate, with the ability to recognise true talent in a Committee, I will make myself available for any honours that may be bestowed by my colleague the member for Henley Beach when he gets to his feet. If he does award me the honour of best Chairman, I will forgive him for taking my office on the lower ground floor.

Mr MEIER: Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

A quorum having been formed:

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD (Chaffey): The Appropriation Bill seeks approval for the provision of approximately \$5 000 million to be made available from the consolidated revenue of the State for the purposes set out in the schedule of the Bill. In terms of a total budget of approximately \$5 000 million, the people of South Australia can well ask why it is that, at a time when we are experiencing the greatest increases and levels of taxation that we have ever known in this State, fewer hospital beds are available to us, our schools are falling into disrepair, our roads need significant upgrading, and our Police Force is having difficulty maintaining its rosters and presence out on the roads of the cities and towns of South Australia.

The average person in the street might well ask why it is that we have this situation, and the answer really lies in the fact that, in 1982 when this Government came to office, South Australia's total debt was approximately \$2 600 million. Today, that figure is officially \$7 300 million. So, we have a situation where we have seen the total debt of South Australia triple in 10 years, the short period of this Labor Government, compared with the total debt accumulated from the beginning of government in this State.

That is the simple answer as to why the people out on the street are having enormous difficulty understanding why the Government, through the Health Commission, is looking at closing down our hospitals and the fact that their children are attending schools which are in many instances weatherboard—timber boxes which have been there for the past 40 or 50 years. They were only temporary buildings when they were put there and they have never been upgraded to solid, permanent construction buildings. People, particularly the parents of South Australia's children, might just be asking where the money is going; what is happening to it; why are we in such a situation?

I said officially the accumulated debt in South Australia is now \$7 300 million: it is anticipated that that will rise to \$8 800 million by the end of this financial year. It is fair to say—and I believe it has been accurately assessed—that total State liabilities are somewhere in the vicinity of \$13 000 million. It is a mammoth task to address that situation, and what we have seen over the past five or six years is certainly not an effective attempt. Just what the new Premier will be able to do that is different from the outgoing Premier's actions is yet to be seen, but it is fair to say that the existing Cabinet—the new look Cabinet—is basically exactly the same Cabinet that presided over that massive blowout in the State's finances, resulting in this accumulation of some \$8 800 million that we have now. If we look at the implications of this massive blowout and this massive debt that has to be serviced, and the sheer magnitude of the interest bill, and we see that virtually 50 per cent of every dollar collected in South Australia through various forms of taxation now goes into servicing the blunders which have occurred, particularly in the past 10 years, it is not so difficult to see why we are in this mess.

Let us go into the country and look at the implications, particularly for some of the people living there, and let me just remind the House of what I have said on numerous occasions, namely, that while only 27 per cent of the State's population lives in the country areas it still generates 50 per cent of the State's economy through export, and export principally of primary products, involving primary industries. Of course, when we look at what is returned into the country areas it is very small indeed. It has been assessed that around 15 per cent of what is collected by Government actually goes back into those country areas.

So, what are the implications for the country services? First of all, as far as services, for example, transport, are concerned, there are no services—certainly no services provided by the Government—unlike the metropolitan area with the STA where there is a service generally provided by all taxpayers of this State to the tune of about \$150 million annually that it loses (that is with the compliments of the taxpayers of all South Australia not just the taxpayers of the metropolitan area). Let us look at what the Government is doing to the Barmera hospital. That hospital that was built in about 1972, so to all intents and purposes it is virtually a new facility. It provides hospital services, nursing home facilities and day care facilities.

The Health Commission has constantly withdrawn funding from that hospital, and the latest cut this year will reduce funding by a further \$250 000. To have a further \$250 000 withdrawn from its operating budget leaves an operation of that size in an almost impossible situation. As I said, if it were an old, tumble down facility that needed to be pushed over there might be some justification for it, but this facility was built by the Government only 20 years ago. It is still in excellent condition; the facilities are extremely good.

One could say that there is a regional hospital up the road at Berri, but I remind the House that a large percentage of the residents of Barmera are elderly people: it is very much a retirement village. The town caters very much for retired people and people on pensions. There is no public transport system to get these people to the regional hospital at Berri and, even if there were, the capacity of that hospital at present is such that it would not have the ability to handle the additional load.

A letter in the *Murray Pioneer* of Friday 4 September from a visiting orthopaedic surgeon (Dr Maguire), who regularly operates in the Riverland and uses the facilities of the Barmera hospital, under the heading 'Surgeon angry', states:

The smell of death hung over the Barmera hospital when last I worked there! It has been cruelly 'murdered' and deprived of all specialist funding by the faceless bureaucrats of the Health Commission. No doubt they acted on the instructions of a barren, hopeless, plundering Government which has squandered money and now sets it right by drastic cuts in health, education and transport. The amount cut means 200 people per year have to travel to the Riverland Regional Hospital to lengthen its waiting list and tax its operating theatres.

It is not as though the facility at Barmera is old, dilapidated or under-utilised; it has just been starved of funds by the commission. This is a deliberate move by the commission—by those sitting down here in Adelaide—which has decided that the regional hospital will cater for the requirements of the people of Barmera. I can say quite positively that the regional hospital cannot

cater for those requirements; it does not have the capacity.

As I said, a large percentage of the people living in the Barmera area are elderly and retired. That is one of the main industries of Barmera—retired people—and it caters for them very well. It has extremely good facilities in the form of day care centres, nursing homes and homes for the aged, all of which work in conjunction with, and in most instances are part of, the hospital facility.

When we look at the fact that we have a budget before us which is bigger than we have ever seen in the history of the State, yet we see facilities being reduced right, left and centre, the public can well ask, 'Where is the money going? What is happening to it?' As I said, a large percentage of that money—50 per cent—is going to service the interest on the debts which have been built up principally in the past 10 years.

Of course, exactly the same situation is occurring in relation to roads, schools and police services on the road. In 1982-83, under the fuel franchise legislation, which came into effect a year or so earlier, \$25.7 million was collected, and that amount went directly into the Highways Department Fund for the improvement and upgrading of roads in South Australia. In 1991-92, \$86 million was collected under the fuel franchise legislation in this State but only \$25.7 million was put into the Highways Fund—the same figure that was applied 10 years earlier. It is anticipated that the fuel franchise tax for this financial year will collect almost \$130 million, but once again the budget provides for only \$25.7 million to go into the Highways Fund. So, in excess of \$100 million of the fuel tax collected in South Australia will go back into general revenue. However, we are finding an ever increasing reduction in the services and facilities provided across the board by Government in the form of hospitals, schools, roads, police and essential services such as water supply.

One only has to go into the country and look at the condition of many of the roads, whether it be on the Eyre Peninsula, in the Mid North, the Riverland, the Murraylands or the South-East, to see the deplorable situation that our roads are in. That was recognised by the Tonkin Government in about 1979-80, and the revenue obtained from the fuel tax was applied totally to the roads of South Australia. Today, we see a minute portion of what is collected being put into roads in country areas, and the roads continue to deteriorate as time goes by. If the Government is serious about a recovery, I honestly believe that it will come from the country areas which have the ability to generate it but certainly not with the lack of support that the country is receiving from this Government and the Federal Government.

A number of primary and secondary industries in country areas have the potential and ability, as long as they are not starved of funds and forced out of existence, to bring this country back from the recession that it is currently experiencing. We only have to look at industries such as the wine industry. Look at what happened to the wine and brandy industry in the 1970s. The destruction of that industry was caused by the excise on brandy that was applied by successive Federal Governments. That caused its downfall. And we should remember that the major part of the wine industry in Australia is still based

in South Australia. The downfall of that industry was caused by the excise on brandy. At that time, 80 per cent of all brandy produced in Australia was produced within the electorate of Chaffey—in other words, within the Riverland of South Australia. As a result of that massive hike in excise, today the Government collects about \$2 400 on every tonne of grapes produced.

The grower is lucky to receive \$180 or \$200 and is going broke in the process. This demonstrates the sheer futility in the thinking of Governments and Treasury officials who can come up with that sort of answer. In real terms, the money collected today in excise from the brandy industry is approximately half what it was prior to that massive hike in excise. So, in this instance the Federal Government has effectively wiped out an industry; it has halved its own income but it still does not have enough commonsense or nous or courage to stand up and say, 'We were wrong; we made a massive blunder,' and to reduce the excise on that product to a reasonable figure, which would enable that industry to revive once again. However, there is potential and the wine industry, particularly in South Australia, is developing a good, sound export industry, but it is to no great credit of the Government that this is occurring. It has not been through any assistance; the taxes and charges put on the industry by the Government—licensing fees and so forth—continue to rise year by year.

The winemaking and grapegrowing industry is gaining strength, not through assistance from the Government but in spite of it. Unfortunately, that is the case across the board in so many of our industries in this country. There will be no recovery in this State or in Australia generally, no matter what the Prime Minister says, unless there is a basis on which the industries and the country can compete on the world stage—on the world market—and, no matter which way we look, that is not possible at the moment. We only have to see what is happening in the EEC and the United States in relation to the wheat industry and the difficult situation that agriculture is being put under at this stage. Let me just remind the House once again that it is only 27 per cent of the population are out there in the rural areas that is generating 50 per cent—

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

Mr S.G. EVANS (Davenport): I do not suppose any of our forefathers, those who pioneered this land or even those who were in the Parliament or in our State in the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s, would have dreamt that we could be plunged into such an economic crisis as we are in at the moment. Of course, that has had an effect also on the attitude of people in the community, their ambitions, and their ability to say, 'Look, I will be able to save for the future to acquire this or that.' There are so many people in our community now who are unemployed that, more importantly, the fear that is in the hearts of others that they could be in the same boat causes people to be more conservative with their spending, because they are not prepared (and I do not blame them) to take a punt that things might be better tomorrow, because we have been promised that by this State Government and by the Federal Government for a long while now and it has not got better.

To most, in their own hearts it has got worse; our State's debt is, in the main, the fault of bad administration and also bad supervision of that administration. For anybody to say that they did not know it was happening or had no idea it was happening, I repeat: they are either fools or they speak untruths. They play around with the truth, because business people were telling the Opposition we were heading for trouble, that the State Bank, the State Government Insurance Commission—all of them—were heading for trouble, and I am sure the message was being whispered in the ears of Government members, especially those in high places.

To give an example I will read a long letter. First, I will read the letter that the constituent wrote to the Premier. The opportunity to raise things in this Parliament by way of question, I have to point out so that my constituent will know, is not easy these days with long answers and, I admit, sometimes long questions. Questions on notice are a joke because the Government can leave them there until the end of the parliamentary year, which is usually in the autumn, and then sometimes not answer them then. We were promised when the Standing Orders were changed that they would be answered the next week. My constituent wrote to the Premier regarding Public Service superannuation and the office of the Under Treasurer:

Dear Mr Bannon,

Complaint

These are, I know, troubled times for you, but I would be most grateful if you could find time to instruct the Under Treasurer to properly address the issues raised in the attached correspondence.

I will not read all the attached correspondence, but I will read another letter that relates to it later. He continues:

I refer, in particular, to the Under Treasurer's letter of 27 July, which fails completely to address my letter of complaint dated 1 June. I deeply resent the contemptuous way in which he has dealt with it. I am looking for him to take some action along the lines set out at item three of paragraph two of my letter of 6 August addressed to him.

I realise that my complaint, on its own, involves a relatively trifling amount of money. But an important principle of truthfulness by public servants in their dealings with the public is involved. And the failure of Treasury's internal control procedures to promptly discover under or over payments by superannuation contributors requires investigation. If I have been misled and inconvenienced, how many other people have and how much money, in total, is involved?

I have therefore asked my member of Parliament to ask a series of questions in the House in relation to the matter. As a matter of courtesy I attach a copy of my letter to him.

Finally, can you let me know, please, whether Treasury is audited by staff of the Auditor-General's Department?

The gentleman had some respect for me because he is not one of my constituents, although I represented his area for a long time and that is why he would have addressed it to me. The letter he wrote to me is as follows:

Dear Mr Evans,

As you can see from the attached correspondence, I am very angry. I have been misled by Treasury officials. I have been inconvenienced by having to find, what is for me, a relatively large amount of money at short notice. And, to add insult to injury, my complaints have been inadequately dealt with by the Under Treasurer.

I have written to the Premier asking him to instruct the Under Treasurer to deal more fully with my complaints. A copy of my letter is attached.

But a far wider and more important issue needs to be addressed: is Treasury concealing from public view serious inadequacies in the way in which it controls the State

Superannuation Pension Scheme and the Public Sector Employees Superannuation Scheme (PSESS)?

I have little knowledge of parliamentary procedures, but I do know that, as a member, you are able to raise matters of public interest in the House. Are you able to ask the following questions on my behalf (and afterwards let me know the answers):

I hope by now that the constituent has the answers from the Premier. I have given the Premier long enough to do it. He has had the letter, but, if not, I hope that this prompts the Premier and those who work in his office of the need for an answer. I continue the constituent's letter, which deals with the efficiency of Treasury's internal control procedures in so far as they affect the State superannuation pension scheme. He says:

With reference to the State Superannuation Pension Scheme for the year ended 30 June 1991:

1.1 How many people contributed to the scheme in that year and what was the total amount (excluding any under or overpayments in respect of earlier years) contributed by them during the year?

1.2: How many people underpaid their contributions during the year and what was the total of their underpayments for the year?

1.3: How many people overpaid their contributions during the year and what was the total of their overpayments for that year?

Question 2 relates to the State superannuation pension scheme as follows:

2.1: In what year did Treasury first institute accounting procedures to enable it to verify that amounts due by contributors had in fact been paid by contributors?

2.2: If the accounting procedure was not in place from the inception scheme, will the Treasurer provide an estimate of the amount underpaid or overpaid by contributors as a result of the failure to install accounting procedures?

Question 3 deals with the efficiency of Treasury's internal control procedures in so far as they affect PSESS as follows:

3.1: I understand from one of my constituents that serious delays are occurring with the issue of yearly statements of entitlement by Treasury. My constituent has not yet received the statement in respect of the year ended 30 June 1990. That statement is now two years overdue. Will the Treasurer tell the House how many Public Service employees have not yet received their statement with respect to the year ended 30 June 1990?

3.2: Will the Treasurer explain the reasons for the delay?

3.3: If one of the reasons for the delay is that Treasury has not yet overcome problems arising from the establishment of the database, when will those problems be overcome?

3.4: When may Public Service employees expect to receive a statement of entitlement on a regular basis, say, within six months of any particular year end?

The writer concludes by saying, 'Are you able to help me obtain information? If you have any queries contact this home number . . .'. The correspondence details what has happened and it is not the contributor's fault that this problem has occurred; rather, it is the fault of Treasury and its supervision, or lack of it. When a person suddenly receives a bill for about \$400 and is told that they are that far in arrears and they check and find that they are not and that there is still an error, that person has a right to be angry, particularly when told that if they do not pay it does not matter and that they will merely not be entitled to as much as they expected they would get at the end.

If that happened in private enterprise, I am sure that someone on the ALP side would stand up and say that the company had carried out a shocking exercise in relation to this customer and that it should pick up the tab. When it comes to people in Treasury, it appears that they overlook that aspect. The Premier may have already

answered the questions but, if he has not, the opportunity is there for him and his staff to go to Treasury and ask for answers. My constituent would understand that in this place, with weeks off and Estimates Committees, time goes by before one gets an opportunity to raise all the matters that one would like to raise.

I now raise another matter. Another constituent wrote to Premier Bannon, who was supposed to be supervising the activities of the State and its various instrumentalities for a number of years and had to step down at least to save some face for the ALP. I am not sure that the member for Ross Smith saved much face for himself. Even though everyone said he was a great person, as an administrator, he was, as I have said before, far from great. My constituent wrote to the Premier some time ago and received four pages on how great they are in the Premier's Department. This letter came from a person entitled the Inquiry Officer to the Premier.

The officer's name was Ms June Appleby. I know her as Mrs June Appleby. She used to be a member of this House and worked with me as a Whip. This long letter to my constituent pointed out that we have had the Grand Prix, this, that and the other thing, and listing all the fancy things that are supposed to have happened, but it did not really answer the complaints of my constituent. So, after receiving the letter from Ms Appleby on behalf of the Premier my constituent wrote back. This may be the plan in the future: to send out four-page letters to say how great we are and not admit any mistakes. However, copies of the reply went to the Leader of the Opposition (Hon. Dean Brown), me and to the new Premier, in the following terms:

Dear Ms Appleby,

Thank you for your letter in reply to mine to Mr Bannon. I have of course read it thoroughly, but I find I cannot retract a single word from my previous letter. Suffice to say, the chief executive of this State has resigned because of gross mismanagement of our money and our resources, along with a significant number of his colleagues. On that alone, I could rest my case, but I will make a few small comments on your letter.

In general: unemployment is rising. Government charges and union pressure on private business has a very great deal to do with this—count the empty shops, office buildings and industrial complexes. The State debt imposed on every one of us by the present regime will never be repaid in our lifetime and will retard real growth for many years to come. This debt is growing daily. Taxes are rising. When a Government has to tax windmills, it is facing collapse and bankruptcy!

Transport: dozens of consultancy reports have been prepared over the last few years, resulting in a ticket system that cost millions and was tossed out virtually within months. Yet another report is being commissioned which is recommending another on-board ticket system. Why do I have to walk 1.25 kilometres from my nearest station to get a ticket? On weekends I can't get one at all! A number of the new trains were built with under-powered engines, and could not go up the hills. The *Island Seaway* is only safe in a millpond. The Director-General, Dr Scratton (is that his name?), does not know his job, does he? Why all these reports and foul-ups if he knew what he was doing?

Hospitals: have you tried to get into one lately? The waiting list is about 10 000. Once again, more consultancy reports are being commissioned because the Minister does not know his job.

The constituent then goes on to attack the national parks area, the prisons system, the priority attached to spending about \$27 million to do up the State Administration Centre and tourism. He points out that very little has been done in relation to tourism over the years. He then refers to crime and the courts. This constituent's letter is excellent. He goes on to state:

I acknowledge much of what you say, but these things are hardly world-shattering events. They are events that one would expect from any Government, in fact, a lot of it is the work of permanent heads.

I also acknowledge that this Government has done good things, but these good things are far outweighed by a factor of 5 000 to 1 by the monumental blunders that have resulted in the position in which we now find ourselves.

The MFP will fail. Every major enterprise in which this Government has taken an interest has failed! I do not belong to or have allegiance to any particular political Party, but as far as this Party is concerned—

he refers to the Labor Party—

enough is enough! I rest my case.

This Government has plunged this State into a terrible crisis as its colleagues have done with the country through their activities in Canberra.

Mr OLSEN secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT

At 5.26 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday 13 October at 2 p.m.