

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 22 October 1992

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

AMBULANCE SERVICES BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 21 October. Page 997.)

Mr S.J. BAKER (Mitcham): In addressing the Bill today I would like to reflect on the wonderful service that St John has contributed to South Australia over the past decades. I do so from the viewpoint of a person who has had some association with St John over the years. One of my close associates, Mr Philip Ferrier, who is no longer in very sound health, made a strong contribution to St John when he was in charge of that service. When we look at St John today and compare it with 10 years ago, we can only be appalled at the changes that have taken place.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is too much conversation. The member for Mitcham.

Mr S.J. BAKER: In many ways, the problems that have beset St John are a mirror image of what has happened to this State under the management of the ALP Government. When the Liberal Party lost Government in 1982, we had a very strong St John Ambulance Service, which employed thousands of volunteers. Young people were trained in the service, and at every sporting venue and Christmas pageant where instant medical care was required we would find St John personnel. Relatives and friends of mine who have served with St John were delighted to be involved as volunteers, and the volunteer element was very strong. That is not the case today. It is sad that we now have before us a Bill that sets in place a monopoly for paid employees in the metropolitan area and places at risk future service delivery in country areas. This has come about because of the bully boy protection tactics employed by certain union members—not by all but by a small handful of people from within the ranks of paid employees and from within the union.

Some years ago we were receiving almost daily reports of the tactics being employed by Mr Palmer and his henchmen to remove volunteers from the ambulance service. At the time I was given information that the tactics involved things like locking doors to ensure that volunteers could not enter ambulance stations, keys being hidden so that the ambulances could not go out on the nightshift, the tyres of volunteers' vehicles being let down and obscene language being used against female volunteers. These were all part and parcel of the union's desire to have a fully paid ambulance service. It was reprehensible and those actions were condoned and protected by this Government.

What we have today in the Bill before the House is the culmination of the efforts of those tactics and what we now see is a situation which I am concerned about, which I fundamentally reject and which I believe must change if we are to continue to provide a timely and professional ambulance service. Of course, as shadow Treasurer I

have some interest in what St John costs the State. There is no doubt that when we had a very even balance between volunteers and paid employees it was the most cost effective service in Australia. It was also the best service in Australia. We had the shortest response times of any capital city in this country and I suspect that, if international comparisons were made, we probably had the best response time of any major city in the world.

That was South Australia's position then due to the efforts of a number of individuals and due to the excellence of the volunteers and the volunteer effort in St John. Importantly, it was believed that the ambulance service was an adjunct to and part of the general training of the large numbers of people participating in a voluntary capacity to have first aid skills of the highest order. As I said, I have had relatives involved in the service, and proudly so. They are no longer involved in that service because of the travesties that we have seen over the past 10 years.

Any system put in place to provide a service to the community has to be reassessed and changed over a period to meet the needs. There is no doubt that we would have seen a greater element of paid employees within the ambulance service, because we are well aware that the level of volunteering, for a whole range of reasons, is not as apparent today as it was one, two or three decades ago; when there was a feeling amongst the population (and we have all been involved with it) of voluntary service being a contribution to the quality of life in this State. That has changed because of economic circumstances; for example, the advent of more families with two working parents, and where a whole range of other activities occupy people's minds. The world is changing and we have to change with it. However, for the Government to allow the tactics that were employed by the union at the time to the ultimate end of achieving a fully paid ambulance service is reprehensible.

If we were to compare the equipment on our ambulances with what was available, say, 20 years ago, we would say that they are now akin to hospitals on wheels. In fact, the way an ambulance is equipped today would suggest that it is far more capable of administering emergency treatment than perhaps hospitals were some 20 years ago. Technology has improved and ambulances now have a whole range of equipment—some of it highly complex, which needs higher levels of training. As a consequence, the chance of a patient surviving that critical first half an hour has been greatly increased.

Against that, if we look at what has happened to ambulance services in other countries, we must be well aware that, if the stringencies that must apply to all Government services are applied here, that extra equipment, that extra expenditure, that higher order of support service, will have to be tempered to meet the budget stringencies. Therefore, in that critical first half an hour, which can mean the difference between life and death, despite all the extra high quality, hi-tech equipment, the service itself may not be able to meet that need of securing a person's life as early as it could have had we retained the volunteers.

I know that my country colleagues have spoken about the level of ambulance services being reduced. We have seen the push by the union to take in outer metropolitan areas; for example, ambulances at Gawler, which were

run on a 24-hour basis with sufficient volunteers to cover almost every emergency, have now dramatically been reduced. We know that the volunteers are being forced further out, and the only people who suffer under the circumstances are the patients or those victims who may otherwise have been saved.

The three types of services that St John provides are: first, courier cars, which take people to and from hospital; secondly, recovery units; and, thirdly, the emergency services. In reassessing the role of St John, or that of the ambulance service—because there is some doubt about the long-term future of St John being the employing agency—we must judge that the courier car service is an unnecessary expense. For example, I am reminded that the Terrace Hotel is selling its Rolls Royce, and it would be cheaper to put a Rolls Royce on the road than to run a St John courier car service. I know that a number of hospitals are not happy with the quality of service they receive currently and are looking to install their own service. I believe a case could be made for transporting patients by taxi, because they do not need the services of an ambulance or a courier car to get them to or from hospital. That whole area must be totally reassessed in terms of its cost effectiveness.

With respect to recovery units, again there is an argument that St John or the ambulance service may have no part to play. We could equally put the case that we have emergency services in the form of the SES, the fire brigade, the CFS and these sorts of organisations. Recovery units could well be left to the devices of the fire brigade, for example. The fire brigade has a team of people skilled in first aid who are required to meet emergencies such as fires. A case could be advanced for the fire brigade, or a section of the Police Force which also has people trained in emergency services, to provide the recovery units.

We then come to the third item—emergency services. Countries in other parts of the world do not necessarily have a dedicated Government-funded ambulance service. Given the changes that have taken place, I have no particular feeling of good will towards the fully paid ambulance service. I do not believe that the proud history that the State once enjoyed has been reciprocated by the people who will now enjoy the so-called benefits of this Bill, and it would be for any Government to reassess the role of the ambulance service.

I do not believe that there should be a monopoly in the metropolitan area, because we could be held ransom to the desires and demands of individuals who have a very poor track record. I can imagine those same individuals will wish to achieve higher status and salary and will use their monopoly status to hold the State to ransom. The only reason they have been prevented from doing so in the past is that a large number of volunteers has been willing to step into their shoes to provide the service. If they indulged in strike action or removal of their services, there has always been somebody to step in and replace them. If the Minister has his way, that back-up safety net will be destroyed. I have serious concerns about that.

We need a complete reassessment of what services should be provided. More importantly, as a Liberal, I completely reject the proposition of a monopoly status being given to this ambulance service. Whilst it had volunteers in it, who performed an appropriate, important

and essential function, I had no reservations. Because tremendous good will and an extraordinary amount of service was given to the people of this State, I never had any difficulties in accepting the monopoly status of St John in the provision of the ambulance service. However, I have some reservations about the new arrangement, and that arrangement will have to be judged on its merits and reviewed when the Liberal Party comes into Government. There is no way in the world that I or anybody on this side of the House will allow those thugs who have achieved their ends to use their new found power to destroy the quality of service that this State has had over a long period. Should they try to do so, there will be some dramatic changes if I have any say in the matter.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen): I want to speak only briefly on this legislation. In saying that, it is not because I do not attach a great deal of importance to the matter that is before the House. At the outset, I should like to commend my colleague the member for Adelaide, the shadow Minister of Health, Family and Community Services, on his contribution to this legislation.

I have had a very long association with St John—almost for as long as I can remember. I can recall vividly, in my very early days, going to a number of St John functions with my parents, who were both involved in the organisation and contributed as volunteers over a vast length of time. Since that time, and in latter days, I have become involved with the stations at both Mount Barker and, in more recent times, Aldgate. I have had a long association, particularly with the volunteers at Mount Barker. I had the privilege some time ago of opening that station. During that time and since then, the association has been very close indeed. It is an organisation that I have admired as much as, if not more than, any other I know of.

The dedication and commitment that is shown generally by the majority of people who have worked with that organisation over a long time is quite remarkable. People have given up so much of their time in so many different ways in serving and caring for their community, and that is commendable. Fortunately, I can say that I have used the facility only once, so I really cannot talk about the care from a consumer's point of view. However, certainly I am aware of the support that is provided to people who are in difficult circumstances as a result of serious illness or accident.

I guess I have had the greatest involvement with individual volunteers during the service that they have provided at sporting and community activities throughout my electorate. I have always been pleased to see familiar faces and to note the support that is provided to local communities by these dedicated people. I have been concerned in more recent times that suggestions have been made that that opportunity could not continue. I am pleased to say that, given everything that has gone on in relation to the whole matter of St John over a period of time, that seems to have been reversed to some extent. It is important to local communities, to those who participate and to those who care for those who are participating in sporting and other community functions that people are there to provide assistance if needed.

St John has had a marvellous history and there are many opportunities for people to read that history and to

be made aware of it. It certainly has concerned me, as I said earlier, that in more recent times I feel that some of the services and, in some cases, many of the services that were provided by the volunteers seem to have disappeared. It has been of considerable concern to me that there has been so much damaging wrangling between professional and non-professional staff—I do not like those terms, so perhaps it would be better to say between paid and non-paid staff, because every one of those people is a professional person, whether or not they are working in a voluntary capacity.

There has been a lot of wrangling. It has been brought to my attention several times that some unnecessary situations have occurred between paid and non-paid staff. On a number of occasions I have put some of those issues before this House, as have other of my colleagues on both sides of the House. Many people have been hurt as a result of those wranglings, and I know that a lot of people have left the service because of that. In my own electorate there were times when people who had served St John over a long period of time were virtually locked out of their offices, offices that they had worked to build.

They had worked with the community, who had strongly supported the service in the construction of those facilities, and they had gained a lot of apparatus as a result of the community making a strong contribution. It was regrettable indeed that we reached a stage where those volunteers were being locked out of their own areas. As has been said by a number of my colleagues, I believe there is a considerable amount of uncertainty regarding the continuation of St John as an employment agency. I can only hope—and I am sure that all members of this place feel the same way—that whatever happens as a result of this legislation before the House—and, as I said earlier, I strongly support the stand that has been taken by my colleague the shadow Minister—that appropriate care can be provided for those people who need it. I say that for sentimental reasons and because of my understanding and that of the majority of people in this State regarding the support that has been given to the local community in South Australia through the St John movement. It is essential that that should be the case.

The Hon. B.C. EASTICK (Light): I support the general thrust of the measure recognising that some amendments are required, and I am led to believe that in due course they will be accepted. My involvement with St John goes back many years; I was in a hands-on situation, as in my former professional life I was constantly shoulder to shoulder with members of the volunteer groups at race meetings, trots meetings, agricultural shows and so on. I came to respect the manner in which those people were prepared to give up their own time to assist the community and in many cases to assist organisations that were seeking to raise funds for the community, without themselves seeking funds from those communities.

I had further close contact with the whole system when, in an *ex officio* position, as Mayor of the town of Gawler, I found myself automatically President of the local branch. For a four-year period I had close contact with the people who were working through the Gawler, Freeling, Kapunda, Eudunda and Barossa Valley areas. I had the misfortune at that time to become involved in the

need for an upgrading of the then service following the fatal crash on the road between Gawler and Wasleys when 17 people lost their lives when a train charged into a double-decker bus.

Arising from that incident and the number of problems that were seen to exist with a completely inadequate service based on Gawler, many changes were to arise and an increase in the availability of ambulance services in the northern area was to follow. I then also witnessed a rather unfortunate aspect of the service, which was no fault of the service itself but in great measure was the unfortunate involvement of a number of medical practitioners when they effectively created what became known as the black and white taxi service where, rather than visiting people in their home, they would have the ambulance call to the home, especially where it was outside the township areas of the district in which I lived, to bring the patients in for vaccinations and various other activities. This started a destruction of the true volunteer spirit and the cost effectiveness of what was a very important unit in the community.

Those days have gone and there has been a rationalisation of the service, but I am led to believe from my own observations and that of others that the rationalisation has gone too far in the other direction. Regrettably, a number of volunteers who have had many years of experience in the service and would willingly continue the commitment they have made to their community to assist on weekends and nights are precluded from so doing. This is for a number of reasons, many of them petty and some of them directly associated with the involvement of union labour *vis-a-vis* voluntary labour. That is an unfortunate aspect of the whole proceedings.

Notwithstanding that, I recognise that it is a service like the fire brigade and the hospitals that one needs in a community, hoping that they will never be used in the sense that there will be no fires, accidents or need for hospitalisation. The reality is that all such units are required from time to time, and it is a cost against the community to ensure that, even if they are not used extensively, they are physically available when events require.

In those circumstances, I find it regrettable that the cost of providing the service to the community got out of all proportion to the requirements of the community and the physical ability of the community to be more than happy with a service that is less costly because the volunteers have a positive place in the development and future involvement of the service. I am talking at this moment of a set of circumstances which do not exist and which are not likely to return to what I believe would be a more community-benefiting organisation in the near future.

However, the pendulum has swung on many occasions in other community issues, and I trust that it will swing in future so that we get back to a sensible integration of a more cost efficient service for the whole community. Not only is it beneficial but also it allows a number of people in the community to have an aim in life and to keep their skills in first aid and resuscitation upgraded, thereby being a resource in the community for emergency situations that nobody can foresee, whether it be in the workplace, on the recreation field or at home.

It is unfortunate that large numbers of people who would otherwise be volunteers with their ongoing involvement with the ambulance service are no longer welcomed as participants, with the result that the community resource has diminished accordingly. I recall when I was Speaker of this House an occasion involving staff and members in a very worthwhile exercise concerning the St John program which sought to teach skills in relation to mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and a basic knowledge of circumstances in which any honourable member or member of staff might find themselves in the community in which they lived. That exercise has not been repeated, and I know that it has not been repeated in a number of communities for the reasons I stated a short time ago.

I hope that, even though the pressures on many people in the community are such that they are looking for paid employment these days or they are not able perhaps to give as much time to voluntary effort as they have in the past, that situation will soon return so that, in total, we have a more caring, integrated population in the future than some of the legislation that we are required to pass provides for us at present.

Mr BLACKER (Flinders): The way I feel at the moment, I do not know whether to talk about an ambulance or to call for one. I hope I can keep going! I place on the record my appreciation and, I am sure, that of the wider community for the service provided by the St John Ambulance organisation to the citizens of South Australia. There is no doubt that the service is second to none and, apart from a few hiccups that vary between country areas and the metropolitan area, and between volunteer and paid officers, we would all agree that the overall service is excellent.

There are, however, a few anomalies that ought to be discussed at this point, one of which is in the application of the call-out fee. One example concerns a group of cottages for the aged located about 40 metres from a hospital. One of the aged residents collapsed and the ambulance was called. Subsequently, the person was issued with an account for the call-out fee of \$380, or whatever it was. The point I made at the time was that it would have been easier and quicker to push the barouche to the hospital rather than load it into the ambulance and drive the ambulance. The motor of the ambulance would not even get warm over that distance. Fortunately, commonsense prevailed and the hospital board stepped in on that occasion. However, this highlights the anomalies that can occur.

In that instance, all the officers were volunteers. They were giving of their time, and the only cost involved in the provision of that service related to starting the ambulance and driving the 25 metres to the front of the cottages.

The Hon. B.C. Eastick: Charged by computer!

Mr BLACKER: As the member for Light says, charged by computer. Technically, the ambulance was started, and technically, there was a call-out, but the computer did not have the discretionary powers to intervene in such circumstances.

The other issue of concern is that, for the bulk of country areas other than regional cities, the services are provided by volunteers. My understanding is that call-out

fees are standard State-wide, and it concerns me that we have volunteers in the country providing exactly the same service as the paid officers in the metropolitan area. In effect, in their own time and at their own expense, those volunteers are subsidising the service that is being provided by the paid officers in the metropolitan area.

I do not believe that that is fair. The work of the volunteers, if they are prepared to give of their time and service at no charge other than their volunteer support to the community, should be recognised, not so much in their being paid a fee or some sort of monetary contribution, but at least with the satisfaction that they are able to provide a cheaper service to the potential users within the community. It is wrong for staff to give of their time freely in one area without the community benefiting by that, and that point should be acknowledged.

The other thing which, although involving St John, does have an indirect association is the Patient Accommodation and Travel Scheme (PATS) and its application of the 200 km zone. For argument's sake, if a person is required to go to a hospital in Port Lincoln from Elliston, that person is not eligible under the PAT Scheme because of the distance being less than 200 km. If, on the other hand, the person were to go to the airport and go by air, a different set of circumstances prevails. If the person lives a further 20 km up the road from Elliston on the way to Port Kenny, eligibility could well exist. These sorts of anomalies need to be ironed out.

St John provides a great service, not only in attending at accidents but also with the volunteer services and first aid posts it mans at sporting fixtures, country shows, etc. As I said, this is usually in the volunteers' free time and, usually, the community responds and the organisation for which St John attends contributes a small amount of money for its presence. We all appreciate that, but there is also a need to recognise the cadet service. I should like to see the organisation continue to sponsor the St John cadets, which I believe is a great organisation. In fact, I have been invited to help at one of its fundraising activities within the next two or three weeks, and it is a pleasure for me to be able to do just that.

In addition, the organisation helps with first aid training and often conducts courses that are a valuable community service. In most instances, the volunteers are giving of their own time. I have needed an ambulance on only one occasion, which was a time when I was involved in rather a serious road accident at Mambray Creek. Although I was not conscious and, therefore, could not take charge of the proceedings, one group of very kind people who were first on the scene rang Port Augusta for an ambulance and another group rang Port Pirie for an ambulance. So, I had two ambulances attend to me, and that then raised a whole new issue in terms of costings.

I could not be blamed for two ambulances turning up and I could not blame the wider community for expressing its interest and concern at an accident victim lying on the side of the road. I do not know how we overcome that sort of problem. It is something with which St John may well be confronted regularly, and I do not know how we deal with it. I support the general thrust of the Bill and merely state my concerns that the wrangling that has taken place between volunteers and

paid officers has done a certain amount of damage to the service. I hope that that damage has not been permanent and that the service as we know it can continue to exist with the due support and recognition it rightly deserves.

Mr SUCH (Fisher): I should like to make only a brief contribution in respect of this Bill. First, I pay tribute to the work that has been done in the past and continues to be done by volunteers generally in our community, not just by those associated with the ambulance service. As a society, we should acknowledge that the role of volunteers has been an intrinsic part of the Australian ethos, and it would be a tragedy if we reached a stage where that volunteering aspect, that commitment to doing things without monetary reward, were totally lost.

If we look around the community we see that many groups do voluntary work and are a credit not only to themselves but to our total society. If we add up the contribution they make in monetary terms, it is quite a significant amount but, more importantly, it is significant in a non-monetary sense. We can look at groups such as the Surf Life Saving Association, the CFS and, of course, St John, just to mention a few.

Central to this Bill, I believe, should be a recognition of the important role played by volunteers in our community in the past, during the present and, hopefully, well into the future, because I believe it is one of the characteristics of our society that should be applauded and continued. The day that volunteerism is absent from our society will be a sad day indeed.

Whilst the Opposition supports the general thrust of the Bill, we have concerns about several aspects of it. For a start, we are concerned about the likely creation of a monopoly in terms of the provision of ambulance services. As we know in other areas, monopolies are not a good thing whether they are in the private sector or the public sector. There is always a danger that if you have a monopoly the particular organisation or group can take advantage of the situation. The temptation is often too great. One of the dangers in this Bill is that it will create a monopoly with regard to the provision of ambulance services.

The Opposition, in keeping with its general philosophy, supports the notion of competition provided standards are met. When we are dealing with the health of people, obviously we must have appropriate standards. So, we are saying that competition should be allowed provided there are adequate standards to protect the health and wellbeing of the people being transported.

It is important that there be a body that ensures that standards are provided and met, but within that general umbrella allowance should be made for the possibility of competition. This Bill creates some difficulties with respect to the definition of an ambulance and, as has been pointed out by other members, there is some doubt whether some of the existing ambulance services such as Westpac, those provided at motor racing events and even some of the St John first aid units would qualify or come within the definition of 'ambulance'. I quote an example in the electorate of Davenport where an existing ambulance was withdrawn—

Mr S.G. Evans interjecting:

Mr SUCH: Yes, as the member for Davenport points out, it was largely paid for by the community. But, they

have replaced an ambulance that was taken away against the will of the local community with a very fine four-wheel drive vehicle. Whilst it is called a first aid unit, it has the capacity and capability to operate as an ambulance. As has been demonstrated recently by the floods in the northern areas, those four-wheel drive vehicles have proved their worth. No doubt the one in the Blackwood area will do the same, particularly during the bushfire season. I hope it never has to be used in that context, but the likelihood is that it may.

One of the aspects of the Bill that is of concern is the definition relating to an ambulance, and I acknowledge that there are a whole lot of activities carried out under the umbrella term of 'ambulance services', and these need to be addressed. It covers the whole range of transport relating to people who are ill or in need of emergency treatment, and includes such vehicles as clinic cars and the like. With respect to the Bill, there needs to be a specific acknowledgment of the role of volunteers. As I indicated at the start, volunteers are a central part of our way of life, and long may that be the case. There needs to be a specific recognition of the important role carried out by volunteers.

In any organisational structure affecting ambulance services there must be adequate representation of volunteers, and the Opposition would strongly urge and seek adequate representation to ensure that volunteers have a proper input into any decisions and arrangements made relating to the provision of ambulance services in this State. A conflict of interest involving the setting of fees, and so on, could well arise in the Minister's relationship with the new association to be established to provide ambulance services. I hope that this matter, as well as any other matters of concern, will be addressed during the passage of this Bill.

I indicated that I wished to make only some brief comments. In conclusion, I once again pay tribute to the work carried out not only by volunteers, in particular, but also by members of various groups that provide ambulance services, because those individuals and groups, whether they be St John or others, have demonstrated a high level of commitment, concern and care for the people whom they have transported. I acknowledge also the work carried out by paid staff. I commend the Bill in general terms and, together with other members of the Opposition, I look forward to changes that will improve the provision of ambulance services in this State.

Mr BECKER (Hanson): Over the years I have had the highest regard and respect for volunteers in the St John Ambulance Service of South Australia who have given hundreds of hours a year, on some occasions 20 or 30 hours a week, to provide a service for the people of South Australia that is probably the best service anywhere in Australia. However, I am saddened by this legislation, a measure exemplifying the final throes of a socialist Government enforcing its minority will on the people by taking over the ambulance service. This has been the greatest conspiracy among the socialist countries of the world. No matter where one goes in the world, the story is the same: wherever an ambulance service has been run by volunteers it has gradually been taken over by professionals.

One of the most difficult aspects of the formation of a voluntary organisation—and I have had a lot of experience in this regard—is that, when professionals are taken on to help with part of the workload, it is difficult to combine the skills and efforts of volunteers with those of professional paid officers. There has been this long brawl within the organisation about who will run it and how it will be managed. The most important people concerned in this issue are the consumers, but I do not think too much regard has been given to those poor people, because the ambulance service in this State has, regrettably, deteriorated, although I hope it is only a short-term problem.

Unfortunately, this duel has been going on for a long time. No-one in South Australia anticipated the problems between professional paid staff and volunteers. The training of a section of the community in a volunteer capacity to provide first aid was an outstanding achievement. To be able to assist those people to go further and become professionals would be of even greater benefit to the community, but there is no need for this continuing brawl that has been assisted, aided and abetted by a Government that is determined to force its will on the people; a Government that has hit at every voluntary agency or structured organisation in this State.

There is a long list of them, including Minda Home, the Home for Incurables, the Children's Hospital and the ambulance service, and now we are aware of the trouble that is erupting within the Country Fire Service. One at a time voluntary organisations have been picked off and taken over by this socialist Government, which has been hell bent on forcing and ramming through its socialist ideals.

The Savings Bank of South Australia belonged to the people—it did not belong to the State. The State had nothing to do with it. All the State Government did, through legislation, was guarantee the deposits in that bank because, under the banking licence, the Reserve Bank was not the lender of last resort. Because the Government provided that service, this Government over the past few years carried out its socialist dream and took over the State Bank and appointed a couple of so-called professional bankers to be in charge of it—and look what happened! It has cost the taxpayers of this State more than \$3 000 million.

Everything the Labor Government has done and touched, every volunteer organisation that the Government has seized, has become a financial disaster. God help us if the Government turns the ambulance service in South Australia into another disaster, because increases in the already high costs of providing an ambulance service are starting to be felt by the community. The situation is unfair because the people of South Australia never voted for this: they never asked for it and it has been foisted on them.

I have to declare my interest as President of the Adelaide Motor Cycle Division of St John, the oldest division of St John and one that has provided an outstanding service for about 63 years. Motor cycle sport—motor sport generally—in this State will not survive if the Bill goes through in the form proposed. There will be no motor cycle or motor sport in most country areas and I doubt that many sporting events will

be conducted in this State if we are to follow the trend of other States and other countries.

About three years ago we started a campaign to raise money to buy a specialist ambulance or first aid unit for the Adelaide Motor Cycle Division so that it could provide the best back-up support service for motor cycling sports in this State, particularly for 24 hour trials, a type of off-road event, and for other events where motor cyclists ride through some of the roughest and toughest terrain in the State.

The idea was that we needed a four-wheel drive vehicle that would go anywhere to retrieve anyone involved in an accident. Finally, the money was found through several donations, including one from the Lady Mayoress's fund, but Motor Cycling South Australia—previously known as the Autocycling Union of South Australia, the controlling body of motor cycle sport in this State—came up with almost the whole sum to purchase this vehicle and outfit it. The Adelaide Motor Cycle Division of St John had saved a considerable sum, in excess of \$10 000 and, with a most generous donation from Motor Cycling South Australia, it purchased the vehicle, but a major factor was the cost of outfitting that vehicle so that it could provide the best possible service in South Australia.

So successful was the design and the structure of this vehicle that, during the floods in Two Wells a few weeks ago, all volunteers under the disaster plan were called into the area and the Adelaide motorcycle division took its ambulance, its four-wheel drive vehicle, out there in case it was needed as a first aid unit. Unfortunately, a resident did suffer an asthma attack. Two medical practitioners were present, and they were so concerned for the safety and welfare of the patient that they ordered an ambulance. The normal ambulance was unable to get to the property because of the level of flooding, which was about knee-deep on an average person. The Adelaide motorcycle division first aid unit was called in and they were able to back the vehicle up to the door of the house, which had already been sandbagged. They had had the foresight to acquire a proper ambulance-type stretcher, and that was used. The patient was placed on the stretcher and taken out of the house and then the four-wheel drive vehicle traversed various roads until it could be met by an ambulance that could convey the patient straight to hospital.

The State ambulance service as we know it at present does not have that type of vehicle in the metropolitan area. It does not have a vehicle that is capable of traversing certain road conditions, and that is most unfortunate. It is fortunate for that patient, the emergency services and the people of South Australia that due to the foresight and planning of the Adelaide motorcycle division of St John we do have this vehicle in the metropolitan area, and it is only too proud and willing to offer its services any time they are ever needed. There is a good working relationship between what I call the professional staff, the paid staff of the ambulance service and this division. I hope that that continues. It is paramount that it continues, because that ambulance is required at the speedway and at other motorcycle events where it will retrieve anybody who is unfortunate enough to have a serious accident. The type of stretcher it has

means that it can be placed straight into a Government ambulance.

We must overcome certain problems. I do not like one clause of the legislation as it stands at present. I would throw out the whole thing; I would not have a bar of it. The voluntary ambulance service that we have in South Australia is superb. As I said earlier, having formed a voluntary organisation, the Epilepsy Association of South Australia, back in 1976, I have nothing but admiration and respect for the St John ambulance service in this State and the way it has handled and looked after people who, for example, unfortunately have had a seizure, in some of the most difficult of places, and who in some circumstances have injured themselves and perhaps even sustained spinal injuries, as happened in my son's case. Those people are well treated and well looked after. Thanks to the tender loving care of St John ambulance officers, at least my son did not become a paraplegic. Many other people not only owe their life to St John officers but their injury and circumstances were easily looked after by St John.

I will fight very strongly and viciously to protect the ambulance service that we have in South Australia, because it is one that has a lot to do with the Epilepsy Association of South Australia over the years. So, Minister, you have a lot of questions to answer; you will have to give a lot of assurances before you will get me onside to accept any part of this legislation, and I will certainly take the opportunity during the Committee stage to seek those assurances. If the Minister cannot provide them, then as far as I am concerned the legislation should be thrown out, until we can get a better working relationship.

The big problem is that if a doctor attending a sporting meeting or function where there is a voluntary first aid unit says to the people in charge, 'This person must be taken to hospital straight away,' there is no time to ring and wait for a Government-owned ambulance to come along; one uses the vehicle and takes that person direct to the hospital. Under this legislation there could be a conflict, all sorts of problems and legal ramifications and they could be construed to have broken the law. In a matter of life and death there is not the time to ring up and say, 'Can you get over here?', even though it may be a priority one phone call.

In the western suburbs we have two wonderful depots at West Torrens and Fulham. I was at a senior citizens' function when an elderly person had a heart attack, and the ambulance was there within three minutes from Fulham to Fullarton Gardens. It was obvious that the person was not alive, but they worked hard to do all they could to try to resuscitate that person, with full credit. As I said, the ambulance got there within about three minutes. If one tried to do that in normal traffic conditions down Tapleys Hill Road one would have to be a pretty good driver. I give full credit to the team on that occasion. I understand that it is not a priority one call today and there could be delays at certain times. One would expect that during peak hour traffic, and unfortunately that is when we experience most accidents.

I am just as concerned about people attending sporting functions. It always worries me when I see football, and I have even seen a case at a cricket match. In Australian Rules, when somebody is king-hit, one sees them go

down, or sometimes they go for a high mark and fall awkwardly, and it seems a long time before the trainers bring out a stretcher, let alone have a fully qualified first aid team there to assist. Australian Rules football has got away with a lot over the years in not having first aid people on the ground with the so-called football trainers, runners and goodness knows what else.

In another situation, a first aid unit could be at a location where a policeman in an emergency orders the first aid unit to convey a person to hospital because he sees it as a life-threatening situation. There are many difficulties with this legislation. In 24-hour motorcycle trials, the first aid units are required to use the public roads. It may be that the first aid unit has to pass a country hospital to transfer a patient to an ambulance to be taken to that hospital. That is a ludicrous situation. All these questions need to be raised with the Minister and they must be sorted out. There could be nasty situations where there is more than one patient at the scene of an accident.

I am concerned about the cost of the service and the provision and maintenance of what has been and what the people of South Australia expect to be an outstanding service since the St John Ambulance service has been in South Australia. It is interesting to note that there is an interim agreement between the operations branch and the ambulance service regarding emergency patient transport by the operations branch. This agreement states:

It is hereby agreed that an ambulance will be used each time a stretcher patient is to be transported from an operations branch duty to a hospital.

That is pretty severe legislation, and I draw the Minister's attention to this, unless he is aware of it, but he has not been in that portfolio for very long. If somebody calls in or the operations branch is attending, they must use an ambulance. It goes on:

An exception will be if the communications duty officer of the ambulance service advises that an ambulance cannot be provided within a reasonable time, bearing in mind the urgency of the case, and authorises the operations branch MFAU (medical first aid unit) to transport the patient.

There is the weakness, Minister. Right in the heart of the legislation there is a conflict where a first aid unit can be authorised to transport someone to hospital if there is a delay in getting an ambulance. What that admits to me is that there will be delays in providing ambulances to the public. People do not like that. People are up in arms as it is because if someone has a heart attack and is required to go to hospital they expect a bed to be made available. Today, there is a chance that one will be left in casualty, out in the corridor or anywhere—anywhere but in a room or in a bed in a hospital. What a terrible situation we have reached.

Are we going to tell the people of South Australia that, because the Government is following its philosophy of nationalisation of everything, we are grubbing the ambulance service and we cannot guarantee that an ambulance will be available, that a medical first aid unit might have to be used or that patients will have to get to hospital the best way they can? It is simply not good enough in this modern day and age when one considers the level of taxation and services that are provided in many other countries, whether it be in the third world or wherever. There is no need to bring this State down to

the lowest common denominator as far as third world countries are concerned. We have the best, we expect the best and we demand that the best service be maintained in the interests of the people of this State.

Mr LEWIS (Murray-Mallee): Like other members of the Opposition, I support the legislation. It is widely known that at least 2 000 people are involved in service to St John, as it has been known historically, and who are not paid for the service they provide to the wider community in that role. Of them, 1 200 are the volunteers whom we normally find in various places around the State, historically wearing black and white uniforms. They derive great satisfaction from their participation in the service and the community derives enormous benefit from their contribution through that service.

There certainly needs to be a satisfactory structure for them that is autonomous. There is no doubt that for many years the Government has accepted the demands made by paid personnel in the ambulance service to dispense with volunteer personnel. As a result, the volunteers are under threat and they have had their role and function seriously attacked to the point where, unquestionably, supporters of the paid service have attempted to discredit the volunteers, abuse them, abuse the values for which the volunteers stood and desecrated what I believe to have been a fine Australian tradition of community service.

I have nothing but contempt for those people and their supporters, and I say that with considerable feeling. They are greedy, self seeking, narrow minded, half witted, inconsiderate people who lack any understanding of what goes into the provision of strength in the fabric of society to ensure that traditions of democracy endure over time.

There are still 64 volunteer centres around the State and it is their wish that we, as legislators, recognise not only what has been done in the past but what they would wish to continue doing and assist in having done in perpetuity. It is our duty, in my judgment, to them and the broader community to ensure that that can happen. One of the things by which I believe the attitude of the paid service can be identified as miscreant is the determination through the paid service to centralise control of the communication system. That communication system as it stands just needs refurbishment and updating to the best available technology and world's best practice in its use. Just because someone is paid to do a job does not mean that they are capable of doing it any more competently or with any greater compassion than somebody who is not paid.

Mr Deputy Speaker, you and I well remember the remarks which you made about volunteers on another matter. A few days ago you said that the Friends of the Botanic Gardens, for instance, should be allowed to assist the Botanic Gardens and the interests of South Australians in continuing to enjoy that benefit. It is a view which I happen to hold very strongly, too. There are friends of many things in our community: friends of parks, Friends of the Art Gallery and so on. The St John organisation is the friend of our health care system and our first aid wherever and whenever it is needed in the various forms.

In my judgment we are paying too much in the form of salaries for some of the people in the upper middle

management and higher levels of the paid service and leaving ourselves too little to ensure that we can derive greatest benefit for the community at large from the full spectrum of skills that would otherwise be made available with the equipment and facilities that could be provided to them. I am not satisfied that any accurate, valid appraisal of the management structure has been done by the management consultants competent to do it. I am satisfied that what has been done has been politically expedient, satisfactory to the unions and satisfactory to the Government in its comfortable relations with them. I am stating quite plainly my contempt for the present position in which we find ourselves as we debate this measure.

Against that background then let us ensure nonetheless that we are able to retain an ambulance service and the other benefits which have been provided by the people who have been largely volunteers in the past, because the people I represent, in the communities in which they live, could not possibly afford to have a paid ambulance service, and neither can the general revenue resources of this State. It is especially stupid for us to contemplate any other approach than to retain what the volunteers have offered. They do three things for us: through their training branch they train others who wish to join the service; they provide an operations branch, which used to be called the brigade; and they also provide a transport service for patients, which is known as the ambulance service. There is absolutely no need to split that down the middle in the fashion in which the unions and their adherents, aided and abetted by the gutless wonders who have determined the policy in the Government, would want it to be done.

All country towns that I represent have made plain to me, through several of the organisations that exist in the community—be they service organisations, local government, churches or other interest groups—that they want to see the services that they have obtained traditionally retained. It is crazy when someone who is qualified and competent to perform one service wearing a black and white uniform is prevented from performing another service wearing that same uniform. It is crazy to want—indeed to require—those people to change uniform before they can perform the service. It is not only crazy: I believe it is immoral and denigrating. It is an abuse of such people and their commitments.

The representations that have been made to me, the background circumstances of which I am aware, come from wider than just the electorate of Murray-Mallee. Indeed, I was involved as the member for Mallee in communities further south that are now in the domain of the member for Victoria. I will use one such instance to illustrate my point about the stupidity of the situation. We have at Lucindale a sub-branch under Naracoorte. It is purely an ambulance service. On Lucindale field days, the ambulance service of volunteers in Lucindale is forbidden from being in attendance; it is forbidden from providing a service. It has to come from volunteers in Naracoorte. That is the implication of the stupid approach being taken by these people who are running the service presently, playing their power games.

The way the cash is worked out means it is \$110 for a call-out fee plus \$50 an hour, and that community and the organisers of the field day cannot afford that;

therefore, they have to use the volunteers from Naracoorte. They would have to charge, under the arrangements as they exist, a fee of \$110 plus \$50 an hour. That is why it cannot be done. It can be done within the existing framework as long as they pay the money. It is rapacious and stupid.

I see no reason why it is necessary for a person to change their uniform to do a job. I certainly see that we need to conserve what we already have and to ensure that it is respected in future in the same way as it has been respected in the past so that children in schools are not made to think of the people who wear black and white uniforms of the traditional St John as being an inferior bunch of Dad's Army operators, because they are not. No-one in this place would have the guts to say that they are, but there are people in this place who would support a view and a course of action that would see them phased out of existence, and that is tantamount to the same thing and is otherwise defined, quite clearly, as hypocrisy.

Looking at the new structure, I believe that we need more volunteers on the board than is presently proposed. There should be a wider community representation from rural South Australia as well as adequate volunteer representation. The kind of people there presently all back up vested interest positions, and the provision of an ambulance and first aid service has nothing to do with vested interests: it has everything to do with political expedience and comfort for the people who are making those decisions and the way that they relate to each other in getting the numbers for their pet hobby-horses to be passed through the decision-making process.

There are still some ambulances and services provided in the Mid North that are not amalgamated, although the last that stood out against amalgamation in my electorate has recently been amalgamated. Those people who are not amalgamated need to be permitted to continue as volunteers, whether by licence or other means. It needs to be recognised also that the volunteer service that we have, such as it is, generates as best I can determine a surplus of \$1.8 million a year, and presently the capital reserve fund receives \$800 000 a year after meeting its budget for vehicles, buildings, refurbishment, extensions and so on as may be necessary. I know that a 50 per cent subsidy is provided to the vehicle fund. All 35 vehicles were paid for from this fund, 23 of them in the current period being allocated to the service where paid staff are working, not to the volunteer groups. Only 12 vehicles are allocated to the volunteer groups. That, in itself, is an administratively expedient change and an abuse of the volunteer service as it has been.

No doubt the volunteer service could run at a much lower cost to the communities in which it is provided if it were left alone to do that, but it is not. For instance, on top of the current \$385 call-out charge there is a charge of \$2 a kilometre, so the account for a call-out from somewhere out in the bush will total as much as \$1 000, whereas a call-out from somewhere in the city to take a person to a hospital will amount to about \$400 to \$420. To my mind, that is not social justice or equity.

Even the member for Napier would have to agree with that. There is no fairness in it, yet this Government prates about social justice, equal opportunity and equity, and frequently I hear members, such as the member for Napier, saying that they do not care about such things. I

do not know how the member for Napier or any other member opposite could possibly answer that. It is simply not fair for people who live in the country to have a cost structure such as that, when the decisions about those costs are not made in consultation with those volunteers and others. They are imposed upon those of us who live in the country by the administration to which I referred earlier. They do deals with each other for the sake of their own personal advancement, ignoring the public interest they are supposed to be serving.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: Rubbish!

Mr LEWIS: The member for Napier may well say 'rubbish', but I have researched the position thoroughly. I know that the member for Napier thinks it is a long way from One Tree Hill to Elizabeth, but let me tell him that it is much longer from Karoonda to Murray Bridge, or from Mannum or Tailem Bend to Murray Bridge. There has been one death already directly attributed to this messy, overbearing direction being imposed by a stacked board that is there for the political expedience of the Government and its union mates. There is already one death on your conscience that I know of, and there are probably more, and I can prove it.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: You cannot.

Mr LEWIS: I can prove it and, if the member for Napier wants it proved, I will happily do that.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: Do it outside!

Mr LEWIS: I will do it outside, and I will show that he is a deceitful hypocrite, Mr Speaker. There is no question that what has to be done in the future is to ensure that appropriate and adequate voting power is provided to the people throughout rural South Australia who have been able in the past to rely upon that form of community service from those people who wish to participate in it, in much the same way as we get that same form of community service from the activities of, say, the CFS or the SES, or the work done by service clubs such as Apex, Lions and Rotary, as well as hospital auxiliaries and the like.

I could place on record a number of other figures, but I will not do so. In conclusion, I will say that I believe the way through this maze is not to abuse the volunteers in St John in the way in which they have been but to foster and encourage them in order to ensure that the paid service does not in the future exercise the undue power causing these high cost impositions on rural people. In addition, the way ahead is probably to adapt from road transport technology to air transport technology for the treatment of trauma cases. In South Australia we would need only five or six helicopters, if that, to provide that service.

They would be able to go to the roadside, the railside, the farm paddock or anywhere in this State, even to an island or on the water, to collect someone who had been injured or was seriously ill and have them under the best medical care in less than an hour, at no risk to the operators of the helicopter or its paramedical and medical crew. In addition to that, wherever there was a mass tragedy there would be a much quicker response with those helicopters being able to reach the site far more quickly than could the requisite number of ambulances.

Imagine having in South Australia a bus crash of the kind that has often occurred in New South Wales, in circumstances in which there might be 50 or more people

very seriously injured. One could imagine a train derailment somewhere in the country. There would be no better way to do it than—

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

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings: Thank God for that!

Mr S.G. EVANS (Davenport): I am grateful that the member for Napier has at last recognised that it is good for me to get up and say a few words, as he said 'Thank God for that,' and I appreciate that.

The Hon. T.H. HEMMING: On a point of order—

The SPEAKER: The honourable member is not making a spurious point of order, is he?

The Hon. T.H. HEMMING: No, Sir. My point of order is that the words that I used, namely, 'Thank God for that'—and I know that I should not have done it—

The SPEAKER: Order! What is the point of order?

The Hon. T.H. HEMMING: I was reflecting not on the member for Davenport but on the member for Murray-Mallee.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member has clearly explained his position.

Mr S.G. EVANS: I was not suggesting that the member was reflecting on me: I thought that he was praising me. Because he was not reflecting on me, I take it that he was praising me, and I am very grateful.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Davenport will come back to the subject of the debate.

Mr S.G. EVANS: I will, because the ambulance service is important and, when people change their mind as the member for Napier just has, I am concerned that we might need one, with such an illness taking place. What has happened to the ambulance service in this State is not good in the long term. One can join St John and get an ambulance within one's membership area, but those who do not do that rely on WorkCover or insurance paying for the service.

I rolled my car on the Mount Barker Road about four years ago, and someone called an ambulance. I did not, as I left in a car. I had a few spots that were not the best, and I left in a car and said that I did not want the ambulance. If I am still able to speak and I have the capacity to decide whether or not I want an ambulance, it is not for some police officer, doctor or someone belonging to the ambulance service to say that I should have an ambulance. I would always take that approach, even if a risk was involved, because our ambulance service has become ridiculously expensive and we should avoid using it unless we really need to.

In our system now we probably have a need for different types of ambulance services. Perhaps the hospitals might provide one at a lower rate just for the transfer of patients who have gone through a certain recovery process and who need to go to another hospital for less care, when they are well on the way to recovery. They could be transported in a motor car, a station sedan or something similar, because they do not need any more than a driver if, at the end of the trip, someone is at the hospital to help them.

Then we would most probably need others to transport those who are moderately ill and who are not at any great risk, with not a lot of personnel with that vehicle. The salaries are so high now that it is becoming prohibitive

within the area of medical care. Then, at the other end, we would need those who are equipped with the best facilities and the best trained personnel to carry out the care of the patient before they get into the vehicle, taking all the safety precautions, and then the transportation of that patient to medical attention which in many cases would be intensive care.

I believe we need to start looking at how often we need to use fully equipped vehicles. A trip cost of \$300 is quite ridiculous when patients have to travel for 10 or 15 minutes, or perhaps only for five minutes sometimes. I said many years ago that what has happened to the volunteers would happen. The trade union movement decided to call them scabs and to attack them at every opportunity. Unfortunately, the Priory, St John, bowed to the pressure. There was a lack of strength to back the volunteers. They should have stood firm, and the Government of the day should have backed them. But the Government of the day could not back them because it was a socialist Government, in the main selected and elected by socialists.

With regard to the guarantees given by the Minister of Emergency Services that it will not happen to the CFS, it will: it is on. The intent is obvious. I say to the people who are foolish enough to elect a socialist Labor Government at the next election that the CFS units in some areas—Happy Valley, the Mitcham Hills, Stirling, Burnside and Tea Tree Gully—will go before the 1998 election. You can take it from me that it is on. It will occur in the same way that it did with St John—push a few paid people in and, if need be, buy a couple of the volunteers and make sure that they are paid; then gradually those people infiltrate and push aside their volunteer mates.

Although the Bill before the House has some dangers, I will be supporting it through the second reading. I will be listening with interest to see what happens with the amendments that the shadow Minister, the member for Adelaide, will move. He gave a great second reading speech and raised some of the issues, as did the member for Hanson.

There is a tendency nowadays to go too far with the service that we provide for many people in the community, because we cannot appear to differentiate between those who need the best of service and those who do not need such an excellent service to get them from point A to point B, for example, in an ambulance.

But we have another inbuilt problem, that is, the person who is injured and others stopping to help. I have said in this House before that, unless it was a close relative or somebody I knew, I would not stop and help at an accident scene because the cost of being sued is too great. Even if the court found that you did all the right things, in many cases the cost would break you. As much as we need this Bill, I think we need a good Samaritan Bill; that is, one that would allow people with good intent to stop to help others without being sued at all or with the Government of the day being sued instead. Before we know where we are, it will be as bad as the American system.

A young man, a member of the football club to which I belong, got a bump while playing football and was taken to his own doctor. There is a doctor available at the ground and, although no ambulance is provided, there are

people with first-aid expertise. The young man's doctor said that he should not have been taken to hospital in the way he was, although the club's doctor agreed to this being done. The young man threatened to sue, but that did not eventuate because the situation was not as serious as some imagined it to be. I think most members would have heard of the rugby league player in Sydney who sued his club and each member of the committee, and many committee members lost their home.

We need to look at that area, which I think is as important as if not more important than the one we are looking at now. People cannot afford to take the risk of stopping to help someone because of the attitude that exists today. I participated in speedway races for many years, and a St John ambulance and volunteers were always available. Most of the volunteers enjoyed racing, and they provided their expertise at very little cost. In those days (the 1950s and 1960s) they would ask for a donation from the club for having the ambulance there and, in return, they would receive benefits such as food, refreshments and meals. They were part of the scene and they gave their services voluntarily. If volunteers are pushed aside altogether, many sporting clubs will not be able to afford to have an ambulance standing by because of the rates that professional officers will command.

I accept that professional officers will not move into country areas unless they are fairly close to a major centre because, in most cases, that would not suit their lifestyle. In areas close to the city, they will keep on using volunteers as tools of the system, and nothing more. If volunteers want to get involved any further, they will be called scabs by ruthless trade union people who want to destroy this voluntary system, as has happened in the past on many occasions. Those same unionists would be happy if the scout leader or the girl guide leader or the sporting club coach were prepared on a voluntary basis to transport their children.

I admit that some professional officers do provide voluntary services in other areas and that not all of them call volunteers scabs. Many professionals have been disappointed with what has happened to their colleagues, and I commend them for trying to stand up against the pressure. They had more courage than the Government or the priory of St John had at that time. I respect St John as an organisation, but that aspect of its operation disappoints me, because there comes a time when you have to stand firm or you are gone. In essence, that is what happened and the whittling away will go on and on.

Let me return to the area of competition, because the member for Hanson referred to a footballer sustaining injury. I have had a few injuries because I played the game until I was 53—not many go that long—and there were only two occasions during my 30 years of playing when either one of my colleagues or an opposition team member needed an ambulance.

True, I was on the training track when a person of 33 dropped dead alongside me, but although a doctor was present he could not have saved that person even with the best of care and attention, because his aorta went. I have also been playing on the field when a 21-year-old dropped dead and no-one could do anything for him either. That was just as likely to happen to him at home when he was picking apples, digging the garden or ploughing the land in following his livelihood.

It is one of the quirks of nature that some of us will be taken out suddenly. In response to the member for Hanson's comments, there are not many cases when we need to have an ambulance service at sporting grounds. Most clubs now have people who are trained in first aid. That is not suitable for all injuries and some clubs are able to get a volunteer doctor to be present. More and more clubs are doing that in both men's and women's sport. The doctors give their time freely and do not seek to get business for their clinic.

Indeed, clubs keep a record of each player's doctor and, if a player needs transport and cannot drive themselves, the player is taken to their usual medical clinic. I know of one man who suffered a broken leg after receiving a bad bump and he ended up driving himself to the hospital in an automatic car. There is nothing wrong with that. That caused no harm and he did not use his broken leg. However, the club was short of numbers and so away he went. He is still playing the game, so that incident did not affect him much.

As to licensing ambulances, are we going to have a different classification? Will we allow a sporting group to have an ambulance which is registered but which may not be fully equipped? It could transport the vast majority of injured players to a hospital and a doctor who is present can advise on whether he thinks the person can be transported by a moderate service involving a club volunteer driver or whether an injury needs the professional service to take that person as quickly as possible to the hospital.

In this modern day and age at virtually every ground, whether it be netball, a contact sport or soccer, telephones are available. Coincidentally, I have one case in my area involving someone suing another player over a soccer incident involving a broken leg at the Blackwood ground, but we will see what happens. In these modern days there is always someone with a portable phone and so response times are more rapid in the case of a serious emergency.

I give credit for that. That results not just from the availability of mobile phones but because ambulances themselves are better equipped and quicker off the mark than they used to be. They are not placed any more conveniently than they were and, in the case of Blackwood, I found it disappointing that, when the community set out to raise the money for a building to provide the facility and buy the unit, someone decided that it should be located not in Blackwood but at St Marys.

It is not much consolation to elderly people to be told, 'We can get there in seven minutes if everything goes all right.' Elderly people are afraid. The Mitcham Hills now has 25 per cent of its population over the age of 55. Those people are concerned, they still come to my office and express concerns, and they have a right to do so. The group who work at the Blackwood station—that still exists, I am not saying that it was taken away—has a unit (as the member for Fisher explained) that can be used for certain types of injuries or for certain types transportation where a person is not in a serious condition. With permission, that vehicle could quite rightly be used, and that is something the community appreciates. Those who are older and who know that, on the law of averages, they or their partner are likely to have a serious illness at

some time are concerned about those few minutes that it might take to get from St Marys up to the Mitcham hills, Coromandel Valley, Hawthorndene, Upper Sturt, Belair, and so on. The difference of a few minutes can mean a lot, and I am sure that the ambulance services themselves know that, as do the medicos.

In setting up this system, a socialist Government, if it wanted, could dominate the whole area and push aside the volunteers. I support it on the basis of seeing whether the amendments are passed but more particularly on the basis that I do not believe that the socialists will win the next election. There will be another philosophy of Government that can do the right thing by the volunteers, as well as the professionals, and particularly those who need the ambulance service.

The Hon. H. ALLISON (Mount Gambier): As members on both sides of the House will have realised in listening to the debate on the ambulance Bill, it is a subject that has generated quite a considerable amount of heat, particularly in a few individual speakers. Those extremely concerned about the implications for volunteers and volunteerism within their electorates are the ones who obviously have been very close to their several ambulance brigades and who have seen the unfortunate dichotomy—the split—which has emerged over the past few years—perhaps unnecessarily—between the increasingly professionalised service and those who have strenuously resisted and wished to remain an amateur body. It is unfortunate that a great deal of heat has been generated in that way rather than for the whole thing to have been negotiated over the years in more of a spirit of cooperation and compromise.

I suppose that, when you think of ambulances, you think of them in two main categories. One category was brought home to me quite forcibly some years ago when a close friend, that is, a close friend who actually worked for me as Minister when we were in Government, was taken critically ill one evening. He had a heart attack. His wife immediately called the ambulance and the hospital, an M care ambulance was despatched and within an extremely short space of time he was on his way to hospital with professional or paraprofessional treatment from the ambulance attendants by way of the heart resuscitation equipment, the electric impulse equipment, being used to bring him around. That saved his life, he was operated on, and he is still around—along, I am sure, with a great many others who have had heart attacks and who have been rushed to hospital and helped on the way. That is one aspect. It is the crisis care for which the M care ambulances were designed and with which professional staff—and highly trained amateurs, too, for that matter—are trained to deal.

Another aspect is where someone who is elderly or disabled but not critically ill (that is, not in a life-threatening situation) is nevertheless in need of an ambulance service that can in those circumstances be regarded more as a professional taxi service. That is a different standard of care. There is not the haste, emergency or life-threatening situation. Ambulances used in those circumstances could be driven and manned by people of lesser training than the now highly qualified professional St John members.

When I was in the Royal Navy we had a saying that a volunteer was worth a thousand conscripts. It may be an extreme exaggeration, but it implied that if you were willing to do something you would put your heart and soul into it as a volunteer, whereas a conscripted person was less likely to do so. I am not comparing the volunteers and the remainder of the St John Ambulance service professionals with that situation, because the professionals are equally committed. I simply bring it up to draw attention to the fact that volunteerism has long been an important aspect of life and is really at the very heart of Christianity which, after all, is one of Australia's and the western world's main religious practices. The spirit of volunteerism means that you do things for your fellow man without reward.

I am also reminded that Sir Walter Scott, the famous writer, when making one of his first visits from the mainland to the Western Isles—this was before he became so impressed with the Western Isles that he wrote *Lord of the Isles*—was warned that he may be pressed into service by the warships depleted of sailors returning from the West Indies. He was given a letter of exemption that the captain of the ship carried in case they were stopped and boarded by the British West India fleet. That is taking press gangs and conscription to the extreme.

The higher standards imposed by State and Federal Governments and by unions in many areas have obviously escalated salary ranges. This applies in childhood services, in several areas of ancillary education, in the Metropolitan Fire Service versus the volunteer fire brigades in the country areas and in the Ambulance Services Bill that we are discussing. As we escalate professionalism and training from low standards into higher secondary and then tertiary, the qualifications increase and the demands for higher salaries and therefore higher operating costs are a logical extension.

The high cost of call-out for ambulances and the costs which have been announced over the past two years have been very worrying for people involved in health care, and certainly for many people who have to pay the bills whether for deliberate call-out or, as was mentioned by the member for Davenport, when ambulances are called out on behalf of someone else and they find themselves landed with a substantial bill in circumstances where they may not have felt they needed an ambulance. It does happen. I have had cases in my office recently of people who have asked, 'What can I do about this very large ambulance bill when I did not call out the ambulance myself?' The answer was that it would probably have to be paid.

It is a pity that the move towards professionalism has been rapid and raised costs so immensely, thereby creating acrimony and pettiness between some of the professional and amateur members. I believe that the Mount Gambier branch has been working towards professionalism in a reasonably harmonious way, but we have had occasional fallouts. I have helped with quiet, private deliberations behind the scenes in some cases, but not to the extent that has been apparent in other districts.

However, as the member for Davenport stated, there are implications for amateur sports—for the SAJC, too, for that matter; it is not doing too well—for motor cycling, for cycling and a whole range of sports. I used to be party to those myself in soccer, hockey, cricket and

other things. We always were appreciative of and welcoming towards the St John people who were along the touch lines. We always felt reassured by the fact that they were there and only occasionally did we have to resort to their ministrations and occasionally we were taken to hospital for broken limbs and cracked cheek bones. It was nice to know that they were there.

It is distressing to think about the cost of having ambulance brigade officers at matches such as that—purely amateur matches—where simply the cost of participation is now exorbitant and slowing people down. That is just one more factor that may militate against weekend sports being successful. I believe the member for Adelaide has put an admirable case on behalf of the Opposition and I certainly support him in what he said.

Another point I would like to make before I conclude my remarks relates to the question of the licensing of brigades, which has raised considerable concern within my electorate. People are speculating about whether the existing system will automatically grant licences exclusively on that narrow, restricted, preordained, closed shop basis or whether the Government has included the clause so that a wider range of options will be at least considered just to see whether the services can be maintained, perhaps not at the same high cost in every instance. That will be considered further in the Committee stage when the Minister will be given the chance to answer a variety of questions. I support the comments made by the member for Adelaide.

The Hon. M.J. EVANS (Minister of Health, Family and Community Services): In summing up the second reading stage of the Bill I would initially like to thank all members who have contributed to the debate so far and, in particular, the member for Adelaide for his extensive commentary on this topic, which is certainly very important to the community. A number of issues has been raised, and obviously I will be able to canvass some of them now, but others—as the member for Mount Gambier has just indicated—will be better dealt with in the Committee stage. I am sure that members whose particular interests are not addressed at this time will raise those questions again during the Committee stage.

First, I reassure all members that I, as Minister of Health, Family and Community Services and the Government in general remain fully committed to the question of volunteer services in the country. There is absolutely no question that this Bill is designed to do other than support them. It provides a continuation of the licence conditions for 12 months, and it is fully intended that those licences will be renewed where that is required in the country to continue that service. The Government remains committed to that volunteer component in the country. Obviously, the volunteers provide an essential, valuable and vital service and there is no question that they will not be other than fully supported in this process. A number of them have amalgamated with St John and will be part of the licence that will be granted to the new joint venture formed under the Bill we now have before us and, of course, they will be covered by that licence. Other individual operations in country areas at the present time have their own licensing arrangements, and those will be continued.

Initially they will be continued under the transition provisions of the Bill, but subsequently, as and when they apply for a continuation of that licence, it will be granted subject to the normal requirements to examine the services provided and subject to the normal licensing arrangements and, of course, subject to the conditions as to standards that will form part of future licence arrangements. Obviously, those standards are a very important part of this proposal. They are being developed by an expert committee at the moment and they will be gradually introduced following consultation—obviously with the community—and those standards, which should form the basis of appropriate medical accountability for the service, will be incorporated as part of licence conditions as and when those licences are up for renewal.

Obviously, the licence group that is presently drawing up those standards will need to complete that work as early as possible. That will not necessarily delay the implementation of the legislation because we are presently operating very satisfactory services in the metropolitan and country areas, and obviously the licence conditions can continue as they are at the moment. The legislation needs to be implemented in order to ensure that the new arrangements intended for the metropolitan area and for the joint venture—which, of course, does extend partly into country areas as well—can be properly constituted under the new service arrangements. The new licence conditions which relate to standards, among other things, will be progressively introduced as those standards become available and the licences are renewed.

Of course, St John had a perpetual licence under the previous Act. It is intended that the joint venture holds a perpetual licence under this legislation, but that would not prevent the revocation of that perpetual licence at some future time were that desirable in the public interest for some reason that none of us can presently foresee. Of course, the Minister will have the power to include appropriate conditions on the perpetual licence as soon as the licence conditions relating to standards are available and as and when they are amended from time to time.

The whole issue revolves around the question of competition and monopoly, which was principally addressed by the member for Adelaide, and other members also canvassed it. I think it is appropriate to spend some time on that issue. The ambulance service is a very important community service. It is not a business undertaken in the context of providing the normal competition which might exist in the general business community. It is about providing the public with a very high level of emergency service and treatment to enable them to be conveyed to hospital or other places for medical treatment in the most expeditious and certainly the safest way while receiving whatever treatment is available.

Obviously, that is a very specialised business and is much more comparable to the other emergency services, such as the fire brigade and the police. It is not comparable with, for example, the tow truck industry or anything of that nature where we would want to see some degree of competition. Quite clearly, the best way of increasing the costs, which are already substantial, would be to provide for a duplication of service and a duplication of the Statewide communications networks which already exist. That would certainly force up the

cost. Members opposite have suggested introducing some element of competition reminiscent of the old days of the tow truck industry. That system was entirely unsatisfactory, and I am sure no-one would want to return to it. Where gravely ill individuals are concerned we do not wish to be involved in the business of having multiple ambulances from competing services turn up at the door, or indeed to have the duplication of Statewide services which any kind of approach there would eventuate.

I see this more in the context of an emergency service, such as the police and the fire brigade, and certainly not in the context of a large-scale duplicated business venture on a profit making basis, where people compete for business at the front door of the patient. That certainly is not something I would want to see develop. Quite clearly, this legislation is designed to put a framework in place where ambulance services can be provided on an effective and efficient basis, and where in fact the country areas as well will continue to be well served in many cases by their volunteer representatives. It is not intended to licence competing ambulances against the joint venture arrangement. Obviously, that would be a foolish path to proceed down and it is not one which I intend to follow. This is an emergency service and it must be treated as such.

While I would agree with members opposite that in most areas of business and other enterprises competition is desirable and a monopoly is undesirable, that is certainly not my view when it comes to the provision of emergency services. I believe special circumstances prevail in respect of emergency services, which is why Parliament is invited to endorse that by way of special legislation. That has been in place for many years, and one has only to turn to the Ambulance Services Act 1985 to see that Parliament has always contemplated that such monopoly provisions will exist. In fact, the 1985 legislation granted St John a perpetual licence. This Bill leaves that question open, although it is certainly intended that that course will be followed.

There is nothing unusual in this context at all. The previous Act provided for that same degree of perpetual licensing for St John, even in the very words of the Act itself, and certainly contemplated that there would be a provision of service by that ambulance service and not that we would have multiple competing ambulance services throughout the State. That indeed would be a wasteful procedure and not one that I intend to follow.

Dr Armitage interjecting:

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: I remind members that, while I strongly support the provision of volunteer services in the rural areas and, indeed, were it practical and possible, in the metropolitan area, obviously we have now moved past that point. I find myself as Minister of Health in a situation where Adelaide as a metropolitan area has clearly moved beyond the point where that is practical and possible and, whilst I am sure that all members supported the excellent and dedicated work of our volunteers in the past in the city area, we are no longer in a position to continue with that. It is only sensible and appropriate that Parliament should face up to that situation and endorse arrangements that will still provide for a very effective and obviously paid ambulance service in the metropolitan area, whilst at the same time

recognising the importance (and I in no way want to detract from that, as it is very significant) of our volunteers in the country areas. Everyone has acknowledged that it would not be practical or possible to provide an economic service to those areas without the dedicated work of those volunteers. That is and will continue to be recognised.

The joint venture arrangement proposed for the metropolitan area was an initiative not of the Government but of the Priory of St John, which brought that idea forward. It was recognised as a reasonable and very sensible arrangement that we should follow. The Government has proceeded from there, and that is the basis of the Bill that members have before them.

A number of other topics have been canvassed. When one looks at the question of monopoly, one has to ask how this will be held accountable to the Parliament and the community. I for one am of the strong view that our services, whether they be business enterprise or simply public service emergency operations, should be required to be accountable to the Parliament and the public for the service they provide. Different techniques must be adopted with respect to services that are not run on a full profit basis because the normal market forces do not operate. It is essential that nationwide comparisons are available and that sound statistical evidence is collected on the output and performance measures of the ambulance service and, in the event that this Bill is passed and the Minister of Health becomes a joint venture partner with St John in the provision of a metropolitan ambulance service, I intend to ensure that appropriate performance indicators and statistics are developed so that the service can be held accountable by the public for its activities.

It may be of interest to members to observe figures collected by the Australasian Convention of Ambulance Authorities in its financial survey report of 1990-91. It is not a straightforward matter at present to gather comparative statistics for ambulance services throughout the country. Obviously, there are different bases on which they are formed—subsidies are different from State to State. Indeed, it is not a simple matter at this time to develop comprehensive and comparable statistics. The Australasian Convention of Ambulance Authorities has attempted to make a very commendable start in this area, and figures such as the cost per kilometre travelled for the 1990-91 financial year on a State by State comparison basis show that South Australia is in a very favourable position indeed. Only Queensland had a lower cost per kilometre travelled; all other States and Territories had a higher cost, in some instances a substantially higher cost. Obviously some States will face difficulties because of their remote communities, and that has to be acknowledged, but the raw data shows South Australia in a very favourable position.

The same is true of costs per patient transported for the 1990-91 financial year and with the cost per head of population (the cost per capita) for 1990-91, which showed South Australia ahead of only Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory in dollar amounts, with the Northern Territory, Queensland, Tasmania, New South Wales and Victoria all recording substantially more in terms of the cost per capita than South Australia. Those are the kinds of statistics that we need to examine

to ensure that what is indeed a monopoly provision does not impose an unreasonable restraint on the public purse. I certainly undertake to see that this kind of data is pursued in the future and forms part of our reporting mechanism, because it is a very valuable guard against the problems that can arise from monopoly provision.

The matter of the Country Capital Reserves Fund was raised, with members expressing concern about what would happen to the significant facilities, resources and capital reserves which have been accumulated in country areas and which, in most cases, have been contributed by those country areas themselves. Much work has been undertaken by people in the country. Reference was made to 'lamington castles', and I am sure that was done in a very serious vein, because it indicates the degree of effort, the lamington by lamington approach, which has built those facilities and resources that are so vital to those areas. Legal opinion indicates that those facilities are held in trust by St John and can be used only for the provision of an ambulance service. Quite obviously, the legal provision is supportive of those facilities. They will be used for the purpose for which they were generated, and will continue to benefit the local community. I am sure that no-one would wish to see other than that provision prevail.

Another issue raised concerned the payment made to a former CEO. I am advised that that has been met from within the St John budget and that no further payment has been made in that regard. That was a decision of the board itself, and obviously it will pay that from within its agreed budget provisions.

The documentation relating to the association, the rules of incorporation and the agreement that has been made with the Priory is available to the Opposition. Recently, I handed a copy of those documents to the member for Adelaide for his perusal. They are in draft format at the moment and obviously will be subject to editorial and policy changes as this proposal is further developed in the event that Parliament supports the Bill.

Some considerable contention existed about the question of the definition of an ambulance. I am sure that this can be dealt with more precisely in Committee. I would remind members that it is not an easy definition to record in a legalistic way—one that will guarantee that all contingencies are covered. That is certainly not the intention of the Government in drafting the legislation; we understand that there will be grey areas or borderline cases that may or may not constitute an ambulance. It is certainly intended that the exemption provisions of the Act will be used in that context to exclude those services where that is appropriate. It is essential that standards imposed on ambulance services be of the highest possible quality to protect the interests of our patients, and no-one would want to see that standard lowered. Therefore, the legislation must be quite broad in catching any service that could possibly be offered in this context and where patients may be at risk were the standards not to be imposed.

I remind members that the definition of 'ambulance' is 'a vehicle that has been modified and equipped and is staffed to provide medical treatment to patients being transported in the vehicle'. Obviously, all those legs of the test must be met, so many of the marginal cases that have been raised in the past few hours of debate will be

excluded from that definition. Where a service would appear to be included on an inappropriate basis, obviously the powers of exemption will be used.

A question has also been raised about the amount of funding from the SGIC third party fund. I am able to advise the member for Adelaide in particular, who raised this issue, that in the financial year ending July 1992, some \$4.9 million was paid by the CTP fund to St John, and that represents the estimated cost of the provision of ambulance services required as a result of motor vehicle accidents.

The point to be noted here is that, where a motor vehicle accident is involved, the costs are certainly higher than the average callout, because general practice and past experience have told the ambulance service that a motor vehicle accident takes more time and absorbs more resources than the average callout. All members would understand the reasons for that. The figure of \$4.9 million is the amount which it is estimated would have been expended last year by the ambulance service in providing the third party costs which SGIC, through its CTP fund, would be required to meet.

Dr Armitage interjecting:

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: These figures are estimates at the moment. I will undertake to examine that matter and reply to the member for Adelaide when I have the statistical detail, rather than doing it now and giving him an inaccurate figure. But the amount of total funding is correct. Many of the other questions that have been raised in relation to the Bill will be dealt with in Committee. I can assure members that it is our intention to continue to provide an effective and efficient ambulance service of the highest possible standard and not our intention to provide one that is subject to day-to-day on the street competition as such. Parliament must recognise that there are some provisions that require a monopoly service, and this is one of them. We intend that this should be provided on a world class, best practice standards basis. Certainly, it is our intention as a Government and as a joint venture to continue to provide those country services on a volunteer basis, and those country volunteers will be supported in their work. The value of their work is well recognised by all those who have been associated with this area.

The other issues that have been raised could well be dealt with as part of the Committee stage so, at this point, I thank members for their implied support of the second reading in order that the matters can be discussed further in Committee and for their support of the ambulance service in general.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 3 passed.

Clause 4—'Interpretation.'

Dr ARMITAGE: This clause deals with definitions, and it is very important that they be further explored at this stage. I note that, as the Minister read previously, 'ambulance' means:

...a vehicle that has been modified and equipped and is staffed to provide medical treatment to patients being transported in the vehicle.

If the Minister, as he indicated, will be looking for every element of that to be upheld, we need to look at exactly what is meant by 'medical treatment' in the first instance. That clearly states that it includes the observation of

patients. Observation is just that: it means that if a taxi has been modified to take a wheelchair, which frequently contains oxygen, suction equipment, etc., and it has a nurse or someone such as that in attendance observing the patient, that vehicle becomes an ambulance, according to this definition. As such, to avoid a division 4 penalty, it would require a licence.

Further, hospital retrievals and the Rescue 1 helicopter, as mentioned before, clearly fit into the same category. I understand the Minister to say that there will be regulatory powers to exclude certain vehicles, but I think the dilemma for the Minister is that so many vehicles will fall outside what is commonly regarded as an ambulance that it will be an administrative nightmare. The Grand Prix medical vehicles are clearly, according to this definition, an ambulance; and I believe that it is quite reasonable to expect that. They are staffed often by volunteer doctors, and they are certainly modified and equipped to provide transport for patients.

If the definition of 'medical treatment' includes the observation of patients, what happens about specially modified buses from areas such as Regency Park which are clearly modified and often equipped to take patients from point A to point B and which nearly always are staffed? Are they an ambulance? Do they need a licence? Are you going to regulatorily leave them out of the division 4 penalties, or what?

If every element of that definition needs to be followed, I put it to the Minister that the well-known and well-recognised St John Ambulance clinic cars are neither modified nor equipped; they are standard vehicles which transport patients from point A to point B. If it means that they are not an ambulance, according to this definition, that opens up an enormous field for the Minister because many hospitals would be absolutely delighted to have their own facilities to move around patients who fall into that category where they are moveable or transportable, if you like, by an unmodified vehicle.

If, as the Minister said previously, every element of that definition must be upheld for it to be an ambulance, clearly clinic cars do not fit that definition. Hence, what I take the Minister to mean is that facilities for clinic car transfers are now up for grabs because a licence is no longer needed. I am sure that many of South Australia's public hospitals will be thrilled to hear this because many of them have told me that ambulance costs are an enormous feature of their budget and they believe that they could save thousands and thousands of dollars each year if they were able to run that service. Clearly, on what the Minister has said, they are now free to do that. I look forward to telling them that; they will be thrilled. It is my understanding that service ambulances such as RAAF vehicles, and so on, have some exemption at present, and I would presume that that would continue. I am happy to be corrected if that is wrong.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

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

APPROPRIATION BILL

Her Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended the new schedule proposed to be substituted in the Bill.

SPEED CAMERAS

The Hon. M.K. MAYES (Minister of Emergency Services): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.K. MAYES: On Tuesday 20 October the member for Hayward asked me a question without notice regarding the number of infringement notices issued on 16 September this year on Diagonal Road, Somerton Park. In particular, the honourable member referred to correspondence from the driver of a Telecom van who claimed that he had been erroneously reported for a speeding offence at the same location on the same day. In response to the honourable member I reported to the House what information had been provided to me by the Commissioner of Police and I undertook to obtain further information regarding the honourable member's question. I received further information from the Commissioner yesterday, 21 October, which I detailed to the House in response to a question from the member for Spence.

The substance of that advice was that no infringement notice had been issued to a Telecom van in the circumstances described by the member for Hayward. I table that advice from the Commissioner for the information of the House. Following my response, the member for Hayward provided me with a copy of the infringement notice referred to in his question. I then immediately requested the Commissioner to review his advice in light of the information provided by the honourable member. The Commissioner yesterday provided me with further advice. The substance of that advice is that his previous advice had been incorrect in regard to the statement that no infringement notice had been issued.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.K. MAYES: This error had arisen as a result of a misinterpretation of a computer print-out. I table this minute from the Commissioner, dated 21 October, for the information of the House. I have also received a letter from the Commissioner tendering his unreserved apology to me for providing this incorrect information. I am advised that the Commissioner has also provided a personal apology to the member for Hayward. I in turn apologise to the House for inadvertently providing incorrect information during my response yesterday.

I turn now to the general issue of speed cameras and their reliability. As I pointed out to the House yesterday, speed cameras have played a very significant role in ensuring adherence to lawful speed limits and thus improving road safety in this State. However, as a number of members in this Parliament have pointed out, there is a public sensitivity to the issue of speed cameras. I believe this sensitivity arises primarily from the fact

that, because of the nature of the speed camera system, the motorist is not notified of their infringement at the time of the offence, and thus is unable in most cases to ascertain their own culpability.

In these circumstances, it is essential that speed cameras have a strict reliability of operation. Therefore, I have requested the Commissioner to provide me, as a matter of urgency, with a full report on the operation of speed cameras in this State, to include a detailed assessment of their accuracy, detailed information on the warranty of accuracy provided by the manufacturers and information on the safeguards built into the system of operation to ensure that motorists are not erroneously charged with traffic infringements. In the interim, I will instruct the Commissioner that no infringement notices resulting from speed camera detection be issued. As soon as I have received that report, I will provide the information to the House.

WAITE CAMPUS

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. T.R. GROOM: On Tuesday, I advised the House that I am reviewing the appropriateness of the Waite campus as the location for the head office of the Department of Primary Industries in view of the restructuring of the department. In other respects, I made quite plain that much of the proposed work should still continue, since it would form the core of the new South Australian Research and Development Institute and that preliminary work had already begun on preparing the site for the new horticultural complex. Yesterday in the grievance debate, the member for Mitcham said that, in view of the felling of two trees and the removal of a cottage, he felt totally betrayed and upset—presumably by me. He demanded that individuals be brought to account, and he expected me as Minister to do that.

It is clear that the member for Mitcham, in fact, misled himself and, by his own admission, some local residents. There has been a suggestion that the two trees were felled to make way for the administration complex in defiance of my ordered review of the appropriateness of the administration building now being located at Waite. The trees in question have been removed to make way for a horticultural research complex, not the administrative complex. The horticultural complex has always been part of the Waite relocation plan and was not under review. The two trees felled yesterday have been botanically assessed. They are estimated at between 100 and 150 years old and were not considered by specialists in this field to be of major botanical significance. Notwithstanding, I am personally very sorry that these trees could not be saved.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. T.R. GROOM: The timber from the felled trees has been donated to the Milang Historic Steam and Shipping Museum for milling into planks and beams for the restoration of an historic paddle steamer which, when complete, will be the oldest in South Australia.

An honourable member: Very important for tourism.

The Hon. T.R. GROOM: Yes, very important for tourism, as the Minister says. Great effort was made by the planners to save a magnificent 250 year old river red gum near the site of the horticultural research complex. Consultation with botanists helped them make the decision to move the structure to save this tree. It is also important to understand that this project is being handled with due care and concern for the environment and sensitivity for preservation issues. More than 1 000 new trees have been planted over the entire site, and 500 more are due to be planted.

The member for Mitcham's suggestion that the cottage that was demolished was of strong heritage significance was also incorrect. The cottage was in grave disrepair. It was assessed by the State Heritage Branch and found to be of limited local significance, with only a few internal features and fittings rating a mention. These fittings have been salvaged and will be used in the refurbishment of other cottages on the campus which are of heritage value. Even the bluestone from this cottage will be reused in building renovations around the campus. Every effort has been made to handle this project in an open and sensitive way. Information on the progress of the development is always available from the project planners, and considerable effort is being made, through letterboxing, local newspaper articles and public displays, to ensure that everyone in the community—including the member for Mitcham—is aware of what is proposed.

QUESTION TIME

CENTRE FOR REMOTE SENSING

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Minister of Environment and Land Management as the Minister responsible for the Centre for Remote Sensing. When will the Government close the Centre for Remote Sensing, and how does it justify the loss of about \$5 million of taxpayers' money on this high technology centre, including a bungled export contract negotiation with Ethiopia about which the Government was warned but took no action?

The Hon. M.K. MAYES: This matter is currently being considered. Some of the questions that have been raised by the Leader are definitely being dealt with at the moment by Government. When we have made a decision about the outcome, I will inform the House.

SCHOOL STAFFING

Mrs HUTCHISON (Stuart): Will the Minister of Education, Employment and Training advise the House of the result of the review into staffing of schools with high Aboriginal student content, what recommendations have been made and what action is to be taken on those recommendations?

The Hon. S.M. LENEHAN: I thank the honourable member for her interest in this matter. I should like to inform her and the House that the following staffing arrangements will be implemented for the period 1993 to

1995. The Aboriginal and Anangu schools and special programs and projects across schools will be staffed on the basis of the area school teaching formula; that is, all these schools will have access to tier 2 teaching staff—English as a second language, social justice and so on—in line with all other schools. All schools will have the same ancillary staffing as area schools. All schools will have access to temporary relieving teacher (TRT) days according to the same formula and conversion rates as area schools. An additional 21.2 Aboriginal salaries will also be allocated to Aboriginal and Anangu schools, as has occurred previously. Finally, an allocation of 10 non-school based salaries will also be made.

WORKCOVER

Mr INGERSON (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Minister of Labour Relations and Occupational Health and Safety. Is the Federal Government's capital works program for the unemployed at risk because of the high premiums that WorkCover intends to impose on local government employers and contractors; and what action will he take to have the Federal Government provide financial assistance to councils and contractors to meet compensation claims in the interests of encouraging the employment of more people?

I have seen correspondence from WorkCover to local government authorities notifying them that high premiums will be levied against councils and contractors who participate in the unemployment relief program. The letter says that the high premiums reflect past experience, which clearly shows that workers employed in unfamiliar working environments, particularly those who have been out of the work force for a considerable time, are at greater risk of injury. The letter indicates that WorkCover premiums will be between 15 per cent and 17 per cent.

The Hon. R.J. GREGORY: I thank the honourable member for his question. I think that he misunderstands what WorkCover is about. It is an insurance scheme that provides insurance for employers when employees are injured. I would think that the member for Bragg would appreciate that employers have a prime responsibility for ensuring that the people who work for them work safely and in safe conditions. When new people are taken on, they need to be properly inducted into the employment practices of that company and properly trained in all the safety aspects of the work that they are to do.

I point out to the member for Bragg that, in an area with which I am closely associated, the community clubs have an arrangement with the local council regarding the removal of a number of olive trees. That has been delayed because the community clubs are working out how their members can be trained safely in the use of chainsaws. I recall that not long ago there would have been no training, people would have been injured, and that would have been assessed as bad luck.

What we have seen is an understanding by employers that anyone who works for them needs to be properly trained in all aspects of the plant and equipment they will use. It is also well known that people are most at risk when they start work in a new work environment; they are most at risk at the three month and six month stages.

That is where the employer has the prime responsibility of ensuring that those people are not injured. That is what it is all about.

If the injury rates are reduced, the compensation cost comes down. I point out that, in timber felling, in the first clearing of woods and forest trees in the South-East, which called for enormous removal of between 10 and 12 year growth, at one time there was no training. The workers compensation levy was in excess of 35 per cent.

The Timber Industry Training Council introduced a training scheme that saw that injury rate drop to 17 per cent in a short period of time. It then got to the stage where contractors in that area would not employ as fellers people who had not been through that training program. It was a demonstration that even the most experienced, life-long worker in that area, if not properly trained, was of most danger to themselves and to others working with them. What we are seeing here is the onus being put back on the Local Government Association to ensure a very safe method of working.

MURRAY-DARLING BASIN

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD (Baudin): Will the Minister of Environment and Land Management, at an appropriate time, provide a report to the House on the amount of reforestation and revegetation that has occurred in and around the head waters of the rivers of the Murray-Darling basin since renegotiation of the Murray Waters Agreement in the 1980s? In recent days we have seen on our television screens the effects of flooding in the Loddon Campaspe Rivers and, indeed, in the Murray River itself.

It has been put to me that, whereas historically flooding regimes tend to be fairly evenly spread, now with the stripping of native vegetation in those areas they peak very quickly. Given that one of the ambitions of the renegotiation was revegetation also to reduce salinity in the basin, I am sure the House would at some stage appreciate a report.

The SPEAKER: I ask the Minister to remember that he has access to ministerial statements and he should keep his answer brief.

The Hon. M.K. MAYES: I certainly will, Mr Speaker, and thank you for the advice. I am very pleased to respond to the member for Baudin, because at the moment there is a good deal of concern in the lower reaches of the Murray with regard to the flood waters that are coming down. It is important that we get a clear picture of what is happening, particularly with existing vegetation. I am sure that it comes as no surprise to the honourable member that there is no statistical data available regarding the relationship between the clearance and runoff in the Murray catchment. However, the impact of broad scale clearance on land and groundwater management is now widely recognised and, as a consequence, the Murray-Darling Basin Commission has initiated a study to digitise the environmentally sensitive areas to assess the existing basin remnant vegetation. It will certainly provide us with a data base which, when complete, will enable improved integration of vegetation and land management programs and will enhance the management of the basin's natural resources.

I am sure that the Murray-Darling Basin Commission will be devoting quite a deal of time and effort to assessing the situation and providing each of the States with the general information that the honourable member is seeking. In recent years, Victoria has imposed controls on vegetation clearance similar to those which apply in South Australian. New South Wales has now begun to exercise control over clearance in those environmentally sensitive areas. We are seeing an attack on two fronts. I hope that very shortly we will be able to recognise those areas that contain remnant vegetation, particularly in those environmentally sensitive areas so that we can start to address that issue with not only programs in terms of runoff but also revegetation.

PROBATION AND PAROLE

Mr MATTHEW (Bright): Will the Minister of Correctional Services confirm that due to budget cuts there are proposals to reduce the supervision of offenders on parole and probation?

The Hon. R.J. GREGORY: I will not confirm anything.

Members interjecting:

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

Members interjecting:

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

HENDON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mr HAMILTON (Albert Park): Hendon Primary School, which is in my electorate, has raised concerns about its allocation level for special education funding. Will the Minister of Education please clarify how special education salaries are allocated? What are the guidelines for providing special education teachers in schools?

The Hon. S.M. LENEHAN: No member of this House seeks to represent constituents with greater fervour and diligence than does the member for Albert Park. I feel a little like the line from the Hound of Heaven: I have moved from one portfolio to another, but the member for Albert Park has been seeking me in terms of representing his constituents. I am sure that his constituents are very grateful to him for that.

I happen to have some of the information for which he has asked. From term 4 in 1992 Hendon Primary School has been allocated 3.2 salaries for special education staffing, which include 2.2 for special classes and an additional 39 hours assistant time. Special education salaries are allocated to assist schools in the development and implementation of a negotiated curriculum for students with disabilities. Classroom teachers are trained to provide quality education programs for children of wide-ranging capabilities. This includes catering for the special curriculum needs of children with learning difficulties.

At Hendon Primary School, with the additional expertise of something like 3.2 special education teacher equivalents on site, the school staff will be able to do two things: first, enlist the support and guidance of their

colleagues who have this special training; and, secondly, provide the school with additional placement options for students. I am sure that the honourable member will welcome this announcement and decision.

STATE FINANCES

The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE (Coles): I ask the Treasurer: before the introduction of the 1992-93 State Budget did the Under Treasurer, Mr Emery, write to the Federal Government seeking a bail-out? If so, was that request refused, and will the Treasurer table Mr Emery's letter and written reply from the Federal Government?

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: The member for Coles is pre-empting the answer.

The Hon. Jennifer Cashmore: I said 'if so'.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: Members opposite have all been told to behave today, and they have done very well so far and should not spoil it.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: I was going to congratulate them, Mr Speaker, on their behaviour.

The SPEAKER: Order! I suggest the Treasurer leave that to the Chair.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: Thank you, Sir. I was just trying to be friendly. I have absolutely no knowledge of any letter from the Under Treasurer to the Federal Government asking for a bail-out. I would be astonished if any such letter was sent, but I have no doubt that correspondence between the Under Treasurer and his counterparts in the Commonwealth and State bureaucracies occurs from time to time—

Mrs Kotz interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Newland will behave, and the Treasurer will address his remarks through the Chair.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: I will examine the question as always and see if there is anything in the question that warrants a further response. If that is the case, I will bring back a reply to the Parliament or contact the member for Coles direct.

CHIROPRACTORS

Mr De LAINE (Price): Will the Minister of Labour Relations and Occupational Health and Safety inform the House if any investigations have been or will be carried out to establish the value of chiropractic treatment to some workers who are recipients of WorkCover? It has been put to me that the often overlooked treatment of injured workers by chiropractors would in many cases restore these people back to working conditions far more quickly than by more favoured conventional methods of rehabilitation.

The Hon. R.J. GREGORY: There has been a strong interest in this issue for quite some time, particularly from the Chiropractic Association. Officers of WorkCover have carried out such an investigation. However, in their opinion, there is no reason to change the manner of treatment at this stage, given that patients

choose their own treatment modality, anyway. WorkCover has recently increased the range of chiropractic services it provides. A chiropractic service reviewer has been appointed for sessional work and WorkCover has established a joint liaison group with the chiropractic community to review issues such as fees, standards and training.

LEARN TO SWIM CAMPAIGN

Mr OSWALD (Morphett): Will the Minister of Recreation and Sport give a guarantee to the House that the up to 45 per cent cuts in the hourly payment to learn to swim instructors by the Department of Recreation and Sport will not disrupt the country-based learn to swim campaign? New wage guidelines for swimming instructors announced by the Department of Recreation and Sport could see hourly rates cut by as much as 75 per cent, according to Australian Teachers Association President, Mrs Marion King. Yesterday I was informed that all the 23 instructors in the Port Vincent learn to swim program will not be accepting the Department of Recreation and Sport's pay rates and that this attitude is spreading to other country areas.

It has been put to me that the new pay rates will also be taxed at 48c in the dollar, as they will be classified as a second job, thus further bringing down the final rate to \$7.28 per hour, that the instructors will not work for this figure, and that 45 000 children could lose access to these vacation classes.

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER: The honourable member might like to take the advice of the former Leader of the Opposition and read some of the documents released this week by Mr John Howard in another sphere about wage rates in this country.

Mr D.S. Baker interjecting:

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

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume his seat. Obviously going by comments made here earlier, you have been advised to be good boys and girls today—I do not know anything about that—but in the three Question Times this week the member for Victoria has sailed very close to the wind. I am informing him that he is very close to leaving the Chamber. If it happens again, I shall inform him that, as he has left the Chamber for one day, the second expulsion is much longer, and the third much longer again. I ask him to behave and comply with Standing Orders. The honourable Minister.

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER: The Opposition really cannot have it both ways. If it wants to see appropriate wage scales for work done in this country determined in a fair way, then it cannot argue about the actions taken in this—

Mr Meier: There was no consultation—none.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume his seat. The member for Goyder obviously is deaf or is ignoring the instruction of the Chair. It has been a rowdy week, and let me tell you that, as you would all know, the quality of Question Time has dropped to an unacceptable level. Interjections are not helping. In fact,

they stop the passage of Question Time. If the member for Goyder wishes to continue to interject, the Chair will be quite pleased to take him on. The Minister.

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER: I doubt whether he can swim, either, Sir. The reality is that the wage structure that has been set for this program has now been put into an appropriate setting following some severe criticism in reports of the Auditor-General about the administration of the Learn-to-Swim program as it was formally provided within the confines of the Education Department. There are two components to that program. One is the term time swimming program, which each child in this State is entitled to attend, and which also forms part of the school curriculum in this State.

The second and older component is a vacation program similar to the many other vacation care programs provided in our community for young people during school holiday periods, particularly during the long vacation period. The situation had arisen, I believe because of anomalies and other unsatisfactory circumstances in the administration of that program, whereby people who were supervising the vacation program with respect to swimming were being paid five or six times more than the amount paid per hour to people who care for disabled children in vacation care programs and people who are family day care providers throughout the year.

There was an anomaly and, in fact, the payment of between \$20 and \$30 an hour to people for supervising a vacation care program of this type could no longer be justified. That had to be brought into order. It was appropriate that this vacation care program should be brought into line with all other vacation care programs and appropriate wages brought down. That situation has occurred, and it amounts to the maintenance of this important and well received program in our community. However, it is no longer a program that is essential so that every child in our community can learn to swim, which is important in a State like South Australia where unfortunately in the past when it was not available many young people drowned in most tragic circumstances.

Now every child has a right to learn to swim and that is conducted not in vacation time but in term time, and that will continue. As I said, it is a vacation program, and it is well received. It will continue and it will be resourced in an appropriate and responsible way.

CREDIT CARDS

The Hon. T.H. HEMMINGS (Napier): Can the Minister of State Services inform the House about the findings of the Anti-Corruption Branch into alleged misuse of Mobil credit cards? The House will be well aware that the branch, in cooperation with the Government's Public Sector Fraud Coordination Committee, has been investigating claims of alleged misuse of these cards for the past three months following allegations from the Opposition. It has been put to me by concerned constituents that, if any misuse has taken place, those perpetrators should be exposed and brought to justice.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: The member for Bright alleged on 24 July this year that there was widespread

abuse of Mobil credit cards. The claim was immediately picked up by the Government's Public Sector Fraud Coordination Committee, which has consistently asked the honourable member to put up the hard evidence, and to this date he has failed to do so. On 21 August this year the committee referred the matter to the Anti-Corruption Branch and it, too, I understand, had no luck in getting any hard evidence from the honourable member. The head of the Public Sector Fraud Coordination Committee, David Hunt, whom members would realise is the Police Commissioner, sent a letter to the honourable member which states, in part:

There is no apparent multi structural abuse of the credit card by Government employees.

The honourable member failed to mention this when he went on Murray Nicoll's show last night and said he hoped the Government would implement the recommendations of the Anti-Corruption Branch. State Fleet has already had in place many of the recommendations for the past three months, and last Friday the former Chief Executive Officer of State Services, Bill Cossey, circulated a memo to all Government CEOs advising them of the strict procedures in place at State Fleet for checking the use of Mobil cards. The Director of State Fleet, Peter Grenville, has also informed me that State Fleet has been replacing Mobil cards—

Mr MATTHEW: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. I believe that the Minister is quoting from a docket, and I ask that that be tabled.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I am not quoting from a docket, but I will be delighted to table this document after I have finished reading it into *Hansard*, because it is very important for the House to understand what he has been up to. The Director of State Fleet, Peter Grenville, has also informed me that State Fleet has been replacing Mobil cards since March this year with a new type which follows many of the recommendations, specifically having the type, make, colour, and registration number of the car embossed on the card and restricting it to unleaded fuel and oil purchases. I suspect that the honourable member knows all this because he has been briefed by Mr Grenville.

This Government has also received a letter from Mobil Australia, very concerned about comments made by the honourable member. Its Managing Director, Mr Rogers, believed that the comments of Mr Matthew, the member for Bright, were a slur on his own employees and the company itself. When will the honourable wake up that he has been the main obstacle in the investigations? If he has the evidence, he should put up or shut up. If necessary, he should put up a 0055 number so that he can ring to get accurate information.

The SPEAKER: Order! I refer members who are answering questions to Standing Order 98 which provides that no debate, argument or opinion is allowed in answers.

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings interjecting:

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

STAMP DUTIES

Mr S.J. BAKER (Mitcham): My question is directed to the Treasurer. On which original mortgage document was the additional \$116 000 stamp duty on the Henry Waymouth building stamped? Who paid the additional stamp duty, given that the Hooker Corporation was in provisional liquidation? Why will the Treasurer not provide a full report on any sale of the building?

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: The facts are that whoever was advising the Leader—and I assume it was the member for Mitcham—dropped him right in it. Of course, I have no idea of the answer to the question in respect of which particular document it is, but I will refer the question to the Commissioner of Stamps, and I am sure the Commissioner of Stamps will supply me with some information which, in turn, I will supply to the member for Mitcham. I am not in the business of giving gratuitous advice but, if I were the Leader, I would be very cross and in future I would check in more detail some of the nonsense that is put up by the member for Mitcham in this Chamber.

AUSCO

The Hon. J.C. BANNON (Ross Smith): Can the Minister of Business and Regional Development advise the House on the implications, and in particular the employment impact, in respect of a recent contract won by Ausco to supply accommodation to the UN peace keeping forces in Cambodia?

The Hon. M.D. RANN: There is some very good news: the Adelaide-based company, Ausco International, recently won a \$37 million contract to supply a range of living and office accommodation to the UN peace keeping forces in Cambodia. The \$37 million contract consists of housing and office accommodation for a total of 1 600 people. Ausco has approximately 50 Australian employees currently located in Cambodia supervising the installation of some 1 088 buildings, all manufactured here in Australia. Most of these buildings—as I am sure members on this side of the House will be delighted to hear—are being built at the Elizabeth manufacturing facility. The contracts have resulted in the employment of an extra 100 people at Ausco's Elizabeth West factory. To complete the contract, the employees at the Elizabeth plant have been working double shifts, six days a week. In addition, a substantial amount of indirect employment has been generated as a large number of contracts on other areas have been let out to other suppliers in South Australia. This contract was won against fierce international competition and is one of the largest contracts awarded by the United Nations for accommodation.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. M.D. RANN: The honourable member interjects, 'What about Bob Pike?' If Bob Pike is honest and his committee dinkum, he will want to see the Liberal Party's files on Robyn Greenberg. We shall soon see whether his committee is a political set-up rather than a genuine inquiry.

The success of Ausco in winning this major international contract is an example of what can be

achieved when companies take an international perspective and do their homework on the opportunities that lie offshore.

CITRUS BOARD

Mr VENNING (Custance): Will the Minister of Primary Industries take urgent steps to revamp the Citrus Board of South Australia to strengthen its marketing activities; and what will he do to rectify a disastrous situation which exists in the Riverland citrus industry where the price for citrus juice has dropped to \$54 while the cost of production ranges from \$140 to \$160 a tonne?

I am told by a constituent that Riverland growers are going broke because of ruinous prices for their products. They claim that the Government has been procrastinating for the past two years over the vital revamping of the board and its marketing activities.

The Hon. T.R. GROOM: I thank the honourable member for raising that matter, because it is a serious situation and one that should be of concern to all of us. The 1991-92 financial year proved to be a relatively good year for the South Australian citrus industry, because there were record orange exports of 31 000 tonnes worth about \$24 million. There was a substantial increase in fresh juice consumption as well as rising prices. Recently in the Riverland we have been confronted by a dramatic fall in the citrus juice price. As the honourable member said, the range is between \$54 and \$59 a tonne.

The Hon. P.B. Arnold interjecting:

The Hon. T.R. GROOM: It is very serious for the growers in that area, as the member for Chaffey knows. The cost of production is in the vicinity of \$140 to \$160 a tonne. In May this year the price per tonne was about \$280. Therefore, it has had a very substantial impact on the Riverland. Some 65 per cent of South Australia's citrus juice is sold for processing and prices are directly related to the market. The remaining 35 per cent is sold as fresh squeezed juice or fresh fruit for local and export consumption.

I have had a series of meetings over the past week with the Citrus Board, local growers and industry leaders. Two matters have been put to me. One of the things requested of me as Minister, because I have power under the Act, was to set a minimum price. I have agreed with industry leaders to look at this matter properly and seriously but, in regard to this, I need to act in concert with my counterparts in Victoria and New South Wales. I have today written to both those Ministers, following a request from the Citrus Board, to seek their opinions, but it would be extremely unwise for either of those States to consider acting alone.

The other matter that has been put to me, of which I know the members for Chaffey and for Custance are aware, is an industry stabilisation plan. The Citrus Board has requested my support for the stabilisation plan and, subject to looking at all the details, I shall be giving it my full support. A stabilisation plan was put forward in 1990 to the Federal Government, but it was rejected at that time. In fact, I think the Premier wrote in support of a stabilisation plan. The Federal Government rejected that plan in favour of allocating other measures. I think that it gave \$2 million to the Australian Horticultural

Corporation for the promotion of fresh fruit and juice. I think that the situation in the Riverland is so serious and unique with regard to the dramatic fall in prices and the serious situation that it raises that it warrants my full support.

I propose to write to the Citrus Board today formally advising it of my support for the stabilisation plan. It has the concept of an import price. It will move within a certain range, but without interference, and will allow the industry to stabilise prices when fluctuations occur. I stress that it is to be an industry plan, not a Government-run plan. I think that is in the best interests of the growers. Again, I want to stress that I am most sensitive and concerned over this grave situation that faces the Riverland, as I know are the members for Custance and for Chaffey, because they will have had the same correspondence as I have had. I want to assure the House that I will do everything I can to reasonably and properly support the industry.

ANTI-RABBIT RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Mr FERGUSON (Henley Beach): I direct my question to the Minister of Environment and Land Management. What steps have been taken by the Minister's department to further the work of the Anti-Rabbit Research Foundation of Australia established earlier this year?

The Hon. M.K. MAYES: I thank the honourable member for his question and interest in this area because, as members would have observed, there has been quite a bit of coverage of developments that are occurring, particularly with sterilising programs—genetic programs—that are being considered nationally by the Federal Government in cooperation and in coordination with State Governments to address this critical issue of the damage that is caused by rabbits throughout our country.

I am sure that members would know that the Anti-Rabbit Foundation of Australia was established at the initiative of my colleague the previous Minister. It arose out of concerns expressed by South Australian pastoralists, in particular, some of those being significant pastoralists, such as Keith Greenfield from Billa Kallina, who has played a very important part in initiating the Anti-Rabbit Foundation. He repeatedly observed the devastation that has occurred in grazing areas and also to the natural vegetation, resulting in the need for regeneration of native shrubs and trees.

The Anti-Rabbit Research Foundation is currently chaired by Mr Ed McAlister, the Director of the Adelaide Zoo, and organisations such as the South Australian Farmers Federation, Western Mining Corporation, the Conservation Council of South Australia and the University of Adelaide have also played a part in this organisation and are represented on organising committees in support of the Anti-Rabbit Research Foundation.

The foundation has already held its first formal meeting and plans are afoot to organise a national conference on rabbit control early in April next year. At this conference, delegates will be made aware of recent progress on the various biological control methods

available and the expected strategies that will be adopted at a national level. In this context members should be aware that there has been recent progress on two fronts, and I mentioned the genetic sterilisation programs that are being considered by scientists at the moment as part of the national program. Other programs are also being considered, particularly in relation to research being undertaken at a scientific level. I think the viral haemorrhagic program is also one that has been mentioned as part of the whole research program to attack this massive problem, which costs rural Australia millions and millions of dollars each year—and I am sure that my colleague the Minister of Primary Industries could provide the figures. In addition, of course, one must consider the devastation caused to the natural vegetation throughout this country.

I look forward to the outcome of the foundation. I am sure that at a national level there will be a great deal of interest in the programs being pursued. I hope we see controls brought in that will bring us back to a situation where our native vegetation is not being destroyed and we are not losing millions of dollars from our rural income.

GUNS

Mr BECKER (Hanson): What urgent action will the Minister of Emergency Services take to ban the sale of replica guns in South Australia?

The Hon. M.K. MAYES: The Government is currently considering additional amendments to firearms legislation. I guess that within the next few weeks we will be able to address that issue comprehensively. As the honourable member—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. MAYES: Just relax. As the honourable member has raised this issue, I am more than happy to arrange for a briefing for him. I hope that can be arranged within the next fortnight. I appreciate the honourable member's interest. I know there is a wide concern within the community in regard to replica guns and the impact they have. Of course, they have been used for illegal purposes, and as a community we have to address every aspect that puts any member of the community in danger or threatens the safety of the community as a whole. I appreciate the honourable member's concern and I shall be more than happy in the next week or so to arrange a briefing for him on the proposals that the Government has in mind.

WARRANTS

Mr HAMILTON (Albert Park): I direct my question to the Minister of Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations, representing the Attorney-General in another place. Will the Attorney-General investigate alternative methods by which a person can determine whether he or she can meet their obligations to expiate an outstanding warrant? I have received correspondence that states, in part:

A person believes they have outstanding warrants. They want to make arrangements to clear up the matters and they attempt to ring the warrant section and are told such information cannot be

given over the phone and they will have to come in. If they go into the warrant section they may be arrested and serve time, so they generally do not go in. Therefore, the State loses money. If they do not go in to the warrant section the State loses money and the police are having to keep more records, etc. I realise that there is a problem of confidentiality, but there ought to be a solution that will lead to these people being able to check out their commitments, make payment and get on with their lives.

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER: The honourable member raises an important and practical issue for people facing these situations and, indeed, for the efficient administration of justice in our community. There may well be ways in which savings can be made in the administration of justice and in the respect for the law by some improved administrative arrangements in this area. Obviously, it relates not only to the functions of the Attorney-General but also to those of my colleague the Minister of Emergency Services because of the police role in this matter. I will have the matter referred to both those Ministers for consideration.

ASTHMA

Mr D.S. BAKER (Victoria): Will the Minister of Education reverse the decision by her predecessor, who accepted the Education Department's advice that a 10-year-old asthmatic boy could not keep his portable oxygen cylinder at the Kingston Community School outside of school hours? I am told that this bureaucratic decision forces the boy's mother to take the emergency oxygen supply to and from school each day, yet oxygen acetylene equipment is stored at the school permanently.

The Hon. S.M. LENEHAN: The honourable member raises the issue with respect to the treatment of asthma. During this week—and, indeed, we have had some evidence presented to us on the select committee on education about the handling of asthma—I have had the opportunity of meeting with parents and the Marion-Brighton-Glenelg Health and Social Welfare Council to examine how the Education Department and the parent and school community might look at the way in which asthmatics are handled and treated within our education system.

As a parent of a child who was an asthmatic, and at times a severe asthmatic, I have some understanding and empathy with parents who have to deal with this at times very serious problem. Therefore, I will look at the whole management and handling of asthma right throughout the education system. On the specific question that the honourable member has raised, I will be very pleased to get a report for him, and I am sure he will be interested as well in the way in which we look at the management and control of asthmatic children attending the school system in South Australia.

SPORTS DIVISION

Mr FERGUSON (Henley Beach): Will the Minister of Recreation and Sport inform the House of the response by State sporting associations to the new structure and direction of the Department of Recreation and Sport's newly formed Sports Division?

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER: I am pleased to advise that State sporting associations were invited to a forum

held last week where the direction of the newly formed Sports Division was presented to those associations. Mr Neil McGachey, the Director of the Sports Division of the Department of Recreation and Sport, spoke to and answered questions from representatives of some 30 sporting associations present at the forum. The representatives were from associations currently—and many are not—involved in the South Australian Sports Institute (SASI) programs. It was explained at the forum that there will now be two areas from which sporting bodies can apply for funding and other forms of assistance, they being the South Australian Sports Institute and the Sports Development Section, both areas coming under the umbrella of the Sports Division of the Department of Recreation and Sport.

The South Australian Sports Institute unit will be solely based on high performance and on merit. SASI will be responsible for a restricted number of comprehensive sports plan programs which will be assessed on the basis of achievement to meet performance objectives. There will be flexibility to ensure that sports not performing will be replaced by sports that are attaining the appropriate performance levels. The Sports Development Section of the Sports Division, which is on track for being operational by the end of this calendar year, will service those sports not receiving SASI funding. The Sports Development Section will provide support for sports development programs on the basis of equity and fairness, with a specific emphasis on women's sport, Aboriginal sport and sport for people with disabilities.

The South Australian sporting community now has distinctive avenues to submit funding applications for either high performance level sports or general sport development programs, aimed more broadly at encouraging greater participation in organised sporting activities across our community. I am pleased to inform the House that the new directions of the Sports Division have received a positive response from the South Australian sporting community at large.

WORKCOVER

Mr LEWIS (Murray-Mallee): What action, if any, has the Minister of Labour Relations and Occupational Health and Safety taken to address a matter of extreme concern in WorkCover's senior administration which came to light in July in evidence given to the Federal Arbitration Commission? A dispute was heard before Deputy President Maher in July between WorkCover and the Finance Sector Union. The advocate for the Finance Sector Union, in what has been described to me as an unprecedented attack on WorkCover's most senior executives, at one stage said (page 18):

When I talk about managerial inadequacies, I talk of management at an executive and chief executive level. I do not talk about the management immediately below because that level of management . . . has made the very same criticisms.

In the course of the hearing, a report from the senior training and development coordinator was quoted in part, and it was strongly critical of the most senior administration of WorkCover. It states:

Distrust, open derision, public ridicule and sabotage are all symptoms of deep internal divisions, and these now permeate

most, if not all, levels within WorkCover, and appear to be intensifying as the external political pressures grow.

The Hon. R.J. GREGORY: I have had my attention drawn to a transcript of the hearing that occurred in the Industrial Relations Commission. Unlike a number of members opposite, I have appeared there, and union officials tend to overstate their case from time to time—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. R.J. GREGORY: —just as employers also tend to overstate their case. As a number of serious allegations are raised, I will read the statement made by Deputy President Maher who heard this matter. It states:

This matter first came before the commission on 14 July 1992. At that time members of the two unions had imposed bans which were affecting the operations of the corporation. During that hearing the parties set out in detail their concerns and put on record a great deal of information about internal problems at the corporation. A report of a human resources manager was quoted and it included references to alleged broken promises by management and that staff had extremely poor attitudes. While this and other information was put to the commission as part of an historical background I decided that it should not be generally available and the transcript was marked accordingly. The reason for doing this was that I considered that publication of all that had been said would not assist the conciliation process as many of the complaints were very dated and in my view it was best to put it to one side and concentrate on positive matters.

Since then there have been several conferences and hearings in the commission. As well, and importantly, the parties have met on many occasions by themselves. It is significant that the following has occurred:

most problem areas affecting case managers have either been settled or ways found to deal with them;

the integrity of the testing arrangements for case managers has been preserved;

communications between management and staff has been greatly enhanced;

the Chief Executive Officer has met with staff on a number of occasions;

standing consultative mechanisms have now been set in place;

the parties have responded to commission requests professionally and quickly and have now created a very sound working relationship;

the commission has separately consulted with the Chief Executive Officer, managerial staff, supervisors and case managers and has noted an underlying commitment by all concerned to deliver a very professional community service;

the parties have reached a stage where discussions can now get under way concerning an enterprise bargaining agreement aimed at providing benefits to employees based on measured performance improvements

While the commission will be available to assist the parties in these and other matters, developments over the past three months indicate that the parties have taken hold of a difficult situation and turned it to the advantage of themselves and more particularly their community clients. In the meantime the transcript that I had marked 'In confidence' will be available for general publication.

That is signed by Deputy President Maher. We have here a classic example of Australia working under a system of industrial relations which we all know works very well. The system that members opposite promote would not allow this process to continue and would not allow an adequate and reasonable settlement to be reached.

GAWLER RIVER

Mr QUIRKE (Playford): Can the Minister of Primary Industries say what his department has analysed as being

the value of losses to crops and stock due to recent flooding in South Australia?

The Hon. T.R. GROOM: I thank the honourable member for his question. It is correct that officers of the Department of Primary Industries have inspected the flood damage in the Two Wells and Gawler River areas. I should say that whilst it is extensive the damage is not as serious as was first thought, but nevertheless there are problems in relation to it. The estimated field crop losses are as follows: about 200 hectares of cereals and pastures, 36 hectares of trees—mainly almond, olive and vines—and 165 hectares of vegetables, mainly potato and lettuce. That is the extent of the damage to field crops.

There was great concern with regard to livestock, but departmental officers made an extensive inspection and there were some unsubstantiated reports of sheep and horses being drowned. The information I have received from the department is that, in respect of livestock, there has not been all that much damage. The overall damage, over about 431 hectares, involved crops, pastures, tree crops, vines and vegetables. As I said, there was a small number of unconfirmed stock losses. The department has a Rural Finance and Development Division, which provides rural assistance, as the Premier indicated in the House last week or the week before, and anyone in the rural area who has suffered extensive crop or livestock damage simply needs to contact departmental officers for the purpose of being assessed.

SPEED CAMERAS

Mr BRINDAL (Hayward): My question is directed to the Minister of Emergency Services. When was the Police Commissioner first made aware of the decision to withdraw speed cameras pending their reassessment and what were the comments of the Commissioner?

The Hon. M.K. MAYES: The situation with the Commissioner is that, after yesterday's Question Time and following the presentation to me by the member for Hayward of a copy of the infringement notice, it was communicated, I think to the Assistant Commissioner, by my officers. As a consequence, it was checked and some time late yesterday afternoon I received the advice that there was an error. I then had a discussion with my officers and I think this morning there was communication between my officers and the Commissioner as to the accuracy of cameras and what ought to be done. We concluded that there ought to be some testing, not necessarily into the mechanism of the cameras but the setting up procedure and, as a consequence of that, I understand there was discussion with the Commissioner in relation to what would be the outcome of any testing process. On reflection, and in discussion with the Premier's office, it was decided at about lunchtime that no traffic infringement notices would be issued.

RESERVE BANK ACT

Mr HOLLOWAY (Mitchell): Will the Treasurer inform the House of the impact on South Australia of

Federal Opposition proposals to alter the Reserve Bank Act?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: I thank the member for Mitchell for his question. I was quite mystified at the Federal Opposition's policy on the Reserve Bank. I thought it was a quite bizarre attempt to run an economy and hand over a very significant part of that control to another body. However, I had lots of things on my mind, so I thought no more about it until I saw an article in the *Weekend Australian* of 17 October. The article, entitled 'Libs will spark depression'—they depress me, but I do not think the article refers to that—is written by Jane Hammond, a well respected financial journalist, I might add, and it states:

New Zealand property investor Sir Robert Jones said yesterday his company had put its entire \$1 billion Australian property portfolio on the market because of fears that a Federal Government under Opposition Leader Dr Hewson would send the economy into a 1930s depression.

Speaking in Perth yesterday, Sir Robert said his company, Robert Jones Investments Limited, had set an agenda to get out of Australia when it judged that a Hewson Government would almost certainly win the next election . . . the Liberal's policy to change the Reserve Bank Act would 'bring Australia to its knees'.

Sir Robert, a well respected businessman, went on to say:

Dr Hewson planned to copy the New Zealand initiative in changing the Reserve Bank Act, but that had 'wrecked' the economy.

This is the opinion not just of Labor Party supporters or all sensible economists but of a business person with a \$1 billion portfolio in Australia, who says, 'If Dr Hewson gets in, then I'm out.' The changes to the Reserve Bank Act will bring Australia to its knees.

Mrs Kotz interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: I have no reason whatsoever to disbelieve Sir Robert, who is a very highly respected business person. In fact, I find that what Sir Robert says confirms my own views and those of all sensible people. What intrigues me about the promised changes to the Reserve Bank Act is the question of why any Government would do it. I have never understood why people go to all the trouble of being elected to Parliament—and it is not easy—and further trouble to get into the ministry and then, after arriving at a position where they can do something to control the economy, they hand over a significant lever to somebody else.

If members of Parliament, particularly members of Government, do not want to control the economy, they ought to stay out of politics. If Australia is unfortunate enough to suffer under this policy, let us consider one example. If the legislative instruction is given to the Reserve Bank to maintain inflation at 2 per cent and the consequences in a particular set of circumstances are, say, 16 per cent unemployment, do we say that that is acceptable? Does the Government stand up and say, 'That is the responsibility of the Reserve Bank. Parliament has handed over responsibility to maintain inflation at or to bring it down to 2 per cent. Never mind about the consequences. We, as members of Cabinet and members of Parliament, do not care about that. We have handed that job to the Reserve Bank.' What nonsense! I commend Sir Robert on his frankness. I hope that he

does not sell his business interests in Australia precipitously, because I have no doubt whatsoever that the next Federal election will be won by the present Labor Government, and so it ought to be.

The SPEAKER: Order! Before taking any other business, the Chair wishes to make a statement regarding a point of order that was raised earlier. During Question Time the member for Bright, on a point of order, asked the Minister of State Services to table a docket from which he was quoting, and the Minister agreed to do so. However, on perusing the papers, I see they are not a docket but merely the notes that the Minister was using for his answer. Therefore, I feel it is inappropriate that they be tabled.

CREDIT CARDS

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Minister of Business and Regional Development): I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I should like to clarify a point. By interjection during my answer to which you, Mr Speaker, have just referred, members of the Opposition, including the member for Bright, doubted the veracity of a letter from which I quoted. In order to clear up that matter, I should like to read the letter into *Hansard*. It is from Mobil Oil Australia Ltd to my predecessor, the Hon. Anne Levy, and it states:

Dear Minister,

My company is very concerned at the recent comments made by a member of Parliament regarding Government use of the Mobil Fleet Card. In our view, the allegations made were exaggerated, largely unsubstantiated and an unmerited slur on the honesty and integrity of State Government employees, Mobil dealers and the Mobil company.

The card currently used by Government personnel in South Australia has a number of security measures associated with it and these, to our knowledge, are being implemented. Mobil has had a long and proud history in South Australia. We pioneered the establishment of the State's oil refining industry. Today, Mobil is one of South Australia's major employers and investors. The Adelaide refinery alone employs 320 people and spends some \$50 million a year on local goods and services. In addition to the refinery, which supplies most of the State's fuel needs, our company has a major distribution and retailing network there.

In view of the importance of our activities in South Australia and the good reputation we have worked hard to achieve, we are naturally disappointed that the quality of one of our most successful products—our Mobil Fleet Card—is being questioned.

I wish to assure you that we are making every effort to ensure the dealers in our network are aware of their responsibilities in regard to observing credit card procedures. We will also be contacting Mr Matthew to clarify a number of areas of confusion.

I am prepared to table this letter in the interests of the House in order to get to the honesty and truth of this matter. If necessary, I am prepared to assist the member for Bright by setting up a 0055 number.

WAITE CAMPUS

Mr S.J. BAKER (Mitcham): I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

Mr S.J. BAKER: In the ministerial statement made today by the Minister of Primary Industries, the Minister

made a number of statements that reflected on me. Regarding the trees, it was clear that the Environment, Resources and Development Committee of this Parliament recommended that the trees and the cottage be saved, and it was possible that this could occur with some realignment of the plant, sciences and laboratory buildings if the administration centre did not go ahead. I was entitled to believe that these trees and the cottage could be saved if the administration centre did not go ahead, because there was capacity to realign. The Minister of Primary Industries also said today that the trees were 100 to 150 years old—

The SPEAKER: I believe that the honourable member is now commencing to debate. This is a matter of how the member for Mitcham had been misrepresented.

Mr S.J. BAKER: By his statement, the Minister was accusing me of being inaccurate. I am trying to clarify that situation. I believe that is appropriate.

The SPEAKER: I accept that, but the honourable member should make his point regarding how he was misrepresented in relation to the trees.

Mr S.J. BAKER: In response to a release that I issued, the Minister said that he had had botanic experts who said the trees were only 100 to 150 years old. My botanic experts said that they were at least 200 to 300 years old.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr S.J. BAKER: Well, I can; I have a certificate. I would also—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mitcham. If the member for Napier and the member for Spence wish someone to be named, they should continue in the way they are carrying on.

Mr S.J. BAKER: The Minister also mentioned the extent to which trees had been planted on site. I inform the House that the Department of Agriculture did not live up to its responsibilities and its contract to plant trees on the northern side of those premises by the due date. Importantly, when the Minister said that the cottage was of little historic significance and that it was in grave disrepair, there is a difference of opinion. However, in terms of the cottage being in grave disrepair, which again reflected on my statement, that cottage was not in disrepair until such time as the department said, 'You can take all the fixtures and fittings.' By the time the Environment, Resources and Development Committee was assessing that cottage, it was of significance and, indeed, it was in a good state of repair. However, of course, it fell into great disrepair when the Department of Agriculture was let loose—

The SPEAKER: I think the member for Mitcham could have taken advantage of a five minute grievance for this.

Mr S.J. BAKER: That would have taken up grievance time, Mr Speaker. The last point is that the Minister of Primary Industries has stated in this House that every effort was made to handle this project in an open and sensitive way. I completely reject that statement.

CREDIT CARDS

Mr MATTHEW (Bright): I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: I call on the member for Bright and ask him to be precise in his personal explanation.

Leave granted.

Mr MATTHEW: In answer to a question today regarding alleged Government credit card abuse from the member for Napier, the Minister of State Services misrepresented me through selective quotings from a letter that was sent personally to me from the Police Commissioner, Mr David Hunt, in his role as Chairman of the Public Sector Fraud Coordinating Committee. The Minister said, in part:

The claims were immediately picked up by the Government's Public Sector Fraud Coordinating Committee, which has consistently been asking the honourable member to put up the hard evidence. To this day he has failed to do so.

I now quote from the letter that was sent to me by the Police Commissioner; it stated, in part:

I refer to your letter of 31 July 1992 concerning allegations of abuse of the credit card system by Government employees. The Anti-Corruption Branch has conducted an investigation on the information provided by you and other sources to assess the extent of fraud by use of credit cards issued to Government employees. A report on the result of this investigation, along with recommendations on ways to improve the security of the use of credit cards, has been received for consideration by this committee.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MATTHEW: The Minister also said that on 21 August this year the committee referred the matter to the Anti-Corruption Branch for further investigation. He said that it, too, had no luck getting any evidence from the honourable member. By saying this, the Minister has again misrepresented me, because the fact is that the Anti-Corruption Branch did approach me. I met with two senior officers of that branch, one being Superintendent Graham Brown. We met for some 12 hours in my office and I gave extensive information to the police officers. They thanked me for the volume of information I gave to them and said it would assist their investigations greatly.

Subsequent to that I have had further discussions and meetings with Superintendent Brown, who has reaffirmed that the information I gave to the Anti-Corruption Branch would result in substantial recommendations to Government on ways in which to reduce the possibility of credit card fraud and also said there was the possibility of some prosecution resulting from information I passed to that branch. The Minister also quoted selectively by saying that there is no apparent multi-structural abuse of the credit card by Government employees. The letter states in full:

The difficulty in investigating alleged fraud of this nature has been highlighted by the investigations from the ACB because of a lack of complaint by the retailer and the difficulty by Government departments to identify those goods that have been unlawfully purchased. It is suspected that there may be some cases where retailers are cooperating with a Government employee by recording the unlawful purchase of goods under the heading of items reasonably expected to be purchased by that customer.

It also states:

...investigators are also pursuing several lines of inquiries that may result in identifying fraudulent use of the credit card...

The Minister said:

When is the honourable member ever going to wake up that he has been the main obstacle in the investigations...? It has wasted a lot of time and effort investigating the fantasies of the honourable member.

The Minister again misrepresented me, because the letter from the Commissioner states:

The risk of potential abuse has been noted and the matters raised by you in your discussions with the Director, State Fleet, Mr Grenville, have been incorporated in the recommendations made by the ACB and these will be pursued by the committee. These investigations are listed below.

I again quote:

- The registration number, make, model, colour and body type be embossed on all mobilcards.
- That mobilcards have an 'Imposed limit' restricting purchases to specified fuel and oil.
- That employees be required to clearly identify themselves by number or name on the voucher or credit slip and to verify that they have checked the details on the purchase voucher for correctness.
- Employees be required to quote the kilometres to the attendant when purchasing fuel or oil.
- That compliance with these instructions be monitored by the internal audit units of the Government departments.
- Items other than fuel or oil be obtained by using a local purchase order.
- Mobil Oil Australia Limited include the name of each purchaser against each transaction on the mobilcard invoice.
- Mobil Oil Australia Limited include the purchaser's name and vehicle registration against each transaction on the mobilcard invoice involving temporary mobilcards.

Mobil Australia Limited include the name of each purchaser against each transaction on the Mobil Card invoice. Mobil Oil Australia Limited include the purchaser's name and vehicle registration against each transaction on the Mobil Card invoice involving temporary Mobil Cards.

The Minister also alleged that I had slurred the Mobil company and its employees. That has certainly not been communicated to me. Mobil has procedures that need to be tightened, which I understand will occur, because the Commissioner also says:

It is intended to negotiate with Mobil Oil Australia Limited to consider the feasibility of implementing the additional audit controls.

In his concluding remarks the Minister also made a derogatory remark concerning 0055 telephone numbers. As a result of the investigations undertaken by my office into telephone pornography, the *Advertiser* in this State ceased advertising those telephone numbers. The Managing Director wrote to me personally, thanking me for my concern and for pointing out the problem to the paper, and Telecom Australia has now placed a ban on those numbers. It is a pity the Minister did not—

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member is now debating the matter.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! This House has a process whereby we allow five minutes for grievances. Some of these personal explanations are now taking longer than the five minute grievance, and I believe that is not using the time of the House correctly. Personal explanations are meant to be concise and relevant to the issue at hand, and they will be watched very closely. If they go too long the member will be referred to the five minute grievance, because that is the system.

Mr Lewis interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Does the member for Murray-Mallee have a problem?

Mr LEWIS: May I seek your direction, Sir?

The SPEAKER: If the honourable member has a point of order.

Mr LEWIS: I understood that personal explanations were the same as notices of motion in that each member has the opportunity for one and, if there were to be a subsequent one, it would be taken after all other members had put their explanations to the Chamber.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Chair is not aware of that. The Chair at this stage has no idea what the personal explanation is about; it may be a totally different issue. The custom in this House is to go from side to side. There is no precedent of which the Chair is aware that the member should wait until the end.

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Minister of Business and Regional Development): I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Being cognisant of your remarks, Sir, about the necessity for brevity, I feel again that I have been reflected on in a most adverse and unfair way. I was referring to a media interview last night on the Murray Nichol show in respect of which I have a copy of what the honourable member said. He failed to reveal during questioning the fact that the Police Commissioner had said that there had been no apparent multistructural abuse of credit cards by Government employees. Also, he called for a number of initiatives to be put in place on which he had already been briefed and which had already been put into place.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr LEWIS: I rise on a point of order, Sir. The two points made so far by the Minister are not in explanation of anything in which he has been misrepresented.

The SPEAKER: I am listening very closely to find what the point of order is and what the personal explanation is about. The explanation has proceeded on the same basis as that relating to the member for Bright's explanation and the case he put forward. I now ask the Minister to come right to the point and be brief.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: In the member's personal explanation he said that I had accused him of slurring Mobil employees in this State. I did not; I simply quoted from a letter signed by the Acting Chairman and Managing Director of Mobil Australia, who accused the honourable member of slurring employees.

LEARN TO SWIM CAMPAIGN

Mr MEIER (Goyder): I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

Mr MEIER: Earlier today the member for Morphet asked the Minister of Recreation and Sport to guarantee to the House that cuts of up to 45 per cent in the hourly rates for 'learn to swim' instructors of the Department of Recreation and Sport would not disrupt the country based 'learn to swim' campaign. During the Minister's reply, the Minister reflected on me by asserting that he doubted that I could swim. Whilst I do not pretend to be a Kieran Perkins, I most certainly can swim, and I thank the instructors who instructed me in earlier years.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member has made his personal explanation very clearly and succinctly.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

The SPEAKER: The proposal before the Chair is that the House note grievances,

Mr HAMILTON (Albert Park): Today during Question Time the Minister of Education, Employment and Training stated that I had pursued her across a number of portfolios. I understood that the Minister said it with some levity and also with some seriousness, for I will pursue Ministers, even if sometimes it may be to their annoyance. I know that the Minister did not say that today in those terms. I thank her for the way in which she responded to the questions that I directed to her, as she has done in her other portfolios and, in particular, for the manner in which she responded to my question about the Hendon Primary School, which needs special attention in terms of special education funding and which is situated in my electorate of Albert Park. The Minister had been briefed by me in relation to this issue because I was concerned about it following representations made to me by a number of people at the school. I place on record my appreciation to the Minister and her staff for acting very promptly in responding to this question.

Talking of education matters, I again thank the Minister of Education, her predecessor and the parents and staff of the Semaphore Park Primary School for their diligence and doggedness in pursuing the need for a new multi-purpose hall at that school. It has taken a couple of years to bring that project to fruition. However, I want the Minister to take on notice a couple of questions, as I believe that the staff of Ministers read *Hansard*. When will work start on this building? Will it be some time this year? If it is not to be this year, when will the work start? It is important, because that school has for some time expressed a very strong desire to have this matter attended to.

In addition, twice last week in this House I raised the issue of waiting lists at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I note that the Federal Minister for Health, Mr Howe, in an article in today's *Australian* headed 'Howe woos States with fast options for tied hospital grants', is quoted as saying:

States showing a willingness to sign the new Medicare agreement will get almost immediate access to Federal funds to reduce hospital waiting lists.

The article continues:

On the eve of tomorrow's meeting in Adelaide with State Health Ministers, Mr Howe said they did not have to physically sign the new five year Medicare agreement to get their share of the money. The Commonwealth has offered the States \$50 million in 1992-93 to reduce the waiting times for orthopaedic, ophthalmology, ear nose and throat, urology and general surgery.

Twice last week I indicated to the Minister of Health that I would be watching this situation with a great deal of interest. As a consequence of tomorrow's meeting with the Federal Minister and other State Ministers, I hope that money will be forthcoming to reduce the waiting list at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. As I understand it from figures supplied to me, this hospital has a waiting list of in excess of 500 more than any other hospital in metropolitan Adelaide, excluding the Royal Adelaide Hospital. I will be watching the outcome with a great deal of interest and hope that, if the statements in the *Australian* are correct, those moneys will be made available almost immediately.

If members refer to the *Hansard* of 13 and 15 October, they will see how those figures have been dissected into the areas of ear, nose and throat, urology and general surgery needs at that hospital. I thank both the Federal Minister and the State Minister in anticipation of the funds being made available for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to reduce the waiting list and the needs of my constituents and many others in the western suburbs of Adelaide.

Mr VENNING (Custance): I am very concerned about an article that appeared in an international magazine a couple of weeks ago written by two Adelaide scientists warning of the apparent toxicity of *blanche fleur* vetch. I am very concerned with the adverse effects that that article will have on the export industry, at present worth millions of dollars to this State. I am also concerned at the action that will be taken by the department to ensure that satisfactory tests are carried out urgently to prove or disprove these scientists' argument.

It absolutely amazes me that two people employed in this State by the department are allowed to have articles published in an international paper making accusations such as these without any real proof. It is very obvious to the rank and file South Australian the damage that it could do (and has done) to a very important industry to this State.

The price of *blanche fleur* vetch has been removed from listing, and at this time it has no value. Dr Max Tate and Dr Dirk Enerking of the University of Adelaide and the Waite Institute have issued a warning to the Government, the grain industry and farmers about *blanche fleur* vetch, a substitute for red lentils which is toxic to humans and therefore should not be exported. Their findings have been disputed by the Grain Council of Australia, which is most concerned about the damage being caused to the industry by the report. It concerns me that this accusation should be made in an international magazine, with the obvious potential damage to our industry.

The second issue to which I shall refer is the restructuring of the former Department of Agriculture, now called the Department of Primary Industries. I am very concerned about the final directions of the former Minister, now Premier Arnold, with respect to the establishment of a separate research institute with the corresponding arbitrary shift sideways of Dr John Radcliffe.

It has always been my understanding that the agriculture industry and the department were unanimous in their agreement that research and extension should

ultimately be brought together. I have never heard a contrary view to that. In my whole time in the Department of Agriculture, it was always our aim to get research and the extension work of the Department of Agriculture working better and more fluently. This act flies in the face of all that. I have never heard a dissenting view from that.

However, former Minister Arnold's parting shot to the department flies in the face of all this consensus, without warning, for the ODR report to be released during the next couple of weeks. He arbitrarily set up a research institute in the department. We have all heard about this research, which is costing this State more than \$800 000. All of a sudden, out of the blue, the former Minister makes a massive change in the order. One would think he would have waited at least for this review to be handed down.

My further worry is that Mr Arnold has effectively removed or dispensed with the very capable services of Dr John Radcliffe by shuffling him sideways with no explanation or warning. I understand that Dr Radcliffe was overseas at the time. I believe that this was a retrograde step, as Dr Radcliffe was a very valuable asset to the department and very well respected by all those concerned, both in the industry and the extension. It was a very political move, obviously, because Mr Arnold could not wait for the ODR report. It has caused utter confusion and resentment in the department, which is noted for its high level of cohesion and commitment to the job.

The move has merely served to put a greater divide between the research intelligence and agricultural practitioners. I cannot understand why Mr Arnold has done this. I will be asking questions about this in the House in the future. Hopefully, the new Minister will take a more sensible view on the matter. I urge the House to watch this situation very closely. I reiterate: this move was done without anyone at all being consulted.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD (Baudin): A day or so ago I came across a report issued way back in 1981 by the Australian Natives Association entitled *Salination and Desalination: some ANA thoughts on the twin problems*. It is a bit of a period document these days. Most of what is in it has been overtaken by events. It is interesting for the graphic pictorial contents, such as that on page 3: the stark effects of salination. There are photographs of areas of Victoria, such as near Benalla, near a place called Balliang, west of the You Yang Ranges, and in other places north of Bendigo, and so on. It reminds us that the fight against salinity in the Murray-Darling Basin must proceed. The problem is not so much an environmental one, although environmental issues can never be ignored because, as I understand it, at least the larger fauna tend to be largely salt tolerant and could probably tolerate a rather saltier regime than now occurs.

The problem is rather with the loss of productivity, the damage to pipes and other reticulation apparatus, because of encrustation of pipes and industrial installations, and the loss of energy as a result of the additional heat that has to be applied to many of those processes. In the next couple of months, we will see a very gratifying reduction of salinity in the Lower Murray because of the additional water flows which are occurring and will continue to

occur in South Australia. For example, I note in the past week that the figures have been interesting. At Lock 9, up river from our boundary, on 14 October the salinity level was 333 electroconductivity units.

By 21 October that had declined to 306 electroconductivity units. Downstream at Murray Bridge the figures went down in the same week from 559 to 411. Some of the other figures bump around a bit but the trend is quite clear and will continue. However, we are aware that the volume of water currently in the catchment is not always the case and in periods of sustained aridity there can be high salinity levels.

A number of factors have been identified as causing the high level of salinity: natural groundwater inflow, given the fairly high levels of salinity in the subsoils of the catchment area itself; inflow aggravated by river structures, such as the additional head of water caused by weirs on the Murray; and inflow aggravated by irrigation and drainage. I do not have time to go into all of that at this stage. What is more important are the sorts of measures adopted in order to mitigate the effects of salinity, and I refer to interception schemes, management of pool levels, environmental flow and revegetation.

Earlier today I asked a question of the Minister about revegetation because, although there has been an enormous upsurge in interest in revegetation throughout this country—not the least among primary producers who, for the most part, are the people who own the land—so much more needs to be done. We can get short-term gains in the reduction of salinity by the salinity interception schemes, by the management of pool levels, by using environmental flow and the rest of it, but revegetation is where the long-term gains will occur, but there is a fairly long proving time.

Once trees are planted it takes quite some time before they have their traditional impact on the evapotranspiration cycle, which is so important in reducing the salinity in soils and hence in the water, in the billabongs and in the rivers of the system. Therefore, I hope that, particularly in the upstream States where the planting has to occur, the pressure will be maintained. I commend to the South Australian Ministers on the Murray-Darling Council that pressure must be maintained on the upstream States to ensure that the gains are achieved. The gains cannot be won quickly, but they must be achieved.

Mr OSWALD (Morphett): I am appalled and disgusted at the way in which the Government is handling the disposal of the Glengowrie High School site. On 24 July this year at a meeting between the Town Clerk and staff of Marion council and officers of the Department of Lands, the department—and through the department the Government—was left in no doubt that the council was negotiating and was an interested purchaser of the site, subject to approval by the council.

At that meeting there was also discussion about the transfer of the 12.5 per cent open space, which would subsequently be negotiated between the developers and the council. Subsequent to that meeting the council proceeded and eventually in October it approved the purchase of 1.4 hectares of land from the Glengowrie High School site. The Town Clerk sent that offer to the Department of Lands by letter. The following day the

Department of Lands wrote back to the council advising it that the department was no longer prepared to accept the offer, an offer which would have collectively given the council 2.4 hectares of land and enabled the community to retain an oval and tennis courts for use as open space by the community. This project was dear to the heart of the community, and it will be bitterly disappointed if it cannot proceed.

The Government has not yet sealed any deal with the developers. It is still negotiating with them at this point, yet the council has made a firm offer based on the valuations that were given to the council by the Department of Lands. The Government has chosen to reject the offer and to continue to negotiate elsewhere. The conduct of this matter is appalling as it involves a valuable community resource, one which, when lost, will never again be available. We have young families moving back into the area. The land is extremely valuable. It has the potential for use as open space and sport. As I said a moment ago, this opportunity will never again be available to the community. I received a letter today that was sent to Premier Arnold. It is dated 20 October and it is signed by the Mayor of Marion, Colin Haines. The letter reads:

Dear Premier,
Glengowrie High School site

For some time the council has been having discussions with officers of the Department of Environment and Land Management about the future of the former Glengowrie High School site. I attach for your information copies of recent correspondence between the council and the department concerning this matter. On 13 October the council offered to purchase 1.4 hectares of the site for \$840 000. Together with the minimum legal open space requirements, this would have enabled the Hazehere Oval and tennis courts to be preserved as open space for the community.

The council was extremely disappointed to receive the advice on 19 October 1992 that the Department of Environment and Land Management did not wish to take up this offer at this time. The need to preserve open space on the site is one which is deeply felt within the local community and one which has been actively pursued by the council and the Glengowrie Area Residents Association. Much of the area was developed when current minimum open space requirements did not apply.

I point out that the council was not asking for anything free or any special consideration. It was prepared to pay a full commercial rate as advised by officers of the department. On behalf of the council and the local community, I request your intervention to ensure open space in the area is preserved, and that the council's offer be reconsidered.

Yours sincerely
Colin M. Haines (signed)
Mayor, City of Marion.

I refer to my earlier remarks. The department let the council believe from the outset that, if the council approved the purchase of the additional land, the Government would consider it seriously and accede to the request. There was no question in the mind of anyone who left the meeting on 24 July that that was not the position. From 24 July right through until it went to council members of the department knew that the council was heading towards that decision, and it had ample opportunity to do so. For departmental officers to come in now and start considering another application from the developers is appalling—

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

Mr QUIRKE (Playford): A couple of days ago I received what can be described only as one of the most disturbing phone calls that I have had in my almost three years in this place. I received a telephone call from Mr Doug Hooper, a personal friend of mine and Chairman of the Valley View Secondary School Council. Mr Hooper told me about a matter of great concern in that school community. The concern surrounds the fate of an 18-year-old student at the school who unfortunately has been diagnosed as having brain cancer which is inoperable and which in almost all circumstances apparently progressively leads to death. Sadly, as I understand it from subsequent discussions that I had with her father, she can expect a period of relative deterioration in health, sight and other faculties, eventually leading to considerable pain and ultimately to death.

Mr Hooper spoke to me about the school community's desire to raise some moneys to help this particular person. It was unsolicited, and in Mr Hooper's case it stemmed from a deep feeling within the school community of members of that community wanting to do what they could to help that family and that person in need. I was asked whether I would be prepared to help in that process by contacting the domestic or international airlines to see whether I could obtain an airfare for this person before she loses the ability to appreciate sights in other States and perhaps overseas.

Last Friday night I went to the Real Estate Institute's annual dinner and by strange happenstance my wife and I were lucky enough to win a spot prize, which was a return trip to Melbourne and tickets to see *Phantom of the Opera*. I should like to thank the Real Estate Institute for that opportunity and Messenger Press, which I understand donated that prize. I had a dilemma for a few days because I could not decide to whom in my electorate I should donate that prize. I have no problem in saying that the most worthy person is the young lady in question.

I also make clear to the House that I will be contacting travel agents and the international airlines to see whether it is possible to obtain some help in getting a trip of a lifetime for this person. When you look at the situation that she and her parents are in—and they are facing it very bravely—and you look at your own children, you realise what indeed could be. I conclude by saying that the school community in Valley View is already setting in train programs to help in this hour of need. I commend them for the activities into which they have entered.

Mr BRINDAL (Hayward): In this House today we have witnessed one of the greatest shemozzles that I have seen in my three years here and, of course, I refer to the statement of the Minister of Emergency Services. That statement raises serious questions, which I hope over the next few weeks this House will pursue. I asked a legitimate question and I was subsequently put down by the Minister for asking it. In that respect, I accept the explanation offered by the Minister and his apology to me personally, because it was a reflection on me. However, it raises a number of other issues. In that context, I have a copy of the facsimile transmission which the Police Commissioner, Mr David Hunt, sent to the Minister of Emergency Services yesterday.

I remind members that I asked a serious and important question about speed cameras, and I did that on 20 October during Question Time in this House. On 21 October Mr Hunt was able to write these words to his Minister:

At this stage it must be remembered that the only information the officers had to work with was the information which had appeared in the *Advertiser*.

I am therefore left to ask: when members of this Opposition ask questions of the Government, is it legitimate that Ministers of the Crown do not even bother to refer those questions to the appropriate officers within their department? That statement is quite clear.

That statement from the Commissioner of Police says that—and I believe if members of this House check the Minister's statement he confirms it—as late as yesterday this Minister and his apparatchiks had not bothered to ask the Police Commissioner the *bona fides* of the question. However, the Minister could stand up and make pronouncements and give answers on behalf of this Government which have been proved today to be palpably wrong. A few of the members opposite, a few of the newly elevated backbenchers who have escaped from the front bench, can grin as much as they like, because this shows the malaise that has beset the Government and made it incompetent to govern. Indeed, I refer all members to section 21 (1) of the Police Act ('Control and management of the Police Force'), which provides:

Subject to this Act and the direction of the Government, the Commissioner has the control and management of the Police Force.

Yet in this House today the Minister said he would issue an instruction to the Commissioner of Police. That is contrary to the Act. It is contrary to the separation of powers, except in very special circumstances, and those circumstances are these (section 21(2)):

The Minister may cause a copy of every direction under subsection (1) to be laid before each House of Parliament within six sitting days of the date of the direction if the Parliament is then in session and if not within six sitting days after the commencement of the next session.

I acknowledge that the Minister has six sitting days to lay his direction to the Police Commissioner before this House. However, every member of this House must seriously question why, if a direction was issued, that direction was not laid before this House when the Minister was making his statement. If we question that, we can legitimately arrive at the conclusion that the Minister has tried to issue an illegal direction to the Police Force. He has not done it according to the law, and therefore the Minister has exceeded his authority as a Minister of the Crown. Either the Minister or the Premier of South Australia, whoever it was who issued the direction, has contravened the law of this State and is clearly not fit to hold office under the Crown. Therefore, he has no recourse other than to tender his resignation. If the law has been breached, I demand that the appropriate Minister's resignation be tendered.

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

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

A quorum having been formed:

APPROPRIATION BILL

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Legislative Council has, in reply to Message No. 33 from the House of Assembly, withdrawn the Appropriation Bill, which is returned herewith.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS (Treasurer): I move:

That the vote on the third reading of the Appropriation Bill be rescinded.

Mr S.J. BAKER (Mitcham): I should like to respond to that motion, if the House will allow me to do so. I would like to know what is going on in this Parliament. We have a schedule that suddenly—

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to resume his seat. This is an extremely serious motion. This is the first time—

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would ask members to be quiet. This is the first time that this proposition has ever been put before this House and I expect the House to treat it with due seriousness. Unless there is complete order in the House, I am afraid that I shall have to take action. I would request that members who speak on this motion be heard in silence. The member for Mitcham.

Mr S.J. BAKER: I should like to know what is going on. We have before us a proposition that we rescind the third reading of a Bill. I cannot remember in my 10 years in this Parliament when this has occurred—that we have wiped off the third reading of a Bill. I can understand the schedule being resubmitted for consideration.

The Hon. Jennifer Cashmore interjecting:

Mr S.J. BAKER: As the member for Coles points out, we are talking about the budget. We have been presented with a schedule that nobody in this Parliament has had an opportunity to scrutinise completely. We understand that the Government is in grave difficulty because it has to have Ministers signing documents and those Ministers do not exist. However, we have had no explanation and no consultation; we have had nothing from the Treasurer of this State to tell us exactly what is going on. As a Parliament, we are assumed to approve this change without any explanation. That is simply not good enough. This is the first time in the 152 years of this Parliament, of which I am aware, that the House has been asked to change and resubmit the Appropriation Bill because of administrative bungling. It is because the Government simply does not have its act together. It has so many problems on its plate that it simply cannot cater for the day-to-day running of this Parliament.

This is a particularly serious matter. We are dealing with the budget—an appropriation of \$4.5 billion. If a mistake has been made, the Government should come clean and explain to the House what has happened. The Treasurer should have had the guts to stand up and say, 'We have made an error.' He should then have explained what changes have taken place and why. This Parliament has not had the privilege of that explanation. We are being treated as mere machinery to approve of a process

because the Government seems to have made a huge error. I do not know how far the records go back. I can certainly attest to the fact that, in the 10 years I have been here, the third reading of a Bill has never been obliterated from the record.

The Hon. G.J. Crafter: So what?

Mr S.J. BAKER: The Minister of Recreation and Sport asks 'So what?' It is typical of the way that they trample on the traditions of this Parliament. This is just another example of the contempt with which this Government has treated this Parliament over the years. We are talking about a very large sum of money. We do not know whether there are further errors in the schedule, because we have not had the opportunity to scrutinise it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The motion before the House is that the third reading be rescinded. The comments made by the member for Mitcham thus far are quite legitimate, but we are not debating the schedule. The schedule will be debated in Committee, and many of the remarks that have been made might well be made again. At the moment, the motion that we are considering does not refer to the schedule. I ask members to take that into consideration. The member for Mitcham.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I appreciate your guidance on that matter. You are quite correct in your judgment: we are dealing with the third reading to enable this schedule to be reconsidered. At the outset, the Opposition is in a vexed situation. We do not know whether to approve of this measure or to say no to it, because there has been no consultation. We do not know whether we are doing the right thing for the people of South Australia. The Government has suspended Standing Orders to bring this measure before the House in order to ask for a rescission of the third reading of the Bill, and we are expected to agree with it. In the circumstances, we are in an extremely difficult situation. I would have hoped that there would be some consultation on this very serious matter. Whilst it might be that the Government is in strife, that is no reason to expect the Opposition to approve this measure.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Leader of the Opposition): I make quite clear that the Liberal Party will oppose this motion, first on the ground that it is an unprecedented move. It has been moved because the Government is in total and complete disarray. Since the new ministries have been brought in, we have had these Bills before the House, and they have subsequently left this House. However, since then, the Government has suddenly found that it has to restructure the financial allocation for Government departments. What ineptitude!

This Government, some four or five weeks ago, allocated ministerial portfolios, but it is only now in the last 24 or 48 hours that it has found out that it has to bring back this Bill and rescind the third reading of a Bill which has already been passed in this Parliament. We know from questions in another place that there are other major problems in dealing with the change of ministries that have been brought in by this Government.

I know from constituents who have raised matters with me of the enormous problems being encountered by this Government in carrying out routine documentation. I know that very important real estate transactions have been frozen as a consequence of the change of ministries

by this Government and the lack of planning and knowledge of what should be done under normal Public Service procedures. Therefore, at this very late stage, we have an attempt by the Government to rescind the third reading of a Bill and to do so without any full explanation of what is occurring in terms of the changes within the schedule.

I realise that I cannot talk about the schedule, as such: that comes under the next motion. However, I highlight the complete lack of explanation and I also highlight the point that it is normal parliamentary procedure, which I have seen used in this House on numerous occasions, that the reduction of a Minister's line by \$100 would bring about a vote of no confidence in the ministry and in the Government and, therefore, under normal procedures, a defeat of the Government. However, we do not know what fiddle and manipulation of finance occurred under the schedule that we are about to consider.

There has been no attempt whatsoever by the Treasurer to give a full and detailed explanation. We have had two weeks of Estimates Committees in which we went through, line by line, looking at what has been allocated to each ministry. We have had a further week of debate on the Bill when it came back to this House after those Estimates Committees. Yet, now, on the stroke of a pen, this Government is trying to change—and perhaps change very fundamentally—the entire allocation of funds to each ministerial line. It is totally unacceptable.

I put to the Government that the Opposition will oppose this; we will consider it next week, if the Government has the decency to withdraw this motion and bring it back next week with a full explanation and a briefing so that we can be assured that there is not some underhand fiddle and manipulation of funds from one ministry line to another. How do we know that there is not a fundamental shift from one aspect of health, for example, to another aspect of health to cover up the debacle and the crisis that is occurring in the hospital system? How do we know that there has not been a manipulation of funds across to the Police Department to cover the shortfall in funds there? How do we know what has occurred with the Festival of Arts funding where the Government has withdrawn funding from the Lotteries Commission?

These very fundamental issues, which have been debated in this House since the Estimates Committees, have been completely overlooked in the Government's bringing this matter back before the House in the manner in which it has been done. For the sake of democracy in this House and for the sake of some procedure in this House, I ask the Government to withdraw this motion, to consult fully with the Opposition so that we know what is going on and then to let us consider it next week.

The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE (Coles): I oppose this motion. It is quite clear that this Government is in chaos. It is very dangerous indeed for a Parliament to give power to the Executive when that Executive is clearly incapable of managing the affairs of the State. We have before us a proposition which would wipe out two weeks of debate and two weeks of close scrutiny of the budget in the budget estimates process.

Barely two hours ago we received the schedule that we are now being asked to use as an instrument to rescind

the third reading. In the subsequent period, we have had and hour of Question Time, during which the attention of all members was engaged on questions without notice. We have since had the grievance debate, when many members have been occupied. There is no way on earth that this Parliament is prepared or able to debate the proposition that will be put if this motion is carried.

We have already in this session two examples of gross ineptitude, one relating to the poker machine Bill, which should be an example to this Government of what happens when Parliament is simply bulldozed by the Executive and forced to sit all night, and when the staff are forced to do things under pressure. That is when mistakes occur. The same is about to be presented to us now; we are about to be required, if the Government uses the brute force of its numbers, to rescind the budget—not just any ordinary Bill or any ordinary Act of Parliament but the approval of Parliament for funds that will keep this State operating for next 12 months. We are supposed to do that with no notice at all on a very complicated schedule which deals with a pile of documents which, if they were put together, is about 12 inches thick. That is not reasonable and, as far as I am concerned, it is unconscionable, and I will not be party to it.

The Ministers on the front bench are right to hang their head in shame. Some of them look darned embarrassed, and they have every reason to be so. I am very surprised that some of them would even lend their normal attitudes of integrity and parliamentary procedures to this intolerable act by the Treasurer. For him to put this proposition to the Parliament without a word of explanation, either to the Parliament or by way of preliminary explanation to the Leader, the Deputy Leader and manager of business for the Opposition, or the shadow Treasurer is something that is just without precedent. I cannot, neither can any of my colleagues, contemplate agreeing to this. Not only is it unprecedented in this Parliament: I venture to say it is unprecedented in this Commonwealth and probably in any country other than a banana republic. That is exactly what this Government has sunk to. It should be dismissed and certainly should not be given its way through this motion.

Mr D.S. BAKER (Victoria): I agree with the Leader and the member for Coles. What we see now is a Government withering away in a sea of scandal. For the first time in this State's history we see the most underhand, unparliamentary act that anyone has ever heard of who represents constituents in this Parliament. We are faced, without any ministerial statement—and there was plenty of opportunity for such a statement to foreshadow this motion—at 4 o'clock on a Thursday, a suspension of Standing Orders to slip another sleazy document through this Parliament in the expectation that the Opposition will go along with it and agree to it. As the Leader said, we will oppose this motion, and we have every democratic right to do so and to put this before the people of South Australia again.

I might say that the former Treasurer and Premier, when he found that he could no longer sustain his position in South Australia, resigned as Premier of this State. I noted in the budget papers his glowing reports about how, in preparing the budget, he was helped by the Minister of Finance. There is only one honourable course

of action that can happen in this House, and that is that the then Minister of Finance, the current Treasurer, should resign from his position because of this debacle in the Parliament of South Australia. I oppose the motion, and I will oppose it vigorously in the debate that ensues. In fact, on a quick flick through the document in front of us, I do not think it even adds up.

Mr INGERSON (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I wish to make a few general comments on this whole document. I was approached last night, by the Leader of the House, to discuss this issue. The Deputy Premier advised me that there were some errors in the Appropriation Bill and that a schedule would be brought into this House today. That was the beginning and the end of that debate. I agreed that an amending schedule should come before the House.

What I did not agree to and what I was not asked about—but what was given to me some five minutes ago on request—were the procedures and rescissions that are required to achieve that action. As the Deputy Premier is well aware, my agreement related to our enabling this amending action to take place—no more, no less than that. There was no agreement, as the Deputy Premier is aware, as to how this action would be treated. I wanted to make that clear to the House, because it is an important issue.

Having said that, I find it absolutely incredible that we are asked at such short notice to debate very significant changes to a schedule. That schedule, of course, will be debated if this motion is carried. The issue, as was put clearly by the Leader of the Opposition, is that there has been a total rearrangement of the financial Bills before this House. The point that needs to be made is that, as the Leader said, if any line in a Bill is ever changed and that issue is lost, we lose Government and go to an election in this State. Despite the massive changes proposed here, there is no provision for any sensible debate on the issues involved.

Mr LEWIS (Murray-Mallee): We know now that the Estimates Committees were a Clayton's exercise, if we did not know before, because, although it allowed an examination of what departments proposed to do with the funds being appropriated to them, we were not having any scrutiny in effect. The Government knew all the time that it intended to rearrange not only the ministry but the entire structure of the Public Service, yet none of that was disclosed through the Estimates Committees.

That is a gross deceit: there is no other way of describing it. Whole divisions of departments have been transferred from other departments to which they were originally attached, and that is why this schedule has become necessary. The entire ministry was 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 to avoid the exercise with which it would otherwise have been confronted. It determined that the Premier of the day had to go. With the election of the new Premier and the resignation from the ministry of the former Deputy Premier, given that he had already announced his intention to do so, a rearrangement took place of the entire Cabinet. The Labor Party knew that if it was to

avoid the ignominious consequences of utter devastation at the next election it had to get the cooperation of the Independent members sitting on its side of the House.

The documents we received then were completely irrelevant to the structure that would be put into place immediately after the Estimates Committees were held, and the Government, including the Minister, knew that. The departments were immediately reorganised and renamed and whole slabs of departments were moved from one portfolio to another. So, we as a Parliament now face great difficulty in trying to understand them. They do not relate to anything on the schedule. The appropriations made will not be spent in the name in which they were allocated. So, we have had a Clayton's Estimates Committee exercise.

The Government also worked out which Minister would do what after the procedure was over. It knew what that was, such that Ministers were giving assurances in the Estimates Committees deceitfully, and they are now absolved of any responsibility whatever for breaches of those assurances in which the new Ministers in the new departments may be involved. Is it any wonder that the Opposition is outraged by the proposed change?

It is incredible to me, also, that the Government now seeks to withdraw from itself the Supply that it needs to run the State. This proposition if it passes is in effect a vote of no confidence in the Government taken by itself and moved by the Treasurer. He should be ashamed, as should every other Minister, the Premier and the former Premier, for allowing this to happen.

If any other members on the other side of the Chamber vote for this proposal they should know now that they are setting a precedent in the history of Westminster Parliaments. I know of no other instance in which a Government has sought to remove Supply from itself, voting, in effect, no confidence in the appropriations that it gave itself and then attempting to recover its confidence by a rearrangement of those appropriations without scrutiny, without delay and without the public being able to understand why, let alone those of us who were elected here to represent them. It is a shame.

Mr MEIER (Goyder): I am completely nonplussed at what is going on. I have heard some arguments from this side of the House. When the Minister moved for the suspension of Standing Orders he had the opportunity to say why he wanted it, but no contribution was made. He then moved to rescind the third reading of the Appropriation Bill. In my time here I have never seen that happen before. I have now heard from my colleagues that possibly in 152 years it has not been done.

We are being asked within a matter of minutes of the introduction of this Bill to allow things to go forward. The Government would know better than anyone that since the last election we have had an understanding that two weeks is the normal minimum time, unless exceptional arrangements are being entered into. It is very generous of our Leader to say that if the Government is prepared to withdraw this Bill today and to allow us further time to consider it we will do so next week and we will want to see a full explanation.

Surely, the taxpayers of South Australia will want to know from me as one of the 47 elected members and from other members why I did or did not agree to the

reintroduction of this Bill, and at this stage I would not be able to offer them an explanation. So, I have no alternative but to oppose the measure. In fact, I see that this Bill deals with some \$4.5 billion, so we are not dealing with a small amount of money. We hear an inane interjection from a member opposite. They could not care less about the moneys of this State: they have allowed our debt to increase from \$2.5 million—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The debate has been going well so far. I have pointed out to the House that members must not refer to the schedule. We are not debating the schedule at this time. The debate before the House is that the third reading of the Appropriation Bill be rescinded, so I ask the honourable member not to drift into the schedule at all.

Mr MEIER: There is no doubt that the Government is on the skids. The very fact that this measure is before us shows that it has lost control. We on the Opposition side have been saying that for a long time. It is now becoming clear, even to members of the Government and, as one of the speakers pointed out earlier, many Ministers on the front bench are looking very uneasy. They are very uncomfortable being in the position in which they are today—understandably!

I would love to be in the Caucus room next week when this issue and what happened is hammered out. The two Independent members are not allowed in the Caucus room, so they will not participate in the discussions. It is a disgraceful situation that we have here today: no notice, massive implications from the withdrawal of this Bill, and I, together with my Opposition colleagues, oppose the motion.

Mr OSWALD (Morphett): I, too, oppose the motion. One of the strengths—

The Hon. T.H. HEMMINGS: On a point of order, Sir, when an honourable member is speaking, no members must have their back to the Chair, obscuring your view of the member who is speaking.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order and ask all members to take their seat. Will the member for Adelaide take a seat.

Mr OSWALD: One of the strengths of the Estimates Committee system is that we have an opportunity to analyse Government programs. We have programs listed in the Estimates of Payments and Receipts, and for the two weeks that we adjourn into Committee we can analyse those programs and know what the Government will do with the money that we are appropriating.

By its action this afternoon, the Government has attempted to reschedule that money so that different sums go into the new portfolios, and all we see are gross amounts in those portfolios. We have no idea where that money will be spent. We have no idea whether any programs have been axed. And, we have no idea what are now the priorities of the State. I will not look at the figures in the schedule in this part of the debate, but some of those figures will line up as being common to portfolios that have not changed, but in the portfolios that have had a major change there will, I guess, be major gross totals.

It is totally unfair and unacceptable for us to pass those figures now without knowing how that money is to be spent, because that is the whole purpose of program

performance budgeting. It is the whole purpose of the Estimates Committees, and it is totally unacceptable for any Parliament to be expected to pass a budget, not knowing how the money is to be spent.

We are not doing the right thing by anyone in this State if we go along with what the Government is proposing this afternoon. Program performance budgeting is just that: the opportunity to know how the money is to be spent before the third reading is finally passed. To expect us here this afternoon to give an imprimatur to this resolution so that the Government can pass the third reading of the budget measure, when we do not know how the money is to be spent, and not knowing, for instance, if there is more money for the Coast Protection Board or if that will be further axed—

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask members on both sides of the House to please take their seat while this debate is proceeding. It is a very important debate, and I will come down heavily on anyone who transgresses the Standing Orders.

Mr OSWALD: It is an historic debate. It is a debate brought about by a Government that is trying to push through a gross total, a new figure, for a budget in this State without the Parliament and the people of South Australia knowing how and on which programs the money is to be spent. We have absolutely no idea with these new portfolios what the programs are and whether they will be the same as they were when we held the Estimates Committee hearings last month.

Ministers are shaking their head; I am wrong, they say, by interjection, but we do not know whether these programs are the same. We do not know what cuts have been made to programs and what priorities have been changed, and that is what program performance budgeting is all about. On that basis, I urge members not to support the motion before the House this afternoon and to give us an opportunity to look at the programs and see whether they have survived under the changed portfolios. Heaven knows whether the new Ministers have new priorities or whether, in a few months when their new regimes are in place, they will *change* those priorities. What we approved at budget time may no longer be the priority of the Government.

We as a Parliament have every right to know how every cent of the budget is to be spent. I would like to think, from the smirks on some of the faces opposite, that perhaps I am starting to strike oil. Perhaps, in the fullness of time, we may find there have been changes of emphasis in policy, and the Ministers in the new portfolios may have decided to alter their priorities, or axe or reallocate programs. We want to know these things, and that is why we will oppose this motion: to give the Parliament its inherent and historic right to examine the programs that have been put up by the Government before we approve the expenditure.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS (Deputy Premier): I heard Mrs Greiner once describe a former member of the New South Wales Parliament as a drama queen. What we have seen today is an awful lot of drama queens making something of nothing. However—

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable Minister to sit down, because I am taking the same line with the Opposition as I did with the Government. I cannot express it any stronger than this: this is a very important debate, and I ask that there be no interjections and that the Minister be heard in silence.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: Thank you very much, Sir. Why is this matter here today? There are two principal reasons. There was a change in the Public Service arrangements between the introduction of the Bill and the completion of the debate in the Parliament. Therefore, we are appropriating money and allocating it to departments that no longer exist. That is obviously nonsense. There is a view in some quarters by those people who debate these matters that that can be done; that the arrangements can be made; that we should not worry about it; and that the Public Finance Act allows those appropriations to be shifted around. I and a number of others believed that that was massaging the Act to an unacceptable degree.

If the problem was merely that, because some departments had been abolished and some amalgamated, the funds had to be allocated into different areas to do exactly the same programs at exactly the same amount with precisely the same bottom line, all that was required would be a change in the schedule. Again, that is a very commonsense approach—no drama, and involving no difference in the programs that have gone through the Estimates Committees. So, everyone accepts that. Therefore, some discussions were entered into today. The Attorney-General spoke to the Legislative Councillors where it was agreed that it was commonsense; there was no problem and it took 30 seconds.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: Yes, absolute commonsense, no problem. I spoke to the Deputy Leader last night and explained that we had to change the schedule, not because there was any difference in the overall allocation or—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: Well, my advice is that that is not the case.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: Don't interrupt; you have been told by the Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: There is no change at all—that is my advice, and the Deputy Leader agreed with me.

Mr Ingerson interjecting:

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: No, he did more than that. You have had your say, and I did not interrupt you. The Deputy Leader agreed yesterday that that was an appropriate and commonsense thing to do. He agreed with me that that was the case; no problems. That is why it is here. We have all the machinery to do it. I am in no hurry to do this, none whatsoever. Had the Deputy Leader said to me, 'Well, hang on; you know, this could be drama; the member for Coles will do her thing,' I would have said, 'Fine, let us have the drama next week. I want to go home. There is no time imperative on us. We could debate this up to the middle of November, something like that, so you could drag it out until then.' However, that is not what the Deputy Leader said. He

said, 'Fine.' As soon as the schedule was put in the appropriate form this morning, at 10.30 or thereabouts, the member for Mitcham received a copy, some six or seven hours ago.

Mr S.J. Baker: Yes, I have been going through it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: That's good. That's your job.

Mr S.J. Baker: I still haven't—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: The moment I got it, the member for Mitcham got it. It was distributed at Question Time to everybody else. So, let us recap. Yesterday, there was no drama with members of the Upper House. They all agreed—commonsense, 30 seconds, and they did so. Last night with the Deputy Leader there was no drama; there was commonsense, and away we went. Today, all of a sudden there is drama. As I said, I am in no hurry on this—none whatsoever.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: Yes. If members opposite want to waste the time of the Parliament and make a fuss, before we started this debate the Deputy Leader should have approached me and said, 'They have gone off their faces. Can you put it off until next week?' I would have agreed. In the light of that, I seek leave to conclude my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned—

AMBULANCE SERVICES BILL

Adjourned debate in Committee (resumed on motion).

(Continued from page 1011.)

Clause 4—'Interpretation.'

Dr ARMITAGE: Will the Minister address the far from facetious question I raised in my second reading contribution? If someone ran an ambulance service with staff who did not know how to provide medical treatment but were merely driving the ambulance or the transporting vehicle, would that contravene the definition in this clause?

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: Obviously, some time has elapsed since the member for Adelaide and I last discussed this matter. If I omit any of the points that he raised earlier, he might like to raise them again so that I can address them. Clearly, an 'ambulance' within the meaning of the definition in this clause has to fulfil all the tests proposed. The honourable member was quite correct when he said earlier today that a clinic car would not come within the definition of 'ambulance'. That is true, and that is precisely what is intended by this clause. The honourable member correctly assesses the impact of this amendment in respect of the law as it now stands. The reality is that a vehicle which has been modified to take a wheelchair, for example, is not modified for the purposes of treatment. Therefore, a taxi which is modified to transport disabled people through a wheelchair process is not an ambulance for the purpose of this Bill because, clearly, the vehicle must be modified, equipped and staffed to provide medical treatment.

Merely adapting a vehicle to carry a wheelchair does not adapt it to provide medical treatment, for example, nor would the taxi be staffed to provide medical treatment. Those issues must all be met by this test, although I clearly acknowledge from the nature of the questions and from my own understanding of the Bill that this definition and any conceivable definition of 'ambulance' will never be a straightforward proposition. No-one maintains that it is, which is why the exemption clause is provided and why obviously the legislation will have to be administered with commonsense and rational logic in respect of the definition.

Clearly, the Parliament is never going to be in a position to provide the sort of comprehensive and exhaustive definition of 'ambulance' that catches everyone who ought to be caught but catches no-one who should not be because the nature of some vehicles and the service provided are too diffuse; and too many of them, such as those in the sporting situation, are at the margin and need to be examined. I include in this the service provided by the Westpac rescue helicopter and so on. The practical administration of the legislation will occur with discretion, care and responsibility and, where examples occur that should not be caught by the provision, the exemption powers will be used.

Dr ARMITAGE: I am interested to hear that we are now able to offer for competitive tender the clinic car services in all the hospitals because they do not need an ambulance licence. As I indicated before the luncheon break, I am sure the hospitals will be delighted to hear that because it will save them a lot of money, and I look forward to telling them that as soon as I leave the House. Let us look further at the definition of 'ambulance'.

I do not wish to be pedantic, but I want to make sure that people who provide the service, which clearly under the definition would mean that their vehicle is an ambulance, are not caught with a division 4 penalty. I refer to a taxi that has been modified to provide medical treatment which, as defined in the Bill, includes the observation of patients. A vehicle does not have to be modified to observe patients. If a nurse aide or someone else is present in the vehicle to observe the patient, clearly they are providing medical treatment. I ask the Minister to guarantee that those sorts of services will not be required before someone can obtain a licence.

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: I point out to the member for Adelaide that 'observation' in my view requires a little more than simply looking at a patient. It requires things like taking blood pressure, monitoring a pulse and so on, which is a more active participation than simply, for example, a taxi driver looking at a patient. That is not 'observation' in a medical/legal context. Clearly, the Bill has to be construed in the context under which it will operate, and a taxi driver who simply looks occasionally at his passenger is not observing them for medical purposes. It is a requirement of this clause that the vehicle itself provides the staffing and not that the patient is accompanied by their own nurse, assistant or friend. The vehicle itself—

Dr Armitage interjecting:

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: With respect to the member for Adelaide, 'ambulance' means a vehicle that has been modified and equipped and is staffed. In other words, the vehicle comes with the staff, the modification and the

equipment. It is a package deal. Clearly, the ambulance service, if we look at the normal St John ambulance, is modified to provide extensive patient treatment. The ambulance is equipped accordingly. It has a full range of modern scientific and medical equipment and the staffing is part of the package. The people who drive and staff the ambulance are part of the process. They are part of the team and clearly they fall within this definition of 'ambulance'. If the patient is accompanied by their own nurse, that does not come with the vehicle. If the member for Adelaide takes his next door neighbour to hospital and the neighbour is accompanied by an RDNS nurse, he is not providing a vehicle staffed, modified and equipped.

I can certainly give him the assurance he seeks that, if someone falls within this definition and in logic it is the clear intention that they should not be so caught, the exemption powers can be applied. There is power to exclude 'a person or a person of a class, or in circumstances, prescribed by regulation', so a broad definition can be used in the unfortunate event—because we have had to use such a wide definition—that someone who is not intended to be caught is so caught.

The CHAIRMAN: I point out to the member for Adelaide that he has spoken to this clause three times and, under Standing Orders, I cannot allow him to speak again.

Mr BECKER: Will the Minister consider withdrawing the legislation at this stage so that we can get a better interpretation of 'ambulance' and 'ambulance service'? There are units called first aid units, and in my speech I referred to the Adelaide motor cycle division first aid unit, which has provision for a stretcher which is compatible with an ambulance. The clause does not include a definition or interpretation of the term 'first aid unit'. That is what concerns me, because in the next clause we will have a conflict if we cannot clarify that situation.

The first aid unit of the Adelaide motor cycle division in my opinion would meet everything here, because it has been modified, it is equipped, it is staffed and there is always an attendant to provide medical treatment to patients being transported in the vehicle. What is the situation there when one organisation calls it one thing and the legislation calls it another? If a medical practitioner or a police officer instructs the driver of that first aid unit to proceed immediately to a hospital, where does everybody stand?

As the Minister would be aware, during the Two Wells flood 90 per cent of the people present were volunteers, and apparently it worked extremely well. There was Red Cross, the State Emergency Service, the Country Fire Service, the St John operations branch, the local community and the Adelaide motor cycle division four-wheel drive vehicle which was used in a life threatening situation. The whole operation up there, coordinating the volunteers and the professionals, was well organised and well managed, and it worked extremely well. So, full credit to all those involved. If the driver of that four-wheel first aid unit is requested by a medical practitioner or a police officer to proceed immediately to a hospital, what do they do?

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: I can assure the member for Hanson that it is not intended that the vehicle which he described should be caught by the provisions as an

ambulance. It is my view that the vehicle—and obviously this would need to be examined—from the description that the honourable member has provided, and from my own understanding of what this vehicle contains, does not meet all the tests required of the definition and, where it is involved in some of those tests, it does not meet them to the extent that the law finds necessary for it to be qualified as an ambulance. Modified, equipped and staffed is a package which the people operating this ambulance should have intended as a whole. Quite clearly the intention must be to provide an ambulance service where you have a vehicle which is specifically modified for that purpose, and obviously more than just trivially modified. In the case of a taxi, simply having a wheelchair adaptation is not enough.

Certainly 'equipped' involves a little bit more than just the provision of bandages and splints, and so on: it actually requires that this thing should be equipped for the purpose of medical treatment and staffed accordingly, which implies a commitment to training and expertise which goes with the vehicle. It does not mean, for example, the club doctor who happens to jump into the station wagon with the injured footballer as they proceed to hospital. That does not make it an ambulance because a doctor happens to be there and jumps in at the appropriate moment on the basis of a good samaritan principle and attempts to assist someone who is injured. Just because he does that and this car then drives to a hospital does not make it an ambulance.

There must be an intention that your vehicle is deliberately modified, it is equipped, it is staffed and that you offer it as an ambulance. That is clearly the intention of the definition of 'ambulance'. Just the mere coincidence that a doctor is available and leaps into the car as the patient is driven off does not qualify it in that context. Clearly, the example which the honourable member has raised will need to be examined. As I understand the provisions of the Bill and as I am advised about the actual nature of the vehicle which the honourable member has described, and subject to those matters being further examined, it is certainly not intended that it should be caught by the provision.

Mr BECKER: This is where the legislation is deficient. It does not spell out what is required. You must spell out what is meant by 'modification'. This four-wheel drive vehicle was a Toyota, if I remember rightly, and the mechanical alterations to the interior of the unit were quite considerable and met all the requirements of a normal ambulance. The Minister has not spelt out what type of equipment is required. Does it include a stretcher—and they are very expensive—that is compatible with any ambulance within the State; and, of course, a special stretcher is required for spinal injuries?

Is it necessary to have a defibrillator, which is portable, in the unit? Is that a central part of an ambulance? With this particular four-wheel vehicle, an attendant has been trained and is qualified under the current St John organisation, and probably most of these people are as well trained and well qualified and have the greatest respect of the professional staff. Of course, many of the professional staff are keen supporters of motor sport.

That is what we are concerned with. I just feel that, when legislation as important as this is brought in, it is necessary to spell out the modifications, the design of the

vehicle, and so on. There is a basic standard design for an ambulance. There is a basic requirement in respect of how the stretcher is attached to the vehicle and what sort of roll bars are used.

Unfortunately, one night on Burbridge Road one of our modern ambulances came around from Brooker Terrace and rolled over. The patient was fully protected and nobody was hurt in the accident. Certain precautions are taken to modify and protect these vehicles. I think the Minister needs to spell out the design, the safety measures and all the equipment that is necessary for an emergency-type vehicle, but he should bear in mind that some of that equipment is portable. So, an ambulance could be put together; one could do all sorts of things. We would need to have the minimum standard and qualifications in respect of the staff. That is where I think the Minister's Bill is deficient.

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: I do suspect that this argument is starting to become a little circular in many ways. The definition in the 1985 legislation provides that 'ambulance service' means the service of transporting sick or injured persons. That definition was extraordinarily wide and obviously included all the things that the member talked about previously. Quite clearly, all those people were caught theoretically by the 1985 Act but, indeed, have not been prosecuted for obvious reasons. This definition is substantially tighter than that previous definition, because it requires that the vehicle must be always modified, equipped and staffed as a package. Previously, it simply required that the vehicle formed part of a service of transporting sick or injured persons which would have caught almost anything.

Under the previous legislation there were some extensions which quite simply would be relatively easy to incorporate, and it was intended to incorporate them under the provisions where we provide exemptions in circumstances prescribed by regulation. I do not really believe that the member for Hanson can suspect that the Government's or the Health Commission's intent on prohibiting a sporting club from having this kind of facility and using it on a temporary and periodic emergency basis would not be exempted. Obviously, it was caught by the previous Act, and there has not been a problem because they have continued to develop this thing since 1985, some seven years ago, and it has not been previously looked at in this context.

This definition is much stricter. In my view, it would clearly not catch the service described by the honourable member. Indeed, I cannot see the problem that he is seeking to pursue further. Obviously, at this stage he will have to accept my assurance that I will look at that category of vehicle. In my view, it will not be caught by the definition. However, in the event that someone were to find a legal context in which it would be caught, it is relatively easy to exempt it under the provisions of clause 5. Indeed, general exemptions will be included in the regulations along those lines, and that would almost certainly guarantee that effect.

Mr S.J. BAKER: What equipment, under the heading of 'ambulance', is necessary for medical treatment, in particular for the observation of patients?

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: It will be a matter of fact for a court to determine in any case—

Mr S.J. Baker interjecting:

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: The member for Mitcham might well be amused regarding this kind of question, but he has been in the House long enough to know that definitions have to be tested finally in the courts; there is no question about that. The honourable member knows full well of my interest in legislation; it is quite as strong as that of any other member. When Parliament legislates, on matters of fact, where people are accused of an offence, there will always be those at the margin. There is no way in which we can prescribe here and now who will fall at the edge of that margin. These things can always be tested.

My intention is that someone should have a substantial effort at a medical service for it to constitute that. There would have to be facilities and an intention of recording pulse, monitoring blood pressure and observing vital signs in the patient. As I indicated to the member for Adelaide, it is not a case merely of casting an eye over these people.

The definition under the previous Act was far wider. This is a much narrower definition. It requires that people have made a substantial effort towards equipping, modifying and staffing the vehicle, and that is a totally different proposition. No court will hold that merely one's looking at a patient constitutes medical observation. If medical observation were so simple, doctors would not keep it to themselves.

Clause passed.

Clause 5—'Offence.'

Dr ARMITAGE: The 1985 legislation granted an exemption for people who provided services without a fee and in an emergency. Why have these exemptions been eliminated?

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: As I indicated in reply to the previous question, I have already addressed this point. As I explained to the member for Hanson, it was intended that that kind of exemption would be what was referred to in the circumstances prescribed by regulation. A similar exemption to that provision with a broadly similar effect would be included in the exempting regulations. That was the response I gave to the question from the member for Hanson.

Clause passed.

Clause 6—'Licences.'

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Adelaide has an amendment to clause 6. He has approached me and said that he wants to canvass matters covered by the clause as well as his amendment. I shall be lenient and allow him to do that.

Dr ARMITAGE: The dilemma is that I wish to address matters in subclause (1) paragraphs (a) and (b) separately and move an amendment in relation to subclause (1) (b). I am particularly grateful for your latitude and generosity. Subclause (1) (a) refers to 'ambulance services of a high standard'. We addressed this matter in the second reading debate. In my view, the question of standards is potentially the most important question in the provision of any ambulance service. It does not necessarily matter whether or not the person providing the service is a member of a union. I am confident that people who were ill and who were being transported to hospital could not care less whether the person driving or looking after them in the ambulance

was a member of a union or a volunteer officer, provided the standards were adequate.

In relation to that discussion and the questions that I raised about reference in the Bill to a medical advisory body, I mentioned letters that had flowed between one of the present divisional surgeons and the Chairman and various other people in relation to this matter, suggesting that the committee should include representatives of various professional colleges. I was marginally disturbed to note that, in the material I received this morning from the Minister, which included the rules of the association and various other documents—I will not take up the time of the Committee by detailing them, but the Minister will know what I am talking about—there seemed to be no mention of standards or a standards committee. I should like to know what the Minister intends to do about that, because I can see no reference to standards or a monitoring body in this material.

Will the Minister indicate whether there is any commitment to continuing education or peer review in relation to an application for a licence? It is that matter of subclause (1) (a) that I would like the Minister to address. I will leave it there and move my amendment to subclause (1) (b) later.

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: The misunderstanding probably arises in relation to the fact that the Ambulance Services Advisory Committee, which has been established under the Health Commission Act to look at the standards for ambulances, would deal not only with the ambulance service which, it is proposed, will be established between the Minister and the Priory partnership. It would have surveillance of the standards of all ambulances across the board. For example, there are a number of country volunteer groups that are not associated with the St John group, and in the future there might conceivably be other licence holders in particular parts of the State who had no relationship whatsoever with St John or any of those areas. This committee is established under the Health Commission Act to examine standards across the board.

The terms of reference are to develop a set of appropriate standards for the operation of ambulance services in South Australia; to assess applications for a licence to operate an ambulance service against these standards; to consider any other matters relating to the operation of ambulance services that are referred to the committee by the Health Commission and provide any recommendations in relation to that; to receive complaints; to make appropriate inquiries; and to make recommendations to the commission—obviously the Minister—in relation to the withdrawal of a licence. The most important aspect of that at this stage would be the development of standards, which clearly would be done in consultation with St John, because its own standards manual is a very substantial and complete document.

The people who are part of that committee include Mr Gary Stewart (Chairman), the Chief Executive Officer of the Port Augusta Hospital; Dr Scott Cameron, Senior Specialist, Communicable Disease Control Unit; Dr Michael Jelly, Chief Medical Officer; Mr David Murray, Executive Officer of ASAC; Mr Terry Brown, Chairman of the Intellectually Disabled Accommodation Association; Mrs Carol Tonkin, Lecturer in Nursing at Flinders University; Dr Jeremy Raftos, Director of

AMCWU; and Dr Geoff Williamson (proxy for Dr Raftos), the Director of Accident and Emergency Services at Modbury Hospital. Clearly, that is an expert committee representative of a wide range of opinion, and it will be able to bring considerable expertise together in developing standards and other matters to which the honourable member has drawn attention as being vital in the provision of this kind of service.

Dr ARMITAGE: I accept the Minister's rationale. Will he forward to me at a later time details of the membership of that committee, what the standards are and all other relevant details? I move:

Page 2, lines 15 to 18—Leave out these lines.

This is clearly a monopolistic clause. There is no doubt that, having regard to any potential financial effect on an existing licence holder of the granting of another licence, in essence there will be only one licence.

I think that that is appalling for many reasons, not the least of which is that in every field, if there is no competition, standards are relaxed. As I indicated in my second reading speech, this issue is far too important for that to occur. Particularly is that the case where one of the licence holders, or one of the parties to the licence holding, is the Minister. The licence will be held by the new association which this Bill seeks to enact, one of only two partners being the Minister. The Minister's being faced with the potential for granting another licence and being the licence holder, having to take into account potential financial effects on the existing licence holder, presents too great a conflict of interest.

However, perhaps more importantly, it is unequivocally clear that elimination of lines 15 to 18 will have absolutely no effect on standards. So, it is quite possible to eliminate lines 15 to 18 without causing any effect on standards. More importantly, if we are to talk about standards—which are the bottom line in the provision of ambulance services—what does the Minister do if someone comes to him and says, 'For the same money, I can provide higher standard ambulance services'? Or perhaps even more relevantly, what does the Minister do if someone comes to him and says, 'I can provide slightly better ambulance services for a lot less money'?

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: Of course, part of this issue was canvassed in response to the second reading stage, but I think it is worth highlighting again the fact that the previous Act, which was in the operation from 1985, granted a licence to St John subject only to certain conditions stipulated in the Act. Quite clearly, this is not a new or novel process that we are contemplating here: in fact, this process is slightly less monopolistic than that under the previous Act, which has been in operation for some time, because the previous Act itself grants the licence to St John.

Let us not contemplate this as a new or startling change of policy. In fact, it merely continues the existing arrangement whereby St John provides that substantial ambulance service. Of course, the member for Adelaide is not correct in assuming that this will be the only licence. Obviously, the Royal Flying Doctor Service will have a licence in that regard, and quite clearly—

Dr Armitage: Metropolitan.

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: The honourable member did not qualify it with the word 'metropolitan' earlier. If he now does, that is fine; I accept that, as these things stand,

that would be the case. However, there are many other licences to be issued under this Act in the country areas and across the State as a whole. Again, quite clearly, there is not a conflict of interest in the ordinary sense of events here, because the Minister holds his share on behalf of the Government and the community as a whole, and this is an emergency service.

As was contemplated by this Parliament in 1985 and, indeed, I would suspect well before that, and certainly as is contemplated in the Bill, emergencies services often require special provision. That is why the Parliament enacts special legislation to create them. It is quite reasonable to acknowledge that one would create a monopoly situation in relation to the provision of ambulance services, of fire brigade services and of law and order enforcement services. These things are special; they are unique; they deserve special treatment by the Parliament; and, of course, they receive it. Nothing is changing in that context.

It is possible to cancel all these licences. In the event that one had a better proposition, which clearly involved a superior service to the public, one would have to review that issue. The Minister of the day would need to take all those factors into account in considering whether to continue with the present arrangement or, indeed, to adopt some new arrangement. I do not resile from that.

Obviously, I, as Minister of Health, and I assume any future Minister of Health, would wish to take into account the changing circumstances of the times. At the moment, this is the best, feasible, rational, economic and sensible proposition to put before the Parliament; that is why it is here. If the circumstances change at some indeterminate time in the future, obviously this legislation is generic; it is flexible enough to cope with those changing circumstances, and I would assume that the Minister of Health at the time would look at that proposition.

The Committee divided on the amendment:

Ayes (20)—H. Allison, M.H. Armitage (teller), P.B. Arnold, D.S. Baker, S.J. Baker, H. Becker, M.K. Brindal, D.C. Brown, J.L. Cashmore, B.C. Eastick, S.G. Evans, G.A. Ingerson, D.C. Kotz, I.P. Lewis, W.A. Matthew, E.J. Meier, J.W. Olsen, J.K.G. Oswald, I.H. Venning, D.C. Wotton.

Noes (21)—M.J. Atkinson, J.C. Bannon, P.D. Blacker, G.J. Crafter, M.R. De Laine, M.J. Evans (teller), R.J. Gregory, T.R. Groom, K.C. Hamilton, T.H. Hemmings, V.S. Heron, P. Holloway, D.J. Hoppood, C.F. Hutchison, S.M. Lenehan, C.D.T. McKee, M.K. Mayes, N.T. Peterson, J.A. Quirke, M.D. Rann, J.P. Trainer.

Pairs—Ayes—G.M. Gunn and R.B. Such.

Noes—L.F.M. Arnold and J.H.C. Klunder.

Majority of 1 for the Noes.

Amendment thus negated; clause passed.

Clause 7—'Conditions of licences.'

Dr ARMITAGE: Clause 7 (2) allows the Minister to vary the existing conditions of a licence or attach new conditions to the licence. Given that this Parliament has unfortunately just enacted a monopoly within the metropolitan area, I would be interested if the Minister might give some examples as to why he believes that the existing conditions of a licence may be varied.

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: The best and most conspicuous example would be the issue of standards to be adopted by the ambulance service in question. Those standards will vary as medical technology and public expectations of the service change. The Minister would want to be in a position to ensure that the standards developed by the expert committee to which I referred earlier were imposed on existing licence holders, and as it was felt necessary and appropriate to vary and improve those standards the conditions of a licence would be varied accordingly.

Clause passed.

Clauses 8 and 9 passed.

New clause 9a—'Appeal to Administrative Appeals Court.'

Dr ARMITAGE: I move:

Page 3, after line 6—Insert new clause as follows:

9a. (1) A person who objects to a decision of the Minister or of a person to whom the Minister has delegated powers under this Part—

- (a) refusing to grant a licence to the person;
- (b) attaching conditions to, or varying conditions of, a licence granted to the person;

or

- (c) revoking a licence granted to the person, may appeal against the decision to the Administrative Appeals Court.

(2) The Court may, on hearing an appeal, exercise any one or more of the following powers:

- (a) affirm, vary or quash the decision appealed against or substitute, or make in addition, any decision that should have been made in the first instance;

This seeks to have an appeal mechanism put in for decisions taken by the Minister or a person to whom the Minister has delegated powers. I believe that it is appropriate for this to occur, particularly given the monopolistic tendencies that this Parliament has just passed. My view is that the Administrative Appeals Division of the District Court is an appropriate mechanism for this appeal process.

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: There would in the ordinary event in law be an appeal through the ordinary processes involving the Supreme Court and so on. This amendment is probably a simpler mechanism and I am happy to accept it.

New clause inserted.

Clause 10—'S.A. St John Ambulance Service Inc.'

Dr ARMITAGE: Clause 10 overrides the provisions of the Associations Incorporation Act, which does not allow the incorporation of a business. As such, the constitution of the proposed association, in particular dealing with membership, the board, the distribution of profits and surplus assets, winding up provisions, and so on, must be given full consideration by members.

It would be reasonable to ask for time to contemplate a copy of the constitution of this new association so that those very important elements can be reviewed. Further, I reiterate that, despite the Minister's protestations earlier, my view is that formally setting up an association for the purpose of carrying on a business of providing ambulance services, with the association being a two-person body—the Minister and priory—clearly indicates a potential conflict of interest, if we read that clause in concert with clause 6 (1) (b). I repeat that, while I hear the Minister's protestations about that, I still believe that there is a great conflict and we will look carefully later on to see the implications of this.

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: The purpose of using the term 'business' in clause 10 (1) is not to override the provisions of the Associations Incorporation Act and it would not have that effect. This is a not-for-profit association, which will not divert profits from the ambulance service into the hands of individuals: that is prohibited by the Associations Incorporation Act and nothing in this clause overrides that. One could have used a word like 'enterprise' rather than 'business'. Nothing too much should be read into that term. There is no provision to override that. All this does is empower the Minister and the priory to enter into that arrangement and specify that the Minister and the priory are the two entities involved in that undertaking and assigns a name to it. That is all that the clause does. The honourable member should not be concerned that the word has any greater import than that.

Dr ARMITAGE: Normally I would not have bothered to raise the matter except that what the Minister says has been the commonsense way of regarding the word 'business'. The Minister will recall that I quoted in my second reading speech a document from one of the administrative officers of the St John Ambulance Service, which was presented to the country conference of the St John Ambulance Association about a month ago, dealing with differential fees between the country and the city. One of the clauses said something like, 'Furthermore, if we allow competition into this area it will affect our core business.' When they talk about fees and core business one can draw the conclusion that that may apply in this clause as well.

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: That is just the language of the corporate sector, which every one hears on television and radio and reads in the newspaper every day, creeping into the vocabulary of our volunteers and the Public Service. It may be a good thing that people start to look at their activities in something like this light. It is just the jargon of the times finding its way into the ordinary vocabulary.

Clause passed.

New clause 10a—'The governing body of the association.'

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: I move:

New clause, page 3, after line 14—

Insert new clause as follows:

10a. The governing body of the association must comprise—

- (a) three members nominated by the Minister one of whom will be nominated by the Minister to be the presiding officer of the body;
 - (b) four members nominated by the priory one of whom is a serving volunteer ambulance officer and one of whom is serving as a volunteer in the administration of the provision of ambulance services;
 - (c) a member of the Ambulance Employees Association nominated by that association;
 - (d) a member nominated by the United Trades and Labor Council;
 - (e) a person nominated by the Minister and the priory who has knowledge of and experience in voluntary work in the community;
- and
- (f) a person nominated by the Minister and the priory who has knowledge of and experience in voluntary work in the community.

My amendment arises out of the amendment that was circulated by the member for Adelaide. Clearly this list of officers to be placed on the governing body comes from

the rules of the association. It was originally intended that that list of the board of management office holders would be incorporated into the rules of the association. The member for Adelaide desires, reasonably, to have that in the Act itself.

The opportunity has been taken to modify the provision that was in the rules to ensure that a serving volunteer ambulance officer and also a person serving as a volunteer in the administration of the provision of ambulance services is included on the board. From my discussion with the member for Adelaide it should meet the requirements that everyone has to recognise the work of the volunteers and to ensure that this whole process is entrenched in the Act.

Dr ARMITAGE: I am happy to accede to the Minister's amendment rather than continuing with the amendment circulated in my name.

New clause inserted.

New clause 10b—'Advisory committee.'

Dr ARMITAGE: I move:

Insert new clause as follows:

10b. The association must establish a committee comprised of members who are volunteer ambulance officers to advise the association in relation to the provision of ambulance services in country regions.

The dichotomy of views between the paid ambulance staff and the volunteers has been canvassed at great length in this place and within the populace of South Australia for the past three or four years, and I do not intend to give the Committee a history lesson in relation to that. However, I would point out that the volunteer ambulance officers have provided a wonderful service to South Australia, and they are identifying that they feel disfranchised by this Bill.

I am pleased that we have been able to alter the board of the governing body and that has given the volunteer personnel much greater input into that level of the association. However, I do believe that the insertion of clause 10b would allow more close to the ground advice to be provided to the association from the volunteer ambulance officers who, after all, are the ones providing ambulance services in country regions for nothing and, as we have talked about, country capital reserve funds are contributed to the service and they are a very important part of the total provision of ambulance services in South Australia. I believe the insertion of clause 10b would enact that in the Bill.

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: I have some concerns about this clause. I certainly want to recognise the work of the volunteer in this context. It is unfortunate that the amendment drafted by the member for Adelaide is a particularly narrow one and provides that the committee must be comprised solely of people who are volunteer ambulance officers. It does not encompass a wide enough range of views, in my opinion. I would be prepared to accept the amendment in this context on the basis that further discussions can be held. It will be incorporated in the Bill. I certainly do not want to give the impression that I am not supportive of this context. I will support it today, but I believe it would be appropriate for me to give notice that I will seek to discuss it further so that in the intervening period (and I am sure that the honourable member knows what I am referring to) we can examine how the amendment might better reflect the need to

obtain a wide range of views on this country issue and ensure that it is not just limited to one aspect.

I believe that a country advisory committee would be a worthwhile addition. It was intended originally that that also would be reflected simply in a decision of the association to establish a committee, so in that event we are on common ground. It might well be appropriate to see this as part of the Act so that the importance of this group is well recognised in the community. I do give notice that the Government would want to extend the definitions a little so that we can incorporate a full range of opinions, but in order that this can be properly debated elsewhere, and the matter is already on the record, I will certainly be happy to accept the amendment on that understanding.

Dr ARMITAGE: I look forward to those further discussions.

New clause inserted.

Clauses 11 and 12 passed.

Clause 13—'Borrowing and investment.'

Dr ARMITAGE: Will the Minister inform the Committee who will guarantee any money borrowed or invested by the association?

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: No-one. The association is an association. It stands on its own. It is an enterprise, an entity, and under the Associations Incorporation Act normal requirements will apply. Members will notice some restrictions on the activities of the association. For example, the association must not, without the approval of the Treasurer, borrow any money or accept any other form of financial accommodation, which certainly makes any question of the association entering into a massive debt quite unlikely; and the association must not, without the approval of the Treasury, invest any money. Quite clearly, it is intended that the association will neither a borrower nor lender be, and will continue to operate the enterprise with not substantial pluses or minuses. I do not think the question of a guarantee will arise, but in the event that it does, the answer is 'No-one'.

Clause passed.

Clause 14—'Fees for ambulance services.'

Dr ARMITAGE: In relation to subclause (1), how will ambulance fees be fixed by the Minister? In relation to subclause (4), does the fact that the fee for an ambulance service, under this Bill, will be payable by the patient contravene the Medicare agreement whereby the South Australian Health Commission insists that, with respect to patients transported from one hospital to another—a matter clearly caught by this subclause—the transferring hospital pays the accounts?

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: The committee which I detailed earlier, whose precise terms of reference and details of membership were made available to the honourable member, will also advise the commission and the Minister on the setting of fees. Obviously they will take into account the actual costs of operating a service in a particular location and also the social justice requirements that might apply in relation to those fees. So, the committee will examine a broad range of matters and then advise the Minister on accordingly.

Clause passed.

Clauses 15 to 17 passed.

Schedule.

Dr ARMITAGE: I move:

Page 5, line 4—Leave out 'for 12 months after the repeal of that Act' and insert 'until surrendered by the holder of the licence.'

This clearly allows the present licence-holders some security after the 12 month period.

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: I oppose the amendment because the 12 months is a perfectly reasonable period. I really do not know that—

Dr Armitage interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: If the member for Adelaide feels that that is the kind of risk, certainly I have no concern about it. The problem is, if we accept the words 'surrendered by the holder of the licence', that effectively gives them a licence in perpetuity, and I do not think that is appropriate. I would certainly have no contemplation that those licence-holders now would not have their licences renewed in the normal course of events. There would be absolutely no reason why the Minister of the day would not wish to renew those licences when they expired, unless the service could not provide the standards which were to be incorporated. I really do not believe there is any requirement for that. After 12 months, they would simply be renewed provided they meet the standards.

Amendment negatived; schedule passed.

Title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

SUPPORTED RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 11 August. Page 73.)

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen): Can I say at the outset how ridiculous it is that we are facing a major piece of legislation and looking to deal with this measure through all stages prior to the bringing down of the guillotine at 6 p.m., which is in 20 minutes time. I am aware of the quite significant consultation that has taken place concerning this Bill, but there are a number of concerns that have been expressed to me in the representation I have received from organisations that have an interest in this legislation. This Bill is to safeguard the needs and interests of residents in supported residential facilities, and to ensure that the facilities provide adequate standards of care and accommodation. At least, that is what we are told is the intent of the legislation. Much of the concern that I have received would suggest that that will not be achieved through this Bill.

I should say at the outset that the Opposition supports the Bill, but with some concerns to which I will refer very briefly and, I would hope, with the acceptance by the Government of some amendments that I will be moving at the appropriate time. There has always been concern about the large number of facilities that have been unregulated, such as boarding houses and some other hostels, and it is pleasing that to some extent this legislation will address that need. Consultations and representations that I have received have suggested that there has been an attempt to have Commonwealth funded nursing homes and hostels exempted from the regulations, and I believe that that is necessary.

It has been felt that nursing homes are one of the most regulated, controlled and monitored areas of all in the health care and residential care system in Australia, and the Supported Residential Facilities Bill meant unnecessary and unwanted duplication and overlap. I believe that that is the case and I would hope that the Minister has time to advise the House about that. In clause 4 'Application of Act', provision is made for the Minister to grant exemptions. However, there are many organisations that believe that a request from the Commonwealth funded nursing homes and hostels be specifically listed as being exempt from those regulations.

It is difficult to understand why the Government wants to go to such great lengths to license and control supported residential services while specifically excluding residential only premises such as boarding and lodging houses etc. It had been generally understood that most of the community concern about standards of care, about abuse, about potential abuse and about infringements of rights and exploitation had focused on the privately owned and managed boarding houses.

The need for Government regulation and control would seem to be just as great—or I would suggest even greater—for the commercially and privately run residential only facilities. Just because personal care services are not being provided does not mean that the standard of physical accommodation is acceptable or that there is not going to be abuse or exploitation.

The provisions under clause 42, according to the representations that I have received, will not necessarily overcome this problem, and one of the questions that I would put to the Minister is, 'How will the owner or manager of residential only premises be expected to know about his or her obligations under an obscure section of an Act that otherwise has no relevance to his or her business?' Why should not the legislation be extended to residential only premises since that would seem to be where most of the problems are at present or, conversely, why regulate and control those services that provide personal care services when most, if not all, are likely to be doing the right thing now and/or are already being held accountable to Government funding authorities? I intend to try to rectify that situation later.

I also refer to the fact there are a number of other concerns that have been raised with me. As I said earlier, regrettably we will not have time to refer to some of those areas. One matter that I have been asked to raise is that, overall, the proposed legislation seems to have something of a draconian and over-zealous feel about it. As I said earlier, it has been suggested by some organisations that it could result in unnecessary regulation, control and intrusion. I hope that we will be able to overcome that situation.

Clause 11 outlines the membership of the Supported Residential Facilities Advisory Committee. Provision is made for a representative nominated by the United Trades and Labor Council, and it was put to me that there is no provision for employer or proprietor representation. I hope that that matter will be picked up in respect of clause 11 (2) (a). I seek an assurance that that will be the case.

As to the powers of authorised officers, a number of organisations with which I have spoken are alarmed that an authorised officer may intervene where that officer

suspects that an offence is about to be committed. I am not sure how that can be determined. At the appropriate time, I will move that 'about to be' be deleted in order to avoid the action of vindictive or overzealous authorised officers. It is appropriate that that wording be taken out.

Concern has also been expressed about clause 31 (1) (h), which provides for cancellation of a licence where 'the holder of the licence is insolvent or is in imminent danger of becoming insolvent'. Again, significant concerns have been expressed about this. The question has been asked: how will licensing authorities determine whether the holder of a licence is in imminent danger of becoming insolvent?

I suggest to the House that even profit and loss statements are not accurate indicators in this respect. A difficulty currently exists in respect of resident contracts, and I refer to clause 38 (1). Under the National Health Act 1953, an agreement or contract consistent with the charter of resident rights and responsibilities is to be offered to all residents in a nursing home. However, a resident may choose, as is their individual right, not to enter into such an agreement and, therefore, the requirement under the Supported Residential Facilities Bill for a proprietor to enter into a contract with a resident in writing conflicts, I suggest, with requirements under the National Health Act.

Also, the proposal of a Supported Accommodation Indemnity Fund is outlined in clause 56, but that has been rejected by some organisations. It is felt inappropriate that facilities that are operating in accordance with that Act should be required to subsidise a fund that aims to indemnify facilities operating in breach of the Act. Furthermore, it has been pointed out to me that, in supporting the Bill, it is rather difficult to take into account a situation that is more a matter of revenue raising than of concern for the promotion of quality of care in supported residential facilities.

Because of the lack of time, it is difficult to refer in detail to a number of the matters that have been brought to my attention. One matter raised by the Advocacy for the Brain Injured relates to concerns about the implications for community houses of provisions under clause 24. Who is the proprietor if individuals own shares, are in a cooperative arrangement or have guardians to protect their interest, such as the Public Advocate? What is the definition of 'substantial', 'rehabilitative' or 'further assistance'? Who will determine whether the resident will have recreational activities included in the service plan? I could go on with a number of such questions. I can only suggest to the Minister that, because of the lack of time, it is appropriate that a number of these matters be addressed in another place. Perhaps I will seek some consultation with the Minister to enable that to happen.

The Opposition supports the legislation but I bring to the Minister's attention that a number of concerns have been raised. I hope that many of them can be considered in consultation between the Bill's being debated in this place and in another place and that further matters can be considered in another place.

The Hon. M.J. EVANS (Minister of Health, Family and Community Services): I thank the member for Heysen for his understanding in respect of this matter,

given the lateness of the hour. I am sure that it would be more appropriate, in respect of the matters he has raised, if I responded directly to him, and I will ensure that the issues which he has taken up and which will be reported in *Hansard* are examined. We will reply directly to him, as he requested, between now and when the matter is again considered.

I am sure that the topics he has raised can be addressed thoroughly in that way, because obviously time does not permit us to do that this afternoon. I thank the honourable member for his contribution. I understand that he might move several amendments in Committee, and it would probably be easier if we proceeded to that stage so that those amendments can be resolved by the Committee before 6 p.m. I thank the honourable member for his contribution and commend the Bill to the House.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 3 passed.

Clause 4—'Application of Act.'

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I move:

Page 3, after line 38—Insert new paragraph as follows:

(da) any premises that form part of a Commonwealth subsidised nursing home or aged care hostel where the Commonwealth monitors outcome standards for residents;

As I said earlier, this clause provides for the granting of exemptions. According to the second reading explanation, exemptions will be considered for facilities accommodating people with disabilities where alternative mechanisms exist under funding conditions. For that reason, I believe it is totally appropriate that Commonwealth subsidised nursing homes or aged care hostels, where the Commonwealth monitors outcome standards for residents, should be exempted. It is appropriate that that should be the case. I seek the support of the Committee in this regard.

The CHAIRMAN: I point out that the amendment moved by the member for Heysen and that proposed by the Minister refer to the same line. It is usual in a case such as this that the Minister's amendment prevails. I ask the Minister to move his amendment. The member for Heysen may move an amendment to the amendment if he so desires.

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: I move:

Page 3, after line 38—Insert new paragraph as follows:

(da) subject to any determination of the Minister under subsection 2 (a), any premises that form part of a Commonwealth subsidised nursing home or aged care hostel where the Commonwealth monitors outcome standards for residents;

I agree with what the member for Heysen is proposing. Certainly, as he indicated, it was the intention to exempt Commonwealth subsidised nursing homes, because they obviously monitor outcome standards for the nursing homes, and it would be quite pointless for us to duplicate that degree of regulation. Based on the honourable member's circulated amendment, I prepared a further amendment which, in effect, seeks to do the same thing but does provide a fail-safe escape mechanism, if you like, so that the Minister can bring a particular nursing home back into the system in the unlikely event—and I would hope extreme event only—that that nursing home was in some grave difficulty which required that kind of intervention.

The member for Heysen is quite right in seeking to have these bodies exempted, so I support the principle behind his amendment. However, I do believe that a blanket exemption, with no possibility of reversal, would do several things. It would mean that the State could not intervene where it was essential, in the case of an extreme situation in a nursing home, to protect the interests of the residents. That is the only purpose for which we would seek to intervene, that is, to safeguard the position of the residents. Further, negotiations between the Commonwealth and the State in relation to the long-term role of both levels of government regarding Commonwealth subsidised nursing homes are not yet complete, and I believe that a total blanket exemption would give the wrong signals with respect to possible future negotiations. I suggest to the Committee that we adopt the principle that the member for Heysen has put forward but that we do so in a manner which allows some degree of flexibility and long-term negotiation.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: The Opposition is prepared to accept the Minister's amendment. I seek leave to withdraw my amendment.

Leave granted; amendment withdrawn.

The Hon. M.J. Evans's amendment carried.

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: I move:

After line 41—Insert new subclauses as follows:

(2a) The Minister may, by notice in the *Gazette*, determine that subsection (2) (*da*) does not apply in relation to particular premises specified in the notice.

(2b) The Minister may, at any time, by further notice in the *Gazette*, revoke a determination under subsection (2a).

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clauses 5 to 21 passed.

Clause 22—'Powers of authorised officers.'

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I move:

Page 12, lines 37 and 38—Leave out ', is being, or is about to be,' and substitute 'or is being'.

As I said earlier, considerable alarm has been expressed that authorised officers may intervene where they suspect an offence is about to be committed. It is the feeling of a number of organisations and individuals who have made representation to me that this clause should be deleted in order to avoid the actions of vindictive or over zealous authorised officers, and I urge the Committee to support this amendment.

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: The Government is prepared to accept this amendment. I do not believe it is a serious issue, but I am prepared to accept it.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clause 23 passed.

Clause 24—'Application for a licence.'

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I would like the Minister at an appropriate time to indicate what implications the clause will have on community houses.

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: I undertake to do that.

Clause passed.

Clauses 25 to 30 passed.

Clause 31—'Cancellation of licences.'

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I move:

Page 18, lines 9 and 10—Leave out 'or in imminent danger of becoming insolvent,'.

This clause relates to the cancellation of a licence for the holder of a licence who is insolvent or in imminent danger of becoming insolvent. I believe that the words 'imminent danger of becoming insolvent', for the reasons I indicated in the second reading stage, should be deleted.

The Hon. M.J. EVANS: Unfortunately, unlike the previous amendments, I cannot accept this one. There are real risks here. The licensing authority does need to be able to intervene. We know there are serious problems if, for example, a proprietor does not meet food accounts with a supermarket or a customary supplier for a couple of weeks. We need to be able to intervene before the residents are actually under threat. For that reason, I am afraid I cannot accept this amendment.

Amendment negatived; clause passed

Remaining clauses (32 to 59) and title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

SITTINGS AND BUSINESS

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS (Deputy Premier): I move:

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

Motion carried.

FINANCIAL TRANSACTION REPORTS (STATE PROVISIONS) BILL

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

CRIMINAL LAW (SENTENCING) (SUSPENSION OF VEHICLE REGISTRATION) AMENDMENT BILL

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

BUSINESS FRANCHISE (PETROLEUM PRODUCTS) (FEES) AMENDMENT BILL

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

LAND TAX (RATES) AMENDMENT BILL

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6.4 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday 27 October at 2 p.m.