

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 6 October 1993

The **SPEAKER (Hon. N.T. Peterson)** took the Chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

### CHILD-CARE

A petition signed by 62 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government not to cut funding to child parent centres was presented by the Hon. R.J. Gregory.

Petition received.

### ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

A petition signed by 54 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to phase out intensive animal husbandry practices was presented by Mr Becker.

Petition received.

### CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

A petition signed by 51 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to reintroduce capital punishment for crimes of homicide was presented by Mr Becker.

Petition received.

### ENGINEERING AND WATER SUPPLY DEPARTMENT

A petition signed by 1 150 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to accept liability for damage to the property of Mr De Corso caused by a burst Engineering and Water Supply Department water main was presented by the Hon. Jennifer Cashmore.

Petition received.

### SWAN REACH FILTRATION PLANT

A petition signed by 854 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to commence construction of the proposed Swan Reach water filtration plant was presented by the Hon. B.C. Eastick.

Petition received.

### QUESTIONS

The **SPEAKER**: I direct that written answers to the following questions on the Notice Paper, as detailed in the schedule that I now table, be distributed and printed in *Hansard*: Nos 13, 25, 35, 37, 54, 61, 68, 74, 78, 81, 86 to 88, 94, 95, 98 to 101, 103, 105 to 109, 114 to 117, 122 and 124 to 126; and I direct that the following answers to questions without notice be distributed and printed in *Hansard*:

### RENT RELIEF

In reply to **Mr OSWALD (Morphett)** 10 August.

The **Hon. G.J. CRAFTER**: Through the Trust's program of providing tenancy bonds to eligible households there has been a long standing relationship between the Housing Trust and the Residential Tenancies Division of the Department of Public and Consumer Affairs. An excellent level of co-operation has existed over the years and the Residential Tenancies Division provides the Trust with

information which identifies properties where a bond has been redeemed due to the tenant vacating. In future this information will be cross-referenced with the Rent Relief Program as a further means of minimising any over payment of assistance or fraud by a recipient.

The Rent Relief Program provides financial assistance to low income households experiencing difficulties maintaining their rental payments on private accommodation. The circumstances of individual recipients are automatically reviewed at six monthly intervals to ensure continued eligibility for this assistance.

Reviews used to be conducted more frequently (originally three monthly and later at four monthly intervals) but the Trust found that the circumstances of the majority of recipients changed little over these shorter time frames. More frequent reviews also imposed unnecessary burdens on recipients in terms of having to obtain fresh evidence of income and rent and caused delays in service provision to new applicants as staff resources frequently needed to be diverted to assist in the processing of reviews. For these reasons, and because private tenancies are generally based on six or twelve month leases, the Trust decided to move to a longer review cycle.

Where a rent relief recipient vacates their tenancy without notifying the Trust, their cheques are usually returned as unclaimed mail. Where this occurs, assistance is terminated immediately and inquiries are made with the landlord, or the landlord's agent to establish when the client vacated the property. In some instances, the landlord or the agent will notify the Trust direct that the tenant has left and action is taken to terminate rent relief in such situations, where the Trust is satisfied of the *bona fides* of the caller. If it is determined that any overpayment has been made, a debt is raised and pursued by the Trust (including legal action if appropriate).

The case described by the Member for Morphett is of concern as it would be most unusual for rent relief payments to have continued in the situation for the period stated. However, the Trust would be pleased to investigate the circumstances of this case if the Member would care to provide me with the name of the person and the address of the property involved.

In reply to **Mr OSWALD (Morphett)** 26 August.

The **Hon. G.J. CRAFTER**: The Government is not proposing any change to Housing Trust rent policy.

### MAGISTRATES COURT

In reply to **Mr MEIER (Goyder)** 26 August.

The **Hon. R.J. GREGORY**: The polished logo and lettering installed at the new Courts Building cost \$16 647. The lettering component is \$5 195 which carries the words 'Elizabeth Magistrates Court'. Information received from Courts Administration Authority suggests the State Courts Administration Council has considered naming the building which will be simply 'Magistrates Court'. No new sign is being considered as the name change requires the word 'Elizabeth' being deleted and the remaining words 'Magistrates Court' re-centred under the existing logo. There is no request from Courts Administration Authority for this name change to be carried out yet. Some additional cost will be involved on labour, making good the wall and repainting.

### TIMBER PRODUCTS

In reply to **Hon. P.B. ARNOLD (Chaffey)** 12 August.

The **Hon. T.R. GROOM**: The demand for timber products in Australia follows a cyclical pattern which is influenced by the state of the economy, first house buyer confidence, interest rates and availability of timber. Close to half of the softwood timber used in this country is sourced from overseas and most of this is imported from the North of America. These imports have been used to meet peak demands. In 1990, 1991 and 1992 the number of new houses being built in Australia was at a low point in the cycle despite an underlying demand for new houses. In 1993 confidence started to return to the building sector and the number of housing starts began to increase.

However, at the same time as demand increased several factors acted to reduce the availability of timber imports. In the United States concern over an endangered Spotted Owl saw the reserving of large tracts of forest which under normal circumstances would supply the Australian demand. Repairs of the damage caused by a hurricane late last year in the Southern States of the US almost eliminated the stocks of building materials, putting pressure on producers in North America to reduce exports and service the domestic market. Concerns about overcutting rainforests in the past

has slowed timber production in the nearby Asian countries and reduced the volumes of timber imports from these sources.

These factors have reduced the availability of timber in Australia to the lowest level for many years, with many customers unable to obtain the volumes they would like. Binder's Building Supplies of Denmark, has been a customer of Forwood Products since July 1993 when their inability to source timber from the private sector sawmills became an issue. Forwood has a stable customer base which has proved to be loyal in difficult times, and with a geographical spread sufficient to ensure that the risk of market downturn in any particular region will not unduly restrict sales. Rather than favour particular markets in times of high demand Forwood Products treats all customers equitably and is sensitive to the needs of the whole customer base. Historical trends indicate that the South Australian market for housing and building material fluctuates widely and it is felt to be more strategically desirable to maintain a geographic spread of markets. The proportional distribution of timber between the various states and markets has been maintained during this period of wood shortage.

#### BROADCASTING LICENCE

In reply to **Mr OSWALD (Morphett)** 24 August.

**The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER:** Applications for narrowcast licences are called for by the Australian Broadcasting Authority. Radio Station 5AA requested an opinion from the Authority as to the suitability of racing broadcasts and associated information for the issuing of a narrowcast licence on January 11, 1993. A positive response was received from the Authority on February 1, 1993. Subsequently, as required under the Broadcasting Act, 5AA submitted an official application to the Authority on February 16, 1993. A decision on this application is expected to be made later this month.

#### GAMING MACHINES

In reply to **Hon. B.C. EASTICK (Light)** 26 August.

**The Hon. R.J. GREGORY:** Applied Data Control (ADC) tendered for the service agent contract and was thoroughly evaluated along with the other eight tenderers. The company was unsuccessful for a number of reasons besides those mentioned by the honourable member for Light. Certainly amendments to the legislation have not precluded ADC from winning the contract. The Gaming Machines Act exposes the board to risks not normally experienced; e.g. heavy fines and possible imprisonment. Because of this, the Crown Solicitor determined it necessary to protect the board to the fullest extent possible. An important criterion in the selection of the service agent was that the company be a company of substance, with the ability to give the board a complete indemnity, as follows:

The Service Agent shall at all times indemnify, hold harmless and defend the board, the Crown in right of the State of South Australia and their respective officers, employees and agents other than the Service Agent (in this clause 10 referred to as 'these indemnified') from and against any loss (including legal costs and expenses) or liability incurred by any of those indemnified arising from any claim, suit, demand, action or proceeding by any person against any of those indemnified where such loss or liability arose out of any act or omission for the Service Agent, its employees, agents or subcontractors in connection with this Agreement or any Contract.

It is acknowledged that most companies hold a form of indemnity insurance, but insurances can be cancelled at any time, and the Board was more concerned with the actual value of the company. In the judgement of the board, whilst ADC is apparently a sound company, Bull is a more substantial company taking account of the circumstances. Concerning employment, the very nature of the services required, ensured that, whichever company was successful, employment in the State would be given a boost. Bull itself is presently engaged in recruiting staff to meet its obligations. As a matter of interest, ADC has written to the board subsequent to the tender being decided and, while naturally expressing disappointment, thanking it for the professional manner in which the tender process was conducted.

#### FORESTS

In reply to **Hon. H. ALLISON (Mount Gambier)** 26 August.

**The Hon. T.R. GROOM:** The Scrimber Consortium comprises SATCO, SGIC, CSIRO and Rafor Limited. Two overseas parties remain interested in the project. Proposals have been received from

both in recent weeks and sensitive negotiations are continuing to determine a basis to enable the Research & Development work to be completed and if successful, provide an equitable return to all contributors. The members of the consortium are confident of a result from these negotiations, however the outcomes should not be pre-empted at this stage. Negotiations to obtain private capital have been determined to a large degree by the need for potential investors to gain an appropriate understanding of the state of the technology and the remaining Research & Development work to be completed.

#### CROWS MATCHES

In reply to **Hon. J.P. TRAINER (Walsh)** 26 August.

**The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER:** There are several issues which need to be addressed before a combined public transport and entry ticket for Crows games could be introduced. For example, people attending matches at Football Park travel from different locations and therefore require different fares. This applies to full fare paying passengers, pensioners and children. The State Transport Authority (STA) already has 16 ticket types, while the South Australian National Football League (SANFL) has provision for only 3. As the scheduled Crows games have been completed for this season, discussions will be held between the STA and SANFL with the view to finding a solution prior to the 1994 season.

#### GARBAGE RECYCLING TRANSFER CENTRE

In reply to **Mr HAMILTON (Albert Park)** 26 August.

**The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER:** Officers from my department have inquired with the Environmental Protection Authority and the Local Government Association of South Australia and to their knowledge no commitment has been given by any council to use facilities at the Royal Park Waste Recycling Depot to date.

#### KESTERS ROAD INTERSECTION

In reply to **Mr QUIRKE (Playford)** 26 August.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** The Minister of Transport Development advises that the Department of Road Transport is developing a strategy for the treatment of the Main North Road/Kesters Road junction in association with its investigation for the upgrading of Main North Road between Kings Road and Montague Road. The department anticipates that its proposals will be exhibited for the purpose of community consultation in February 1994.

#### CAVAN CORRECTION CENTRE

In reply to **Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen)** 25 August.

**The Hon. R.J. GREGORY:** All contracts let on the project have been examined and while some monies are owing to contractors, it is a normal process. Contractors have various works to complete, claims to submit for work completed together with variations to the contract yet to be approved. Payment through the course of the project follows normal contractual processes, and all contractors claims are treated promptly and fairly in accordance with the conditions of the contract. The claim by the Hon. D.C. Wotton that a contractor has not received over \$500 000 owed to him is totally incorrect. There are only two contracts valued in excess of \$500 000 namely for plumbing and bricklaying. Accounting records show that the plumbing contractor has a credit balance while the bricklayer is owed \$600. As to the claim of a cost blow-out of \$2.8 million, SACON is not aware of how this figure could have arisen. The project was completed on time and within budget.

#### REGISTER OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

**The SPEAKER** laid on the table the statement of the Register of Members' Interests for 1993.

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

That the statement be printed.

Motion carried.

#### PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Deputy Premier (Hon. Frank Blevins)—

Parliamentary Superannuation Scheme—Report 1992-93  
Regulations under the following Acts—  
Superannuation—  
Prescribed Authorities—SAOFS, SAGASCO  
Child, Adolescent and Family Health Service Employees  
Transfer to State Scheme  
State Scheme (Bordertown Hospital) Amendment  
State Scheme (Kingston Solider's Memorial Hospital)  
Amendment  
Superannuation (Benefit Scheme)—  
MBH Fund Closure  
SAHC Visiting Medical Officers Fund.

By the Minister of Housing, Urban Development and  
Local Government Relations (Hon.G.J. Crafter)—

Local Government Superannuation Board—Report,  
1992-93.  
South Australian Urban Land Trust—Report, 1992-93.  
District Court Act 1991—Rules of Court—Various.  
Planning Act 1982—Crown Development Report on  
proposal to undertake development, Hundreds of  
Adelaide and Noarlunga.  
Regulations under the following Acts—  
Local Government—  
Expiation Fees—Angle Parking  
Parking—Amendments  
Summary Offences—Dangerous Articles—Variation  
Urban Land Trust—Northfield Development Area.  
Corporation By-laws—  
City of Happy Valley—No.9—Moveable Signs  
City of Whyalla—  
No. 1—Permits and Penalties  
No. 2—Foreshore Area.  
District Council By-laws—  
Mannum—No.2—Streets (Amendment)  
Millicent—No.8—Dogs  
Port MacDonnell No.2—Council Land (Amendment).

By the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources  
(Hon. M.K. Mayes)—

Adelaide Festival Centre Trust—Report, 1992-93.  
Art Gallery of South Australia—Report, 1992-93.  
Department for the Arts and Cultural Heritage—Report,  
1992-93.  
Local Government Finance Authority of South Australia—  
Report, 1992-93.  
South Australian Museum Board—Report, 1992-93.  
State Theatre Company—Report, 1992-93.  
Regulations under the following Acts—  
Fair Trading—Trade Measurement  
Trade Measurement—  
Sale by Volume or Measurement  
Weighbridges  
Measuring Instruments  
Pre-packed Articles  
Trade Measurement Administration—Fees and  
Charges—Various.

By the Minister of Education, Employment and Training  
(Hon. S.M. Lenehan)—

University of Adelaide—Report, 1992.

By the Minister of Public Infrastructure (Hon. J.H.C.  
Klunder)—

Pipelines Authority of South Australia—Report, 1992-93.  
Electricity Trust of South Australia Act—Regulations—  
Bushfire Risk Area—Clearances.

By the Minister of Labour Relations and Occupational  
Health and Safety (Hon.R.J.Gregory)—

Government Management and Employment Act—  
Regulations—Various—Remade.

By the Minister of State Services (Hon. R.J. Gregory)—

State Clothing Corporation—Report, 1992-93.  
State Supply Board—Report, 1992-93.

By the Minister of Business and Regional Development  
(Hon. M.D. Rann)—

Department of Marine and Harbours—Report, 1992-93.  
Metropolitan Taxi-Cab Board—Report, 1992-93.  
Department of Road Transport—Report, 1992-93.  
Boating Act—Regulations—Speed Controls (Balgowan).  
Harbours Act—Regulations—  
Speed Limit Exemptions—Port Adelaide River  
Port River Speed Restriction—Submarine Corporation.

By the Minister of Health, Family and Community  
Services (Hon. M.J. Evans)—

South Australian Health Commission Act—Regulations—  
Compensable and non-Medicare Patient Fees  
Independent Living Centre—Audit.

## GENTING GROUP

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS (Deputy Premier):** I seek  
leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** Early in March of this  
year the Leader of the Opposition asked that certain allega-  
tions about the Genting organisation be referred to the Casino  
Supervisory Authority. An inquiry was subsequently set in  
train by the authority but following advice from the Crown  
Solicitor that inquiry was terminated and an independent  
inquiry commenced by the Chairman of the authority, Ms  
Frances Nelson, QC, acting in her private and independent  
capacity. This action was taken in order to ensure that all  
allegations were subjected to critical scrutiny.

From the outset Ms Nelson was invited to interpret her  
terms of reference broadly and to investigate matters brought  
to her attention which warranted further scrutiny, even if they  
were not technically within the terms of reference. It was  
important that this be done because the reputation of the  
Adelaide Casino needs to be preserved.

The inquiry has been most thorough. A large amount of  
material has been studied and evidence has been taken from  
everyone who appeared likely to be able to contribute. In  
particular, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has made a  
number of submissions to the inquiry and provided certain  
material to it.

The cost to date has been about \$215 000. This figure is  
not expected to increase significantly when the final accounts  
are paid. The report commences with a description of the  
events which led to the development of the casinos in South  
Australia and Western Australia with which Genting was  
involved. It then deals with the specific allegations which the  
inquiry was required to examine.

The first of these concerns the approval procedures in  
place for the satisfactory appointment of Genting as adviser  
to the casino. The inquiry finds that proper procedures were  
in place for this purpose, that there was adequate under-  
standing between agencies of their responsibilities and that  
there are proper approval procedures in place for checking  
future employees. It further finds that procedures should be  
developed to investigate periodically the ongoing suitability  
of those associated with the casino, to monitor the operation  
of the TAMS agreement and to require the production by  
Genting and Aitco and their associates of relevant records,  
documents and accounts. These findings will be discussed  
with the relevant regulatory authorities.

In response to certain difficulties experienced in the past  
by regulatory bodies in this State the report also suggests that  
responsible State Ministers and regulatory bodies endeavour  
to establish some protocol which will permit appropriate

exchange of information and sharing of knowledge between respective jurisdictions. This proposal will be followed up in the appropriate forums. The Government notes that issues such as privacy and potential defamation claims may arise in this context.

The second matter investigated was whether there was any impropriety in the appointment of Genting as adviser to the casino. The report finds that there was no such impropriety and that, specifically, Genting was not the source of a donation of \$95 000 to the ALP in South Australia and that the decision by the Casino Supervisory Authority to approve the appointment of Genting was not influenced by the Government nor the result of undue influences.

The third matter investigated was whether there was any impropriety in the appointment of Aitco as operator of the casino. The report finds that there was no such impropriety and specifically that the Lotteries Commission dealt with each application fairly and on its merits, that the decision of the Lotteries Commission was not subject to Government influence and was not influenced by any undertakings given by ASER in the course of the public inquiry into the site of the casino. The report also finds that the acknowledged preference of the Government for the railway station site did not disadvantage applicants for the operational licence.

The fourth matter investigated was whether the contract between the casino operator and Genting was appropriate. The report finds that the fee negotiated was commercially acceptable to both parties, was in line with management fees charged in comparable situations and therefore was not inappropriate.

The fifth matter investigated was whether the allegation that Genting directors were parties to the issue of false prospectus should be further investigated. Investigation into this matter occupies a large part of the report. The report finds that the allegations should not be further investigated. Ms Nelson has made a positive finding that the Genting directors were not parties to the issue of false prospectus, nor were they parties to the dissemination of false and misleading information, that the prospectus was not false and that the information provided was neither false nor misleading.

The final matter investigated was whether Genting was an unsuitable adviser to the Casino. The report finds that this is not the case and that there are positive advantages to the Casino in having such an adviser. The report also finds that no criticism can be made of Genting regarding its conduct within the Adelaide Casino or in respect of alleged undesirable associations Genting may have with anyone. As a result, the report finds as follows:

1. Refutes the various allegations made against Genting;
  2. Refutes the various allegations made against the Government;
  3. Refutes the various allegations made against public officials and institutions in respect of the process of the granting of the Casino licence; and
  4. Refutes any suggestion or allegation that the Government or any Minister has misled the Parliament.
- On the other hand, the report also identifies the manner in which these allegations have been made and disseminated. It identifies the sources of these allegations and makes trenchant criticisms of the persons responsible, including an interstate police officer. The report also criticises some elements of the media for the manner in which some of the allegations have been reported, particularly during the investigation. The report identifies that much of the material put before and used by the Opposition in making the allegations in Parliament

was based either directly or indirectly upon those sources which the report criticises.

I commend the report to the House. It contains much information about Genting that is valuable and that should help South Australians to understand better the nature and significance of this company and the environment in which it operates in Malaysia. It also contains much that is informative about those who have been Genting's detractors in this country. There is a need for the community to remain vigilant against all forms of corruption. This inquiry should help to restore a sense of perspective to that process by demonstrating how reputable organisations and individuals can be damaged if rumours and innuendo about them are too readily accepted.

One of the benefits we can hope for from this inquiry is that those who are tempted in the future to repeat allegations of impropriety about prominent individuals and organisations will first take time to consider and check their sources. I would like to thank Ms Nelson who, despite the demands of a busy legal practice, has not spared herself in conducting this inquiry and who has in the process performed a valuable service to the community. I now table copies of the report.

## QUESTION TIME

### ELECTIONS

#### **The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Leader of the Opposition):**

How does the Premier justify his claim that, for political stability, South Australian State elections should be held in the first part of the year when the last five elections called by Labor Government's have been in the second half of the year, including three early elections, with the result that South Australia has not had a State election in the first half of the year since 1973?

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** Will the Premier admit that his claim is just a blatant excuse to avoid calling an election this year?

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader is very close to debating the question.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** Up until 1973, State elections in South Australia were always held in the first part of the year—usually the first or second Saturday of March. However, in 1975 the ALP called an early election in the second half of the year, and did so again in 1977 and in 1979. All six elections since 1973—five of them called by the Labor Party—have been in the second half of the year.

**The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD:** The Leader realised that his question was a joke, because he smiled while he was asking it. He knows full well that he has totally misrepresented a statement that I made about this matter. I will canvass exactly what was asked of me and what I said. At a press conference I was asked whether I favoured fixed-date elections, and I said I had not yet formed a final view on that matter. However, I then went on to say that, if you are going to have fixed-date elections—and that does not mean necessarily that we will or that I support that position—it is better that that fixed date be in the first part of a calendar year rather than the last part.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD:** If you just bear with me, we will get there.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Chair will bear with the Premier, and the Opposition will come to order.

**The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD:** The danger as I see it of fixed-date elections held late in a calendar year—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Hayward.

**The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD:** If we have a fixed election date late in the calendar year, we have the prospect of many months of campaigning leading up to that fixed date. One of the virtues of having a non-fixed date is that there is able to be a relatively short election campaign period and people do not feel that they have been subjected to lengthy campaigning. If we have a fixed date in the first part of a calendar year, the break over December-January acts as an automatic circuit breaker, so that campaigning would not be as intense during that period, and therefore we would end up with a shorter election campaign than would be the case with a fixed date late in the calendar year. But my own personal view as to the timing of the election—

*The Hon. Dean Brown interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD:**—in South Australia has been the same from the day I became Premier to this day, and it will be the same until the day the election is actually called, and that is that the election should be held late this year or early next year.

If the Parliament is to come to a decision on fixed dates, my view is that, if the Parliament says 'Yes' to fixed dates, it should be fixing a date in the first part of a calendar year, not the last part. If the Parliament does not make any decision on that matter, the point I come back to is what I have said time and again, and I repeat yet again—I am sorry to be repetitious—that is, the election should be held between late this year and early next year.

### STATE DEBT

**The Hon. J.P. TRAINER (Walsh):** My question is directed to the Treasurer.

*Mr S.J. Baker interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** The Deputy Leader is out of order.

**The Hon. J.P. TRAINER:** What is the Government's target for the reduction of State debt and what threats are there to the achievement of the Government's debt reduction strategy?

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume his seat until we get order in the House.

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** The Government's debt reduction strategy was spelt out quite clearly in the Meeting the Challenge document. It was reinforced in the State budget and, with one exception which I will come to in a moment, the figures that were put forward in Meeting the Challenge and in the budget have been acknowledged by all responsible financial commentators as being very accurate and very honest. Whilst some of them would like us to reduce the debt more quickly, I think all the responsible financial commentators have made clear that they approve of the strategy. The important thing with debt strategy is to ensure that it is

managed and it is declining but not at a rate that reduces services in a significant way to the community.

I almost smelt the whiff of a policy this morning in the *Advertiser*—almost, and I am not sure, but it was fairly close to what was looking like a policy—on how the Opposition will do it. I can tell members that there are only two real options: to raise taxes or to cut services. It is as simple as that. Asset sales are a little bit of a side show, but the main assets in this State also have a financial credit, on the credit side of the balance sheet. If anyone thinks that asset sales will do anything significant to reduce the debt in this State, they are kidding themselves.

But anyway, I opened the *Advertiser* this morning and there it was, 'Libs plan to sell assets to cut debt'. The assets that have been named so far are already listed in the Government's plan. Those that are not will not raise anywhere near \$1 billion. The Opposition seems to have different policies; the Leader says they will get it down to \$7 billion, but the Deputy Leader says, 'That is not true. We cannot do that; that is too hard. We will have a crack it, but what the Leader says is wrong.' That is the effect of what he says. If the Deputy Leader believes that he can sell the schools, sell the roads and sell the power lines, he is kidding himself. It is just a joke—an absolute joke.

The only thing I have heard from the Opposition of how it will reduce expenditure is that the member for Adelaide has this fetish about hospital cleaners. The member for Adelaide keeps saying they will privatise the hospital cleaners. That is the only thing he can come up with. I have news for the member for Adelaide and the Opposition: we really do not have a sufficient number of hospital cleaners in this State such that if we sacked them it would make an appreciable difference, and we have very many fewer than we had three years ago.

In conclusion, there is a very serious issue here, and it is not being dealt with by the Opposition in a serious way. I do not want to be unduly critical of the media, but it is not being dealt with by the media in a serious way, either, because what has been put so far by the Opposition on this so-called debt reduction strategy is a joke—a total joke. At some stage, the media have to put the wood on these people and say, 'If you want to keep to the figures—even those of the Deputy Leader—then you will have to do more than sack a few hospital cleaners and sell a few houses.'

*Mr Meier interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Goyder is out of order and has been for the past 10 minutes.

### ELECTIONS

**Mr S.J. BAKER (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):**

Is the Premier's Government changing its policy on fixed parliamentary terms in an excuse to avoid calling an election in 1993? In the *Advertiser* of 27 September, the Premier was quoted as saying that fixed terms were part of his consideration of the election date. However, Government policy, as explained by the member for Ross Smith, is to oppose fixed terms. The member for Ross Smith said:

One cannot graft onto a Westminster parliamentary system, whereby Parliament is responsible for a Government. . . a presidential system from which its fixed terms are drawn. The two are incompatible.

**The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD:** Again, the Deputy Leader misquoted what I actually said. I said fixed dates are a very 'minor part' not 'a part'. The issue is that it happens to be

before this Parliament as a debate, given the motion of the Hon. Ian Gilfillan in another place to look at a date late this year. It essentially seeks to have, by parliamentary motion, a tying down of an election date which automatically brings in the very concept of fixed date elections. I made the point before that, if that is to be debated, we have to consider very carefully what position we take. Not just this Party but all Parties in the Parliament have to consider the impact of having a fixed election date. If the matter had not been moved by the Hon. Ian Gilfillan in another place, it would not even have been on the agenda. But that motion has been moved; it will at some stage be dealt with.

I have been asked by the media about my Government's view of this matter, and I have said that in due course we will come to a considered view on the matter, but it is not the most important issue on the agenda. There are many other important issues on the agenda at the moment requiring Cabinet business, and we will deal with those. In fact, yesterday I was asked whether we would discuss it at our Cabinet meeting yesterday, and I said, 'Well, we have other things to discuss; if time permits, we might start discussing that.' But I did not see it as an issue of enough importance to get on to.

The whole issue of fixed dates has come before one House of the Parliament because of a motion moved by a member of another Party in that House of the Parliament; therefore, it is something perhaps that members in this place will have to come to a decision on—if it ever gets to this place—and when that does happen we will have a more firm view as to what the Parliament thinks about fixed election dates and when that fixed date should be.

### STATE DEBT

**The Hon. J.P. TRAINER (Walsh):** Does the Treasurer agree with Cliff Walsh, the Executive Director of the South Australian Centre for Economic Studies, that a tax surcharge is needed in South Australia to meet State debt? An article on the front page of the *City Messenger* headed 'Tax surcharge needed: Walsh' has the opening paragraph:

South Australians should pay an income tax surcharge if they want to cut into the State's \$8 billion debt, a leading economic researcher says.

And it appears that in Victoria exactly that form of surcharge applied in the \$100 household tax that Kennett has imposed.

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** I am indebted, as I often am, to the *City Messenger* for its words of wisdom.

*The Hon. Lynn Arnold interjecting:*

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** Yes, indeed; from time to time, it provides information and entertainment and a little discomfort for members opposite—it is quite an interesting newspaper. I was interested to see this significant spread in today's *City Messenger* headed, as the honourable member said, 'Tax surcharge needed: Walsh' and pointing out, according to Mr Walsh, the mythical percentage of State revenue that we will be paying in a few years time. I note that the article actually states that the amount would be going down. I think that is somewhat contradictory to the remainder of the article; nevertheless, leaving that to one side, the answer to Mr Walsh and to anyone else is a categorical 'No': this State Government will not do a Kennett; it will not impose a surcharge of any description on either households or individuals. It is not necessary in this State to take those kinds of measures.

I point out for the record that Cliff Walsh was, I think, a staffer of Malcolm Fraser. Whether that is where he obtained his peculiar views or imparted his peculiar views, I am not quite sure—but this form of right wing nonsense is not something to which this Government will subscribe. I note that Mr Walsh was a little even-handed: he did say that the Opposition does not have a clue. Of course, he is politically opposed to us, but in all fairness he notes that the Opposition does not have firm strategies to tackle the problem. I think he is wrong. I think the Opposition does have a firm strategy, but members opposite will not say what it is. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition let the cat out of the bag during the budget debate the other day when he interjected on the record and repeated: 'You're not going to get any policies out of us.' How blatant and arrogant can one get? We are on the eve of a—

**Mr S.G. EVANS:** I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I will not take the point of order until the House comes to order.

**Mr S.G. EVANS:** My point of order is that the Minister is debating the answer.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order, and once again I ask the Minister to bring his response to a close.

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** I conclude by repeating a categorical 'No': this kind of material would certainly not have any credibility with this Government. However, I think the question should be asked: is the Opposition listening to what contained in this material? If it is not, tell us; if it is, be honest with the people of South Australia, just for once.

### ELECTIONS

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE (Coles):** Does the Premier agree with the Minister of Health, Family and Community Services that 'the substantive business of the Parliament, Public Service and even the private sector is undermined by the endless uncertainty and speculation over election dates when the term draws near to an end'; and, if so, for South Australia's sake, will he declare here and now whether an election is to be called this year?

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD:** The matter of a fixed date has been debated in this Parliament on an earlier occasion. On that occasion, my colleague the Minister of Health, Family and Community Services (the member for Elizabeth) expressed his view, which is well known, that he supports a fixed election date. At that time, my Party came to the considered view that it opposed a fixed election date. However, it has been prepared to consider the matter, which is before the Parliament at the moment, but it has not yet come to a decision.

As to my personal view, I repeat: if there is to be a fixed date, it should be in the early part of the year, but that is not to say that there should be a fixed date. I have not at any stage given cause for any grounds for uncertainty regarding an election date, because I have said from the day I became Premier that it would not be held until late this year or early next year.

Many people including some members opposite and some members of the media have speculated on various dates since May this year, if not before. It has been interesting to read about those speculations, but the point is that those people have been the authors of those speculations, of that uncertain-

ty, because on each occasion I have denied and dispelled those rumours. Therefore, there is no reason for that uncertainty to be maintained, but those people continue to be the author of that uncertainty. If and until the Parliament agrees that there should be a fixed date, this will always be the situation: prior to the Premier of the day calling an election there will be speculation about the date.

It is true that most Saturdays between the time at which someone makes an announcement and the final election date will be chosen by someone. I can dispel certain rumours right now. I will not name a date today, but I can stipulate some days on which the election will not be held, and one of those is 6 November, which is the day before the Grand Prix, the pageant day—so the election will not be held on that date. It also will not be held on Christmas Day, which is a Saturday, and it will not be held on New Year's Day. I was also on the public record some weeks ago saying that it would not be held on Grand Final Saturday either. So, those dates are already starting to be culled out of the options. My line has been consistent from the day on which I became Premier and I maintain that position: the election will be held either late this year or early next year.

#### URBAN DEVELOPMENT

**The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD (Baudin):** Will or can the Minister of Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations explain what, if anything, is new in the Liberal Party's so-called planning documents for the southern area?

**The Hon. G.J. CRAFTY:** I thank the honourable member for his question, because I know that there is quite a deal of confusion among developers and others in the community about this amazing statement with a familiar ring to it which was released on the weekend. Certainly, the honourable member is right: the Opposition has come up with a fabulous new policy which the Government has had in place for almost a year. It came out of the Planning Review and the 2020 Vision report, and there it was almost word for word—maps copied, and so on.

The State Labor Government, together with the Willunga council, initiated a land capability study for this important southern area of Adelaide, and that was completed earlier this year. I have had meetings about these matters with grape growers, local government authorities and subsequently with representatives of the development industry. The Government has been involved in discussions with the Willunga council and the local community for 18 months about the specific needs of this area and the planning issues surrounding them.

More recently, a formal process was set in train with the establishment of a steering committee comprising council members and staff representatives of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. I am sure that the community of Willunga is impressed with how correct the Government's policies have been in this matter, the council, of course, being the first planning authority. Indeed, they have been so correct that they have been mirrored by the Liberal Party, which seems unable to come up with a policy of its own.

I am not certain which reference document the Opposition used to develop its policy—2020 Vision or our own Labor Party platform. The most extraordinary aspect of the announcement by the Leader of the Opposition is the complete about face by the Liberal Party in respect of urban development and the Government's role in that process. That is the

philosophy that has been expounded by the Opposition for some time. I would like to read to the House a short quotation by the member for Morphett, the Opposition spokesperson on planning, published in the *Advertiser* of 21 September last year, as follows:

The proposition to limit the scale of development in the southern metropolitan area is unrealistic and unacceptable in a free market.

In contrast, the Leader of the Opposition stated on Sunday:

A Liberal Government will do this through: stopping any further development east of the Main South Road in the Willunga Basin and restricting further housing to the west of Main South Road.

That is, a State Government would override local government and the local community and, indeed, the participatory and consultative processes that are currently in place. Still, they have the nerve to criticise the South Australian Urban Land Trust for acquiring land which can be released in an orderly and appropriate manner in the overall community interest.

*Mr Oswald interjecting:*

**The Hon. G.J. CRAFTY:** Our plan has been out for 12 months, and you know it.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Morphett is out of order. The Minister will direct his remarks to the Chair, and I ask him to wind up his response.

**The Hon. G.J. CRAFTY:** All I can say in conclusion is: do members opposite support orderly and planned development, or would development be allowed to proceed *ad hoc* to the detriment of the community and the environment—or, according to this latest statement, not proceed at all?

#### STATE BANK CENTRE

**Mr S.J. BAKER (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** My question is directed to the Treasurer. What advice has the Government received from the State Bank on the current value of the State Bank Centre and how is a significant loss on the centre to be accounted for in the sale of the bank? The State Bank Centre cost just over \$131 million for the land on which it is built and the construction of the project. This represented a blow-out in cost of almost \$46 million in just four years. In addition, rental revenues have fallen significantly short of original projections and, with other costs associated with the financing arrangements, the bank is now facing a loss currently estimated at close to \$140 million.

I have in my possession a copy of a memorandum presented to the board on 12 December 1990, which describes the centre as 'a long-term problem that will take five to 10 years to resolve' because of problems including 'funding through a complicated tax structure' and 'rental growth not in line with original projections because of economic conditions'. I have been informed that the revaluation of the State Bank Centre to a much lower figure was delayed to avoid exposing it in the 1992-93 accounts.

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** If I heard correctly, the Deputy Leader was quoting from a document from 1990. I cannot vouch for the veracity of that document at all.

*Mr S.J. Baker interjecting:*

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** What I will do, Sir—

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

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** I will have that document researched and, if it is still around, see what we can say about it. An extensive answer was given in relation to the State Bank Centre during the Estimates Committees and I have received no advice since then to qualify that answer. How-

ever, if there has been a re-evaluation of the State Bank Centre since that answer was given (which is in *Hansard*), I will certainly bring an update to the Parliament, as I always do.

### BUILDING APPROVALS

**Mr HOLLOWAY (Mitchell):** Will the Minister of Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations advise the House of the latest building approval figures? Last week I heard Don Kennett of the Housing Industry Association being interviewed by Carol Whitelock on 5AN, and he said that South Australia had recorded impressive figures and has been doing better than the rest of Australia for the last three or four years.

**The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER:** I thank the honourable member for the opportunity to comment on these figures—another set of figures which indicate that the economy in South Australia is showing strong growth. Housing approvals for the month ending—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER:** Members might not like to hear these facts, but they are very important indeed to an important sector of industry in this State—a sector of industry that appreciates the Government's policies. Housing approvals for the month ending August 1993 were up by 10.9 per cent on approvals for the corresponding period last year: that is, in August 1993, 1 188 building applications were approved compared to 999 applications in August 1992. So, from January 1993 until August 1993 there were 812 more approvals than for the corresponding period last year. Of course, 12 consecutive drops in interest rates over the past three years has played an important role in the increased demand for housing during this period. But, as we know from interstate experience, interest rates are not the only variable to impact on the housing market. Indeed, the South Australian market is strong because of the direct and purposeful housing policies that this Government has had for a long time.

What, then, are those factors which make the South Australian housing sector clearly different from the housing sectors in other States? The first is the State Government initiated HomeStart program which provides loans for low income and moderate earners, thereby creating a greater market for homes in this State. HomeStart has assisted almost 14 000 South Australian families to purchase homes since it was introduced just four years ago. It has provided nearly 18 per cent of all housing finance provided in South Australia over that period. HomeStart has assisted in providing an ongoing market which has maintained consistent activity in our housing sector.

The other significant factor which makes South Australia different from the rest of Australia is Government initiated planning. Through the South Australian Urban Lands Trust we have maintained a steady and a responsible release of land which has resulted in South Australia holding a considerable advantage over the other States by maintaining affordable land prices. That is certainly something that is acknowledged right across Australia. Both these institutions, which have played such a significant role in the housing industry, are constantly under attack from the Opposition.

The Government has played a significant role in bringing about a result in which all South Australians should indeed rejoice. We have steady growth in the housing sector: it is a very stable industry in this State. We have steady employment in the housing sector and we have increased access to

home ownership for low income families. Importantly, the value of housing in South Australia has remained stable over this period, whilst prices interstate have fluctuated enormously.

### STATE BANK CENTRE

**Mr BECKER (Hanson):** Will the Deputy Premier seek an explanation from the State Bank for the payment of \$673 000 in union-related expenses for the construction of the State Bank Centre? I have a copy of a State Bank Board minute relating to a meeting held on 28 July 1988, indicating that that meeting was advised of a significant escalation in the cost of the State Bank Centre. The construction cost of the project was, in fact, just over \$123 million, compared with an estimate at the time it was approved of less than \$80 million. This board minute itemises reasons for the escalating cost, including 'union-related expenses \$673 000'. I have been told that union rorts on this project were just as rife as on the Myer-Remm project, which also continues to cost taxpayers very dearly.

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** 1988—this is even worse than the effort by the Deputy Leader a moment ago. Again, I will see whether any 1988 document as described by the member for Hanson is available and if there is anybody still around the bank from those days—I doubt it—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** I doubt whether anybody is still around in the bank from those days.

*The Hon. H. Allison interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Mount Gambier is out of order. If he continues he will be warned.

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** I doubt whether anybody is still around in a leading position in the bank who would have known anything about those things. Nevertheless, treating Parliament with the respect that it warrants, I will have the question examined and see whether anybody is around from 1988 who remembers that particular incident (if indeed it occurred), and I will bring back a report to the Parliament.

What annoys me about these questions about unions and about the cost of buildings is that all members opposite want the law of the jungle to exist out there. They want so-called enterprise bargaining and free contracts, and in a period like the 1980s when the workers had the upper hand, particularly the building workers—

**Mr BRINDAL:** I rise on a point of order. The Deputy Premier is debating the answer.

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

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** I think they got the point, Sir.

### SMALL BUSINESS

**The Hon. J.P. TRAINER (Walsh):** Can the Minister of Business and Regional Development advise the House of the growth in small business investment in South Australia, and does this growth support the recent survey by the Employers Federation of South Australia which claimed that investment had come to a standstill in this State?

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** It seems that a couple of different surveys have recently been highlighted in that journal of record the *Advertiser*. A small business index was recently



highlighted. This survey, which was compiled from the *Yellow Pages* and dealt with businesses from across the country, revealed that more than 48 per cent of small businesses in South Australia and the Northern Territory recorded sales growth in the three months to July 1993, compared with only 37 per cent nationally. In New South Wales more businesses recorded sales decreases rather than sales growth.

According to the *Advertiser's* business supplement of 28 September 1993 (and members opposite may have missed it when they flipped over from the comics) this survey, unlike the so-called survey of the Employers' Federation, was the most detailed and focused research project yet undertaken in Australia on the true small business sector. It surveyed 1 000 metropolitan and regional small businesses with less than 19 employees from all sectors of the economy, including retail, manufacturing, finance, property and construction. The survey showed that sales expectations for the current quarter are also stronger in South Australia and the Northern Territory than in all other States, with 58 per cent of local small businesses expecting growth. The survey is considered to be a good indicator of economic recovery because the small business sector employs about one half of Australian workers.

In talking about the other survey, I did have a bit of a giggle. I am sure that John Ferguson did too, because he had to write to this garbage. It was not the usual 'poll-eve shock'; it was 'poll pressure'—the editors dropped the term 'poll-eve shock'. The article states that Matthew O'Callaghan declined to comment on the survey. He said:

I haven't had time to look at the survey conducted three weeks ago in its entirety. There are very few copies. I'm disappointed that it has been circulated.

How anyone could actually write that—let alone believe it—is amazing.

### ENTERPRISE BARGAINING

**Mr INGERSON (Bragg):** Will the Minister of Labour Relations and Occupational Health and Safety confirm that, contrary to an answer he gave to this House on 4 August, the Government now intends to extend enterprise agreements to employees under State awards who are not members of a trade union, and will he explain precisely how the Government intends to do this?

**The Hon. R.J. GREGORY:** I thank the honourable member for his question. It is obvious that Matthew O'Callaghan, who wrote to me about this matter, has confided in the honourable member about my response. I imagine he is quoting from that response.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. R.J. GREGORY:** My response covered the possibility of all matters that might arise out of the negotiations that have been happening at the national level between the Australian Government and the ACTU and ultimately with the Confederation of Australian Industry. As members would know, our Government has a record of ensuring that our Act is as near as possible to the Commonwealth Act to facilitate the operations of the Industrial Commission and the Industrial Court in South Australia so that we can have joint sittings. It is important to ensure that we have uniformity. Until those matters have been finalised and the Federal Government has made a decision, we are not in a position to state specifically what we will do. However, we have indicated that we will be considering all those aspects.

### WORKCOVER

**Mr FERGUSON (Henley Beach):** Can the Minister of Labor Relations and Occupational Health and Safety inform the House what improvements have been made to the WorkCover scheme over the past four years, and does he believe radical changes are needed to make the scheme even more competitive?

**The Hon. R.J. GREGORY:** I thank the honourable member for his question. We all know that recently WorkCover announced that it was slightly over-funded, and it was the first time it had been in that position. This happened because of legislative changes in this House and because of administrative changes within WorkCover itself. That also coincided with the introduction of bonus and penalty schemes, which encourage employers to ensure that they have a safe workplace as opposed to having a dangerous workplace.

We have seen the unfunded liability reduced from \$150 million in 1989 to a surplus of just over \$5 million for this year. That is in marked contrast to the predictions of the member for Bragg, who was touting in Adelaide at the time that by 30 June 1992 the blow-out would be \$400 million. I was surprised to be advised of some comments he made on radio in Adelaide recently, and I will read them for the edification of the House. He stated:

We just think this whole workers compensation thing today is a farce and we need to have some rapid changes to the scheme.

I just wonder what rapid changes have to be made when one compares like with like, that is, the South Australian scheme and its exempt employers with the situation in New South Wales. The New South Wales Minister said that, if that were to happen in that State, the rate would go from 2.56 per cent to 2.8 per cent. He said that at a meeting at which I was present. He said that despite the touting of a scheme that members opposite say is very good—a scheme which turfs out people on to social services after six months, which pays less in weekly payments than ours, which has no proper management of injuries and which has no proper control of employers who have poor safety records. None of these things can do that. We have a scheme here that can do all of that and still provide reasonable benefits to workers.

The member for Bragg is saying that the Liberal Party has a secret agenda to cut real benefits to workers in this State. He would not be saying this if the Liberal Party did not have a secret agenda. One can only construe from his comments that such an agenda exists. One also has to consider where we have been in relation to workers compensation. When the scheme was introduced in 1986-87 the average levy paid by private employers was 3.6 per cent; today it is 2.85 per cent. I want to draw the comparison: in 1986 workers were turfed out on low social security payments, whereas today they are reasonably well looked after.

We have seen the costs reducing. I can recall the panic of employers in 1986 when costs were escalating at a rate of 20 per cent per annum and they were wondering what they would do and how they would pay those bills. At the same time, tens of thousands of workers were being disfranchised because employers would not employ them because they had suffered some injury. We have turned that around, and in the process we have done something else that is remarkable. In this State we have been able to reduce the accident rate more than has been achieved anywhere else in Australia.

*Mr D.S. Baker interjecting:*

**The Hon. R.J. GREGORY:** That is despite the economic conditions and, for the benefit of the interjecting member for Victoria, actuaries have estimated that half of that reduction, taking account of all the economic factors, is as a result of the good management of occupational health and safety in this State. I would like the Opposition to acknowledge the good work that is being done by workers, the unions, the employer associations and the employers who are working very hard to achieve that. In fact, I would like the Opposition to join with us in condemning those who do not put in an effort to ensure that they have a safe workplace.

#### PORT AUGUSTA GAOL

**Mr GUNN (Eyre):** Will the Minister of Labor Relations and Occupational Health and Safety take urgent steps to overcome a dispute between painters, plumbers and carpenters unions and the State Government which is holding up the completion of the Port Augusta Gaol and which has already resulted in some 20 people in Port Augusta registering for the dole? I am informed that at least 31 subcontractors are in dispute with SACON over the financial collapse of Bisslands, the construction company contracted to provide interior fitting work for the Port Augusta Gaol. With the completion of the gaol only weeks away, 98 cells virtually are completed, subcontractors are experiencing severe financial difficulties through non-payment for their work, and at least 20 of their workmen have been forced onto the dole. I also understand that management have in place the necessary plans and programs to operate the gaol as soon as it is completed. However, due to this course of action which has been forced on the subcontractors those plans may be in jeopardy.

**The Hon. R.J. GREGORY:** I had some difficulty hearing all of the honourable member's question, but I understand that his principal concern is that the manager of the construction and alterations to the high security part of the Port Augusta Gaol, Bisslands, has recently declared itself insolvent, called in the receivers and has stated that it owes something like \$8 million. It is unfortunate that a number of contractors have been caught up in this but, as the member for Eyre is a business person and claims wide knowledge in this area, he would know that, if SACON paid some of these claims now to get early work, the receivers would hop in and get that money anyway.

My advice from SACON is that it is working through this as quickly as possible so that those matters can be resolved and any outstanding payments can be made so that people can be assisted. It is a difficult situation for those people, and I have sympathy for them. The sooner we are able to implement a scheme of arrangement in Australia which assists people in these circumstances the better, but whenever I have been involved in a proposal to put up such a scheme it has usually been rejected. My advice from SACON is that it will endeavour to have the work completed as soon as possible, despite the very difficult circumstances that apply at the moment.

#### SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Mr HAMILTON (Albert Park):** Can the Minister of Education, Employment and Training refute claims by the Opposition that the Government has some secret agenda to close schools in South Australia in a program similar to that being implemented by the Victorian Liberal Government? At about 8 a.m. yesterday I received a telephone call from a

Tennyson constituent who asked me to ask this question of the Minister and to relay the reply back to her, and I intend to do so.

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr HAMILTON:** I will take you to see the lady if you like.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. S.M. LENEHAN:** It is interesting that the Opposition does not believe in answering questions raised by its constituents. I can assure the House that this is nothing more than a smokescreen that has been raised by the Opposition to pull the wool over the eyes of South Australians. I assure members of this Parliament and the community that the Government certainly does not intend to go down the path of the Victorian Government, which is to reduce State debt by closing schools. I remind honourable members that the 1993-94 budget has been maintained, and this Government has a commitment to both access and equity in South Australia. I also remind the House that in Victoria the Kennett Government's budget cut education spending by \$145 million over the next two years, and it is expected that at least another 100 schools will be closed over and above the 56 schools that were closed last year. On 28 May last year Mr Don Hayward, who is now the Minister of Education in Victoria, gave the following commitment to the Parliament of Victoria—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The members for Goyder and Morphett are out of order once again.

**The Hon. S.M. LENEHAN:** He said:

Schools, teachers and parents are forced into amalgamations that merely serve the Government's political agenda rather than serving the needs of students. The whole process has been rejected by communities. It has created enormous problems and heartache in the community. . . . The coalition will scrap compulsory closure of schools.

That statement was reported in the *Herald Sun* of 27 August last year. This promise was broken by Mr Kennett and Mr Hayward on 20 November, and I have a list here of every one of the 56 schools which were unilaterally closed—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Custance, the member for Hayward and once again the member for Heysen are out of order.

**The Hon. S.M. LENEHAN:** These 56 schools were closed unilaterally on 20 November with no consultation with any member of the school communities or indeed the wider community. In relation to the Joseph Banks school the now Liberal member, Robert Dean, went to the election saying:

At the moment the situation is one of limbo. Joseph Banks is waiting and hoping that the Liberal Party gets into office because it knows that under the Party's education policy it will survive a reorganisation.

Not only did they get their Liberal Government but the school did not survive, and it was one of the 56 schools that were unilaterally closed on 20 November. I remind the House that the Leader of the Opposition gave the only firm commitment in the run-up to the coming election when he said that he will cut spending in various areas, including education, by 15 to 25 per cent. That would amount to a cut in the vicinity of \$210 million to \$350 million. A cut of that magnitude would decimate education in this State. This morning the Deputy Leader told us that he would reduce State debt by selling off assets, and the Treasurer has already addressed this. How

many school sites and how many closures are in the Opposition's sights in an attempt to reduce State debt? The Leader of the Opposition is nothing more than a Kennett phantom. He is masquerading around this State—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. S.M. LENEHAN:**—telling the community untruths.

**Mr S.G. EVANS:** Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Before I take the point of order I point out to the Minister that I did not take the point of order earlier because she was interrupted while she was making her case. However, as far as relevance is concerned the Victorian situation is not pertinent here at this stage.

**Mr S.G. EVANS:** You have covered my point of order, Sir.

### RECYCLING

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen):** When will the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources establish an efficient and coordinated system of recycling in South Australia, and does he still hold the view he stated two weeks ago during the Estimates Committee that the Local Government Association was solely to blame for the unacceptable delay and, if not, will he now apologise? The Minister will recall his statements of 21 September inside and outside Parliament in which he blamed the lengthy delay in implementing a coordinated recycling system on local government. I have received a copy of a circularised—

**The Hon. J.P. TRAINER:** I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. The honourable member is putting a question that is based, almost word for word, on his own Orders of the Day: Other Motions No. 12.

**The SPEAKER:** Rather than disallow the question, I ask the member to bring it up so that the Chair can determine whether it is acceptable.

### PATHOLOGY SERVICES

**Mrs HUTCHISON (Stuart):** Can the Minister of Health, Family and Community Services outline to the House what the effect would be on our hospitals and more importantly on their patients if pathology services were to be privatised? A recent article in the *Public Service Review* claims that public hospital laboratories will be under the Liberals' hammer if they should win the next election. The article claims that 'it is widely known in the hospital community that the private pathology laboratories are expected to grab a large portion of pathology work if the Liberals are successful'. The article claims that some specialists are planning to start their own companies to undercut current hospital analytical services.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. M.J. EVANS:** This question is a particularly serious one and I know that many patients in the health system and employees in pathology services run by the IMVS are very concerned to know the answer to it. It is very important that we maintain a range of pathology and testing services in this State, and I accept the important role that those private sector services play. They are contributors in this area and it is important that there should be a balanced approach to this issue. What is at risk here is the service now provided by the IMVS and the extent to which that might be privatised under any potential change of Government, were

that unfortunately to occur at the next election. Rumours are rife in the community about this. Indeed, it is said that the Opposition spokesman on this matter has already indicated to one hospital pathology service that that hospital's services would be sold off to the private sector.

*Dr Armitage interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. M.J. EVANS:** Whilst it is possible to have a balanced approach to this question, it is not appropriate that it should all be tilted one way. The reasons for that are quite strong. For one thing, there are a number of low volume tests which are nonetheless very expensive but which consume considerable resources. Will those tests be continued by the private sector?

*Dr Armitage interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.J. EVANS:** I very much doubt it.

**The SPEAKER:** If the member for Adelaide continues to interject, the Chair will be forced to take action. The honourable Minister.

**The Hon. M.J. EVANS:** A small number of those tests are very expensive. They are low volume; they consume a lot of resources but they are vital for the patients for whom those tests are provided. Will that service continue if there is no public sector provider in this area?

It is very important that one further aspect be brought up in this House, and it is an area that I would hope was bipartisan, and I say that very sincerely. Medical research in this State to a large extent depends upon the flow of funds, the flow of resources, from that testing service. If the IMVS is not able to fund its research services through some of its testing and diagnostic services, where will those funds come from? Medical research in this State is very important. We have made significant advances. The Hansen Centre for Cancer Research is a very important part of our medical research service. I challenge the Opposition to make that a bipartisan commitment at the next election—to support medical research in this State and to do so through the existing arrangements where funding for those services comes from the diagnostic tests. That is quite vital to medical research in this State and I hope members opposite will support that and support medical research and the patients of this State.

### RECYCLING

**The SPEAKER:** I will allow the question from the member for Heysen.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen):** I was explaining the question and I will go on to explain it. The Minister will recall his statements made in this House on 21 September and outside Parliament in which he laid the blame for lengthy delay regarding a coordinated recycling system on local government. I have received a copy of a circularised letter to metropolitan councils from the Secretary-General of the Local Government Association which recounts a series of meetings since the latter part of last year involving the LGA and waste management organisations appointed by the Government. These meetings culminated with a letter written to the Minister by the LGA President on 2 April stating the LGA's recommended position. It took the Minister more than two months to acknowledge that letter. I understand from the circularised letter that, at the time the Minister was making his comments two weeks ago, the Minister's department had received a final draft of the proposed agreement from the LGA which was actually awaiting his approval.

**The Hon. M.K. MAYES:** The honourable member again gets it wrong, as he so often does. I just draw the honourable member's attention to a function that he attended in the Elizabeth-Salisbury area, that is, the opening of the north-western recycling interchange, when he heard first-hand (and he seems to have forgotten this, but that is not uncommon for the member for Heysen) the events and particularly the comments of the Chief Executive Officer of that organisation about the role that local government has played in the whole process of the introduction of kerbside recycling and recycling. I draw his attention to the *Advertiser* article and to the speech of the Chief Executive Officer which highlights and summarises my position quite clearly and supports every comment I have made in regard to this issue.

We have only to draw the honourable member's attention to the comparison with other States and with other local governments around Australia to see what has been happening and where initiatives have been taken in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia, and even local initiatives here in South Australia. We have seen achievements over the past eight years which we have not seen here in South Australia, and one of the reasons is the fact that we have not been able to reach an agreement with the Local Government Association.

*The Hon. D.C. Wotton interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.K. MAYES:** You just sit there and listen; you might learn something. The position has been that we have not been able to achieve that because an agreement could not be reached within local government. As a consequence of that, we have been forced to try to negotiate with one hand tied behind our back. Quite frankly, the issue of kerbside recycling and collection is a matter for local government. It is an area in which local government is specialised; it is its area of government. We must rely on local government to take the initiative. I congratulate those councils throughout South Australia which have taken those initiatives. There are some excellent examples.

My colleague returned in July 1992 with the national agreement on kerbside recycling whereby all States, including all the Liberal Governments, agreed that there would be a national approach, the best and most economical strategy being through a Statewide approach which picked up the national guidelines. We have not achieved that. Unfortunately, one of the problems has been for the Local Government Association, given the nature of its organisation, to achieve agreement within the bodies that make up the LGA. I am pleased to say that we are making some progress, and I hope that within the next few weeks we will be able to announce a Statewide kerbside recycling program. The LGA has moved towards the position that has been adopted by the national guidelines, the guidelines which I have been instructing my officers to negotiate.

For the honourable member's own interest and for his edification, I restate that we have now moved to that position because we have taken a firm view. One of the critical issues has been the anticipated cost per tonne of fill—delivery of waste. It is a critical issue. Local government wanted one figure, but I was of the view that that would be a burden on industry in this State and would severely disadvantage our industry in comparison with that in other States. I would not agree to that figure. Since those negotiations have been going on this year, local government has moved its position closer to my position and to what I believe is a figure that industry can live with comfortably and survive with in this State and this environment.

If the honourable member is saying that I should have agreed to the proposal that the Local Government Association put to its members, that I should have agreed to that in April, May or June of this year, he should explain to local industry in this State why it would be subjected to a burden far greater than that in any other State in Australia. I suggest to him that he think carefully next time before he stands up and pitches such a general question to me. Quite frankly, if he is suggesting that, I think he has not thought through the whole issue of recycling. I am pleased to say in summary that we are close to agreement with local government and I hope we can soon announce a Statewide kerbside recycling program.

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## GOVERNMENT VEHICLES

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE (Coles):** I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE:** On Tuesday 24 August in a grievance debate I placed on the record the answer that the Minister of State Services had given me in reply to questions I had asked about the cost of accidents involving judges' cars. I sought leave to incorporate a table identifying the amount of the damage in each case. The table which I incorporated was accurate and in accordance with what the Minister had provided. However, on 14 September I received a copy of a letter dated 8 September from Judge Michael Noblet to the Manager of State Fleet pointing out that there had been an error in the figure supplied by State Fleet to the Chief Justice and by the Chief Justice, presumably, to the Minister. I will cite Judge Noblet's letter so that the record can be set right:

The manager, State Fleet, 30 Wakefield Street, Adelaide.  
Re: Holden Berlina, VHH 098. I was concerned to read in the *Advertiser* recently that the damage to my Government car caused by vandalism last March cost \$1 599 to repair. I am informed by the Executive Assistant to the Chief Justice, who collated the information for the purpose of answering a question in Parliament, that this was the figure supplied to him by State Fleet. However, I am now assured by State Fleet that the actual cost was \$155.90. It seems that someone has been a little careless with the placement of a decimal point. I would be grateful if you would adjust your records and ensure that this error does not occur again. Yours faithfully,  
Judge Noblet.

The adjustment of the decimal place and the replacement in the table on page 431 of *Hansard* will require consequential adjustments to my calculations which were based on total cost of accidents of \$26 208.94 and other figures based on that total which also need to be adjusted accordingly.

## GRIEVANCE DEBATE

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

**Mr S.G. EVANS (Davenport):** Considerable community concern has been expressed about the availability of community policing, particularly with regard to the vandalism, sheer destruction and arrogance of a few mainly young people who have cost the community huge amounts of money in lost time for individuals in different Government departments, CFS volunteers and the police, and more particularly in material loss. On Monday, youths broke windows in the

Blackwood Primary School. While SACON officers were repairing those windows, the youths broke windows on the south-western side of the adjoining high school. While SACON personnel were repairing those windows, the youths came in on the other side of that building and broke more windows. The people repairing the windows did not complete the work until 9 p.m. At approximately 9.30, the first building that had broken windows went up in smoke—in other words, within half to three-quarters of an hour of the window replacement work being finished.

The cost of all that is four classrooms. That means that four relocatable classrooms, which were available for other schools that badly needed them (at least in the first term of the next year), have to be brought to the school. The building must be bulldozed. It is solid brick, and the heat was so intense that the nine inch brick walls buckled. I am doubtful whether the concrete slab can be saved, although the departmental officers are talking of saving it.

It was a case of vandalism not only by the youths but by the Government. Within the fortnight before that fire, the water delivery main going into that school was tested, as it was a public building, and it was found that there was not enough water to supply the units. That was known a fortnight before, and a report had gone to the department that the water pressure was not sufficient; more particularly, there was not sufficient quantity of water. Thus 10 units altogether, including the Metropolitan Fire Service, were involved, and they had to lay special delivery hoses from Shepherds Hill Road to the school. One of the mains on Shepherds Hill Road is a 12-inch pumping main which does not always have water in it, so that is not used: the supply was taken from an 8-inch delivery main. The Education Department has known for years that there was not enough water adequately to protect both schools.

Also on the same night, vandals broke the windows at the Blackwood Community Recreation Centre, which is managed by a group of volunteers—sheer vandalism. They also sealed up the locks of some business premises with super glue. It cost \$100 to change the locks on some of the buildings. It is no good claiming on insurance, because the excess is usually \$100 or more, and that is lost if one claims through insurance.

The day has arrived when we should have sensor lights at these schools so the whole area lights up if anyone walks around the building. They also need to have alarms—whether they are silent or loud alarms is another matter. This society cannot afford to have about \$500 000 worth of damage done through sheer vandalism, with the perpetrators being arrogant enough to do it while people are working on-site. We should not condone it any longer. If they are caught, we should not do the same as happened in a case recently where the person was given a short sentence, with minimum parole of four months, retrospective back to July when that person was sentenced in September. It is not acceptable to the community. Business people have gone broke in the Blackwood area because of fires, and the burning and damaging of schools is costing the Government a fortune. At a time when the State is short of money, we should not only take tougher action but also put in the proper sensor and security systems.

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

**Mr HAMILTON (Albert Park):** Nothing stirs me more than road accidents and, given that a member of my family was killed many years ago, I raise this issue with some anger.

I listened intently to the shadow spokesperson on transport who, in relation to a road death that occurred over the holiday weekend, said:

It certainly suggests it's time, and we're coming up to Christmas also where there should be a very concerted, active campaign to make people aware of their responsibilities and the dangers on the road and the Government could easily be using some of the money that it is raising through speed camera fines and also from petrol franchise fees for such a strong campaign.

What angers me is that, unfortunately, some members of this Parliament are prepared to use the tragedy of a road trauma to make a cheap political point. I would be the first one to criticise this Government and the Minister if I thought that we had not been addressing this problem. That is not the case. Over the years, the Government has addressed this problem—and I have served on the Minister's committee—and we are being criticised as a Government, in some cases because members are making cheap political points. This cheap political stunt is a tragedy for the family of these people who have been injured and killed.

Let me put the facts on the record. The road toll has steadily fallen since 1986. In 1986, it was 288; 1987, 256; 1988, 223; 1989, 222; 1990, 225; 1991, 184; 1992, 165 (the lowest in 25 years of statistics); and 1993, 158 until the end of September. Any death on the road is a tragedy. It is unnecessary, and any Government would be doing its best—it does matter whether it was Liberal or Labor, or whatever—to address that problem.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**Mr HAMILTON:** I will ignore that, because it is absolutely stupid stuff. In that period, the number of casualty accidents has risen 9 244 to 6 504, the number of accidents falling from 43 440 to 35 961. But what the Liberal Party and its spokesperson ignores is the fact that, despite these reductions, an extra 23 000 cars and almost 100 000 more licensed drivers are on the road. They ignore those facts. Even though the number of road deaths in this State is coming down, have we heard at any time during this Government's current term of office that it has done a fantastic job? Not once has any mention been made of that fact or any credit given to the Government.

I would have accepted this from the shadow spokesperson if she had had the intestinal fortitude at some stage in the past to say that the Government, the Minister, SGIC and all those responsible had done a decent job. But, no, members opposite merely want to make political capital at someone's expense—death on the road, and that is the tragedy. They ignore the safety programs, Federal blackspot funding, additional 'booze' buses and the provision of 106 breath testing stations. We have been supported by a \$150 000 anti-drink driving campaign and we have pushed for safety devices such as airbags, etc., to be installed in vehicles in this State and nationally. The blackspot program, comprising 280 separate projects, is valued at \$22.35 million.

If the Liberal members can, off the top of their head—because we are approaching an election—organise stunts such as this when someone has been tragically killed or injured on the road, I believe they should stand condemned. I have been on the receiving end of such a tragedy and I know of the trauma families suffer. Let us address this problem in a proper and logical way, not by making cheap statements during a holiday weekend, when I believe the police and the authorities have, through their programs, done everything possible to curb the situation, as has been recognised on radio and television during the past week.

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

**Mr OSWALD (Morphett):** I would like to speak on an issue that has been raised with me in my electorate office by a constituent from Glenelg South concerning access to dental clinics, particularly by people who would normally want and should justifiably receive access through the public health system. I have discussed this matter with the member for Adelaide (Dr Armitage), who totally concurs with my concerns and who is quite happy for me to raise this matter in the House on his behalf also.

The Somerton Park Dental Clinic is situated in my electorate. Schools have access to it as do pensioners, the disadvantaged and unemployed groups. The main concern involves waiting time, and relates, first, to the ability to get on the list so that one is in a position to access the clinic; and, secondly, to the amount of time it takes to get treatment once a person is in that position. As reported to me by my constituent from Glenelg South, it can take up to six or eight months to wait for treatment, and I think that is appalling. It can sometimes take up to 12 months to become enrolled so that one is permitted to attend the clinic. I cannot vouch for the following figure, but my constituent claims that there are 900 people on the waiting list ahead of him. That is an extraordinarily high figure, which may or may not be totally accurate, but for the sake of the concerns that I am expressing this afternoon I think it should be put on the record.

My constituent also reports that, due to cutbacks in staff, the clinic sees only 50 patients a week. No doubt, that figure would have been given to him when he was there. However, the point to be made is that members of the public sector should have access to this clinic for emergency purposes, but the waiting lists are very large. That fact has been conveyed to us by Paul Duke, President of the Australian Dental Association, in a letter published recently in the *Advertiser*. He states, in part:

It is very difficult to get dental treatment after hours in an emergency situation. What can be done if people find themselves in a similar situation? There is no toothache service at any of the public hospitals after hours. Dentists on call will come in only for trauma cases where teeth are broken and for abscesses with facial swelling. The reason for this is that cutbacks for dental staff are very costly for Government dental services.

It will be seen from that letter that the problem exists in both the public and the private sector. I believe that this Government has a responsibility to address the problem of waiting lists for people who seek emergency after hours dental treatment and also the waiting lists for those who seek access to clinics in the normal course of their demands.

Another matter that I wish to raise briefly concerns a lady who lives in Novar Gardens and who had complained in writing to the Executive Officer of the E&WS Department that for the second time in a week the water supply to her home had been discontinued. Her letter pointed out that four days earlier there had been a fault and water had erupted from the roadway and was running down the streets. The E&WS Department had cut off the water to everyone's home without warning, proceeded to do some work, then went away and came back on a second occasion and cut off the water again.

My constituent's husband receives specialist treatment and she says that fortunately her husband had an appointment on the previous day. However, the valid point she makes is that the E&WS Department can and should warn people in the district that it intends to turn off the water. There are

emergency situations, times when people should be given the opportunity to store water for emergency purposes. I think it totally unacceptable that the department should have a system whereby it can do this work without warning people. It would not hurt the department to do one or two streets around the area where the water has erupted and let people know that for a certain period the water supply to their premises will be cut off. I thought that that was the situation, but this incident demonstrates that that does not happen in Novar Gardens.

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

**The Hon. J.P. TRAINER (Walsh):** I rise to express my disappointment with the low standing in which parliamentary institutions and members of Parliament, in particular, are held in the broader community. Parliaments are poorly understood and have a tendency to be portrayed in a bad light by cynical members of the media. Most of those members of the media seem to have little understanding of parliamentary institutions and parliamentarians and hold both in contempt. In doing so, they consciously or unwittingly communicate that contempt to the public. This cynical contempt then has a tendency to feed on itself.

I fear that if civic office is held in contempt then self-respecting persons will not want to aspire to public office or to be part of it. If the media encourage parliamentary institutions to be held in contempt, it is possible that only contemptible people will consider taking parliamentary office in the future. There are many reasons for this, but I have limited time and will touch on only a few. One is the natural tendency of the community to be hostile and critical of political institutions at a time of worldwide economic recession. Another is the poor behaviour of a small minority of parliamentarians at State level and a much larger group of Federal members of Parliament, whose abuse of parliamentary procedures reflects on the standing of all members of Parliament, both State and Federal.

That poor public behaviour was seen by many to have come to a head yesterday. In an atmosphere of terrible abuse and disruption from the Opposition, the Prime Minister, rather wimpishly I felt, curtailed Question Time. It is rather tragic that someone who was able to perform so well as a statesman on his recent overseas trip (when he canvassed trade issues of great importance to the nation) then reverted to a rather disconcerting use of abuse on his return, using language which tends to demean Parliament. I do not know why he needed to do so when he can be quite humorous and effective without resorting to such language. Paul Keating at his best is very good, but he seems to be unaware, when his language is bad, of the impact that has on ordinary Australians.

One side effect of that is that the cause of republicanism has received quite a setback. Someone remarked yesterday that the republic is Paul Keating's GST. I tend to feel that it is the other way around, that Paul Keating is the republic's GST. Furthermore, recent Speakers in the House of Representatives have a lot to answer for regarding the way in which MPs have bandied around words such as 'liar' while members question each other's veracity, and for the way in which so much of the debate, from what I have seen on television, seems to be conducted in the second person with members referring to each other as 'you' instead of directing their remarks through the Chair.

That bad behaviour in the House of Representatives lowers the esteem in which all parliamentarians are held.

Furthermore, there is the way in which the Executives of many Governments of all political persuasions, particularly since the beginning of the 1980s, have tended to aggravate the low standing of parliamentary institutions because of the historic tension between the Executive and the Legislature. This is particularly so at State level because in many of the States finances have been tight and the ordinary backbenchers are often not provided with resources or opportunities to carry out their duties in their electorates, to raise issues in Parliament or to monitor the actions of the Public Service. That last point, of course, is rather important, because after all members of the public have elected members of Parliament in order to protect themselves from the unelected bureaucrats.

In the course of carrying out those duties, especially the duties of raising issues in Parliament, members can be hindered by the media's determination to concentrate almost entirely on the leadership of the major Parties. They tend to treat the Parliament only as an alternative arena to the television studios for gladiatorial jousts between leaders. They tend to not treat it as a forum for raising issues and adjusting the community's political agenda. The media instead tend to treat Government as a presidential-type contest and they seem at times to have no real concept of the Westminster system on which they are reporting. The backbenchers tend to not exist for the media unless they fall into one of three categories: first, they could be a backbencher who is in dispute with his or her political Party; secondly, they could be involved in some scandal; or, thirdly, a member of Parliament might undertake some bizarre action, such as announcing he killed someone in South-East Asia.

If they fall into one of those three categories they get a lot of attention from the media. Unless a backbencher goes down one of those three paths of rebellion, scandal or eccentricity, they do not exist. If they conscientiously carry out what they are elected for—to represent their constituents and help them, and to seriously debate issues—they are non-persons. I have often felt that there are times when we might as well replace most members of Parliament with cardboard cut-outs that could be moved around for divisions.

**Mr GUNN (Eyre):** I wish to explain in more detail the matter which I raised at Question Time today, that is, the unfortunate situation in which a number of subcontractors who have performed work on the Port Augusta gaol now find themselves through no fault of their own, but as a result of a serious fault in the system which needs to be urgently redressed so that it will not happen again. The unfortunate thing is that this is not the first time it has happened. A similar situation occurred in relation to the building of the police station at Ceduna, when a number of contractors in my district missed out badly through no fault of their own. Unfortunately, it appears nothing has been learnt from that exercise. I wish to read to the House a letter I received from a contractor at Port Augusta dated 1 October 1993. The letter states:

We wish to register our concern re the letting of contracts to Adelaide firms for the development of the Port Augusta gaol. Today we learn that Bisslands Constructions have been placed in the hands of the liquidators. This will be the second time we have suffered from non-payment of services supplied. The first stage developers did not pay accounts for \$6 500 (Cosmic Plumbing who subcontracted to Sabemo). SACON and Sabemo were made aware of the above and of course were not interested.

Now the main contractor Bisslands have pulled the same stunt, leaving us and other local suppliers lamenting. To add to the

situation we have been informed that the owners of Cosmic Plumbing, who went bankrupt, are still trading but in a different name. It seems to us that SACON are accepting the lowest tender regardless of the firm's ability to perform.

We feel that the Government must also share the blame because of the inadequacies of the system:

1. For instance, if a builder contracts to do work for more than \$5 000 to a member of the public he must by law take out indemnity insurance (in case of bankruptcy of the builder) and he must produce this insurance cover before council approval is given.

2. With Government jobs there should be some inbuilt guarantee from the Government that subcontractors are protected.

Please register the strongest possible protest in Parliament, as we believe that the Government should stand by the subcontractors. Also, are there any avenues available to recover moneys from owners of Cosmic Plumbing?

Your advice is awaited.

I call upon the Government to immediately alter the arrangement to ensure that people who in good faith have contracted and supplied materials and labour for these sorts of contracts are not the innocent victims. They should be protected by a form of insurance or some other measure which will guarantee that the subcontractors and, therefore, also their employees are protected. A number of people have approached me about this matter. I understand it relates to contractors from not only Port Augusta but from other places in South Australia, including Whyalla and Adelaide, who through no fault of their own have been placed in this very difficult situation. The Government, through SACON, should ensure that these companies not only have the building expertise but the financial stability and resources to meet their obligations at the end of these contracts.

This particular matter has delayed the completion of the gaol. I understand that this delay will not help the good management which has been taking place there; it will not alleviate the lack of space in police cells in other parts of this State, and these people are the innocent victims. I believe the time is long overdue for bringing this sort of behaviour to an end once and for all.

As I said earlier, I had lengthy negotiations with the Minister who is now at the table in relation to the subcontractors who missed out on building the police station at Ceduna. Now the same thing has taken place with painters and plumbers and other people at the Port Augusta gaol. I refer this particular letter to the Minister so that he may be aware of the views of these people who have suffered badly.

*Mrs Hutchison interjecting:*

**Mr GUNN:** Well, that is good. I sincerely hope that the members check to ensure; indeed, there are one or two things in the letter that I would refer. The people who have spoken to me have left me in no doubt that this situation needs to be addressed. I will be discussing this matter with one or two of my colleagues who in the near future will have responsibility for these matters, because I do not believe that any of these contractors should be given contracts unless they carry adequate insurance to protect subcontractors and, therefore, their employees in the situation I have described.

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

**The Hon. M.K. MAYES (Minister of Environment and Natural Resources):** I take the opportunity today as a local member to bring a matter before the House which is of concern to me—and I think it would be of concern to colleagues, particularly on my side of the House—in relation to the activities of one member on the other side and, of course, in addition, the Liberal Party in this State.

Unfortunately, for some time now I have been engaged in a matter with a former local councillor, now no longer a resident, of the City of Unley who involved himself in taking me to court alleging that in a letter I had defamed his character and person. He had put out a letter to a number of residents in my electorate, and I followed it up with a definite number of letters to about 50 households and units in a particular street in Black Forest explaining my position and outlining why I had written a letter about the matter.

Unfortunately, this particular local councillor decided to take this matter to court and, as a consequence, it went before the Local Court. In due course the magistrate, because of a particular phrase I had used—that this former councillor had a ‘political agenda’—found against me and for the councillor. The magistrate said in his judgment:

I am bound to conclude and find that the legal principles regarding application of the defence of qualified privilege do not apply in this case . . . I conclude that Mayes’ defence of qualified privilege is also defeated.

As a consequence of that somewhat esoteric and unusual judgment, the matter went before the Supreme Court on appeal whereupon Justice Perry handed down a judgment in my favour. I may say, not from my opinion but that of learned counsel who are friends of mine, and also from contacts, that they regard it as a text book decision on the part of Justice Perry in the area of defamation. As a consequence, bearing in mind that the cost at this stage would have been in the order of \$20 000 or \$30 000 to either party, the ex-councillor concerned decided to take the matter to the Full Court of the Supreme Court on further appeal. On 17 September 1993 the Chief Justice, Justice Mohr and Justice Bollen found again in my favour. In other words, they found that Justice Perry’s judgment was sound and upheld it.

The costs now amount to something between \$30 000 and \$40 000. I am curious to know why a councillor should pursue to this length the issue of a simple letter that went to 45 or 50 residents in one street in Black Forest. I would guess that his costs would now stand at between \$30 000 and \$40 000 in this matter. It is pretty extraordinary when one considers that it involves a statement in respect of a political agenda. It is well known from a source very close to this individual that he is not a supporter of the Labor Party, and I want that very clearly on the record.

**The Hon. J.P. Trainer:** What political colour was he—black, white or brindle?

**The Hon. M.K. MAYES:** Well, the interesting thing is that on the day of judgment—17 September—the member for Hayward happened to be in the court. My counsel advised me that he thought that he and the counsel representing the ex-councillor were the only two people in the court. However, when he turned around after receiving Justice Mohr judgment, he discovered that the member for Hayward was also present. I ask: what interest has the member for Hayward in this matter? Why was he in that court to hear that decision? A number of rumours have been circulating.

*Mr D.S. Baker interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.K. MAYES:** What I demand very clearly of the Liberal Party—and the member for Victoria can take note of this—is that the Leader come into this House and deny any involvement of the Liberal Party or any organisation—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.K. MAYES:**—or person connected with the Liberal Party in supporting the actions taken by this councillor. I demand that, because there should be no situation where

this House is misled. Finally, I hope that what happened on that day spoils the member for Hayward’s enjoyment—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member’s time has expired. I point out that the member for Victoria has been interjecting constantly, and if he refuses to take notice of the Chair he will find himself in grave difficulties.

#### MEMBER’S REMARKS

**Mr BRINDAL (Hayward):** Mr Deputy Speaker, I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

**Mr BRINDAL:** The member for Unley has made a number of assertions concerning my presence in the Full Court on the day the judgment was handed down. That is completely correct—I was there. The member for Unley said that I spoke to counsel representing the ex-councillor. That is completely incorrect. The one reason I was in court, as the member for Unley well knows, is that the honourable member has accused me of libel against him that is the subject of a current action. I was in the court with my counsel—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! We have to be very careful because, if the matter is before the courts, it is *sub judice* and we should not be discussing it. The member for Hayward.

**Mr BRINDAL:** I am merely explaining that my presence in the court was solely because I was there with my counsel to hear the judgment in a previous matter in which the member for Unley was involved. I can give this House my absolute assurance that I have had nothing to do with the action—

**The Hon. T.H. HEMMINGS:** I rise on a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. The member for Hayward is now debating the issue rather than giving a personal explanation to the House.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I cannot uphold the point of order. The honourable member has a right to explain to the House where he thinks he has been misrepresented. It is becoming a rather long explanation and I ask him to bring it to a conclusion.

**Mr BRINDAL:** I simply wish to indicate to the House that I have no involvement with the ex-councillor or his case and I know nothing about it apart from the judgment I was involved in because of my interest.

#### SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

**The Hon. M.K. MAYES (Minister of Environment and Natural Resources):** I move:

That the committee have leave to sit during the sitting of the House tomorrow.

Motion carried.

#### CONSTITUTION (ELECTORAL DISTRICTS BOUNDARIES COMMISSION) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 8 September. Page 621.)

**Mr ATKINSON (Spence):** This Bill seeks to allow an appeal on the merits against a finding of the Electoral Districts Boundaries Commission. The reason this Bill is before us is that the current Opposition does not believe that



the electoral system that prevailed before 1991 was fair. The electoral system that prevailed at that time required electorates of equal size or at least electorates within a certain tolerance. Those boundaries were drawn by an independent commission and they were reviewed after every three elections.

The commission was independent and its findings were subject to appeal only on a point of law. The Opposition was not happy with that arrangement because it believed that, although the electorates had to be of equal size and although they were drawn by an independent commission, the pattern of Liberal Party support across South Australia rendered those boundaries unfair.

*Mr D.S. Baker interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I ask the member for Spence not to reply to interjections, and I ask him to address the Chair.

**Mr ATKINSON:** The member for Victoria's point is well made and understood by this side. After the 1989 election, the Opposition claimed that it had been deprived of power; it had been deprived of a majority in this House even though it claimed it won a majority of the two-Party preferred vote. So, negotiations ensued between the major Parties and the Independents, a select committee sat and reported, and a recommendation was made to change the system.

Whereas under the old system community of interest had been a major criterion in drawing electoral boundaries, as a result of the bipartisan select committee recommendations, community of interest was downgraded in favour of electoral fairness. In future, the boundaries were to be drawn in such a way as to obtain justice as between the major political Parties, that is, the political Parties that contest and win House of Assembly electorates.

However, for these changes to take effect, a referendum of South Australians was required. So, in February 1991, South Australians went to the polls to change the electoral system so that fairness between the major political Parties would now be a criterion in drawing electoral boundaries. Both major political Parties supported a 'Yes' vote for that referendum. Although I think most South Australians were not clear about the subject, the overwhelming majority dutifully voted 'Yes'.

So, the changes that were agreed between the major Parties became law, and they became a very special kind of law—a law that was entrenched and could be amended only by a further referendum. At the time these changes were debated in this place the member for Eyre was prominent in opposing some aspects of those changes. Indeed, the member for Eyre did not want a referendum to change the electoral arrangements; the member for Eyre wanted more politicians. He wanted the size of the House of Assembly increased so there would be more politicians on the public payroll, and by putting more politicians on the public payroll a redistribution would automatically be triggered avoiding the need for a referendum to change the electoral system. So, the views of the member for Eyre are well known.

Fewer than three years after the people of South Australia voted to change these very important electoral and constitutional arrangements the member for Eyre has come into this House with a Bill to change them again. His proposed change is that people who are aggrieved by a redistribution of electoral boundaries by the independent commission can appeal against that redistribution on the merits. They have always been able to appeal on a point of law, but the member for Eyre wants those people to be able to disagree with the

commissioners on the merits and appeal, asking for different boundaries to be drawn. I oppose that proposal, and I do so for many reasons.

The member for Eyre makes great play of it being somehow a right of natural justice that an appeal should be allowed, and that is so if we are talking about an appeal on a point of law. However, there is no natural justice in respect of having one's case reheard again and again on the merits. The member for Eyre says that, when this Parliament passes laws setting up various tribunals or providing for people to make judgments, it adheres to one of the traditions of the Westminster system, which is that people have a right of appeal, and that is why we have an appeal system in the courts. I am not sure whether it is one of the traditions of the Westminster system, but it has certainly never been part of our tradition that people can appeal on the merits and have their case reheard, so I reject that point by the member for Eyre.

Through this Bill the member for Eyre seeks to put community of interest into the Act by the back door. The redistribution to which he objects most is Kangaroo Island's being placed in the seat of Flinders. That is the real source of his grievance. That was an inevitable outcome of his own Party's attitude to the redistribution. In effect, it was the Liberal Party that put Kangaroo Island in Flinders by undermining the principle of community of interest. This side of the House would have been happy to go on with the principle of community of interest being high up in the list of criteria with respect to electoral redistribution, but the Liberal Party said that it did not want community of interest to have a prominent role in making electoral redistributions—it wanted fairness between the major Parties.

So, in the Far North, instead of having the cities of Port Augusta and Port Pirie together as they have been traditionally, with this new fairness principle we had the Port Pirie seat stretching into the hinterland, the Port Augusta seat stretching as far as the Northern Territory border, and Whyalla going up as far as Roxby Downs and beyond. So community of interest was undermined. It seems to me that the member for Eyre is complaining about something that his own Party did.

I also oppose this Bill because it undermines certainty. It seems to me that when a restriction is published there will always be members of Parliament who will be aggrieved by it, and they will want to make adjustments to the boundaries. The trouble is that, when you make adjustments to an electoral redistribution or where you seek to appeal it on the merits, it has effects across the whole State. You cannot change only one boundary: you have to change many, so it has a domino effect and the appeals may be endless. It seems to me that very few people, apart from politicians, are really concerned about electoral redistributions. This is a politician's Bill for politicians by a member who wants more politicians on the public payroll. If this Bill were explained to South Australians, they would reject it overwhelmingly.

**Mr GUNN (Eyre):** We now know why the honourable member does not practice at the bar. We have had it explained to us clearly and precisely. If the honourable member were to have advanced an argument such as he has today in defending someone at the bar, he would have only ever had one client, because he failed to either recognise or understand that my proposal is identical to the Commonwealth Act. I have not heard one member of Parliament or one person complain about that particular process.

**Mr S.G. Evans:** Particularly Labor members.

**Mr GUNN:** In particular, Labor members, who at the last redistribution in Western Australia used it to argue against the draft proposals. We know that the reason the honourable member opposes it is that there was a built-in advantage to the Labor Party with the previous redistribution, and there is a built-in advantage with this redistribution. That is why the honourable member does not want to see justice and fairness. What is wrong with the community of South Australia having the very simple right to have their objections heard when a draft proposal is put on public display? No matter what the honourable member or his colleagues have to say, as sure as we sit here this proposal will be put in the Constitution Act in the very near future. They can defeat my Bill today, but it will not be long before they do not have the numbers.

The honourable member can go on for his 10 minutes, not address the subject at all and raise all sorts of red herrings, but he cannot escape from the fact that in any decent society there is normally a right of appeal against important decisions.

**Mr Atkinson:** Not on the merits—on a point of law.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Spence to order.

**Mr GUNN:** Therefore, this is a fair, reasonable and just proposal. It provides that the citizens of this State will not be sidetracked and will not have their rights completely ignored. I do not believe that the judge who made the decision the last time took any notice of the 50-plus-1 provision which is in the Constitution Act. Because there was no effective appeal mechanism, the people of Kangaroo Island—and this was very much against the grain—were attached to Eyre Peninsula, and there was nothing they could do because they did not have the financial resources to take the matter before the courts. This proposal simply gives ordinary South Australian citizens the opportunity to put their case when they believe that fairness and justice is being denied. It will mean that they will not have to line the pockets of members of the legal fraternity, such as the member for Spence, but will be able to state their case in a simple, fair and reasonable fashion. I thought that someone who purports to represent the Right Wing of the Labor Party believed in fairness, decency and democracy, but the honourable member has clearly indicated today that he does not. We know why he does not practise at the bar. I commend the Bill to the House and I say that, if it is not successful today, I am sure that it will be successful in the not too distant future.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clause 1—'Short title.'

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

#### **STAMP DUTIES (REFINANCING OF LOANS) AMENDMENT BILL**

Adjourned debate on second reading.  
(Continued from 25 August. Page 481.)

**Mr HOLLOWAY (Mitchell):** I reply on behalf of the Government. The member for Murray-Mallee introduced a similar Bill in the last session of Parliament which was rejected by the House on the third reading on 5 May this year. The Bill introduced by the member for Murray-Mallee would have brought about a wide range of stamp duty exemptions, including an exemption from duty on the refinancing of certain loans.

In my speech on that Bill, I made the following points in opposition to it. The flow-on consequences of the blanket exemption needed to be considered carefully so that no loopholes were created. I pointed out that, following deregulation of the financial sector, there had been changes within the marketplace and that innovations, including the absorption of stamp duty on refinancing, were a reality. I said that interstate experience in relation to stamp duty exemptions was that it had been difficult to measure whether a genuine refinancing had taken place. The point I then made was that the Government would need to look at the problems that were facing the rural sector and find a more appropriate way of addressing them. Essentially, the Government's position has not changed from that time.

The current Bill proposed by the member for Murray-Mallee deals solely with the refinancing of certain loans and restricts the scope of the exemption to a refinancing mortgage that is over the same or substantially the same property. It provided that the amount of the secured loan must not exceed \$200 000 and that the person taking out the mortgage must be a natural person. In that sense, the Bill contains two restrictions that are more severe than those proposed originally by the member for Murray-Mallee—that is, that the mortgage cannot exceed \$200 000 and that the person taking out the mortgage must be a natural person. In another sense, the provision proposed by the member for Murray-Mallee is wider, because it would apply not only to primary production or commercial fishing but also to any refinancing loan of a natural person where the secured mortgage was less than \$200 000.

In opposition to the original Bill introduced by the member for Murray-Mallee, a number of speakers (and I was one) stated their reasons, and those arguments are still valid. There has been continuing competition between financial institutions, and this and other factors have led to a continuing decrease in interest rates; the marketing of various deals to win business has also had the effect of reducing rates. There is no doubt that interest rates are now much lower than they were in the past. Indeed, in answer to my question today, the Minister of Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations pointed out there had been 12 cuts in interest rates for home owners in the past few years. Interest rates are now a lot lower across the board than they were a year or two ago.

It is also true that financial institutions are actively encouraging people to refinance loans held with other financial institutions. As proof of that, I cite a letter that was circulated by the National Bank, being sent out from the Adelaide office to a number of lenders of that bank. It stated:

As your personal banker at the National, I thought you might be interested to know about the special offer we currently have on National tailored home loans. If you have a home loan at another bank or building society, you may be able to save thousands of dollars in interest costs and pay off your loan years sooner by switching to a National tailored home loan. How much will it cost you to switch your home loan to the National?

The following part of the letter is printed in bold type:

We are currently offering to pay all Government charges usually incurred on refinancing your home loan to the National.

The letter continues:

This includes Government stamp duty on the mortgage and all Government registration and discharge fees relating to your old and new mortgage, other than the other financial institution's charges.

I think that letter indicates that some banks are already absorbing stamp duty as part of refinancing; indeed, they are

offering that as part of the package to attract new borrowers. That highlights that the market is already dealing with the problem that this Bill is to resolve.

In any case, where stamp duty is incurred, that cost is relatively small compared with the savings via the interest rate that will be made through refinancing. In his speech, the member for Murray-Mallee gave several examples. First, savings of 2, 3 or in some cases 4 per cent, on a loan of \$200 000, would translate into interest savings each year of \$4 000, \$6 000 or \$8 000 respectively compared with stamp duty costs of \$700 on a \$200 000 loan. I point out that stamp duty is .25 per cent on the first \$10 000 and .35 per cent on amounts above \$10 000. In other words, a cost of \$700 stamp duty is much less than the saving that would be made from refinancing the loan. So, it is a minor cost and a minor consideration in refinancing compared with the savings.

The other point that needs to be refuted was the claim made by the member for Murray-Mallee that finance lending business is leaving South Australia; in fact, the honourable member actually encouraged borrowers to go interstate for their loans because, he claimed, stamp duty was less there. That is simply not true. The main rate in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia is .4 per cent compared with .35 per cent in South Australia. If borrowers were to take the advice of the member for Murray-Mallee and go interstate, they would actually incur higher stamp duty costs than in this State. However, it does have to be acknowledged that a significant group of farmers are paying high interest rates because financial institutions have made an assessment, based upon the farmer's particular financial situation, of the risk, and for this group interest rates will remain high while they are considered to be at a significant risk of default. That is a problem within the banking sector of which members of the Rural Finance Select Committee, such as you, Mr Deputy Speaker, would be well aware. However, that is not a matter that needs to be addressed through stamp duty concessions: rather, it is a problem with the banking industry generally.

It must be acknowledged, as I said in the debate on the earlier Bill, that the plight of farmers, particularly those involved in the wheat, barley and wool areas, has been particularly difficult, and that must be addressed. What I can say since my last address on this matter is that the Government is actively considering a relief scheme that would be administratively operated to address the problems faced by farm owners in terms of renegotiation of loans.

The Government is looking at a method which was structured so that it could operate for a defined period to deal with the specific difficult period we are in but which would not leave a permanent revenue hole once it was no longer necessary to continue such a scheme. So, by that means, it would provide the greatest assistance in the form of stamp duty relief to those farmers who were in the greatest need. Such a scheme could be operated by the State Taxation Office in conjunction with the Department of Primary Industries; indeed, such a scheme is currently being considered by those two departments. So, in other words, the Government is actively considering ways of addressing this problem, but it would be far better to do that through an administrative scheme that was restricted to primary producers rather than by passing this legislation, which could put a huge hole in the Government's revenue bucket, because not only would it cover farmer and rural groups but also it would extend to a whole number of people who may not be in need of assistance.

The matter of whether further Government action needs to be taken for groups other than farmers could be examined further in light of the current favourable trends in interest rates and the comparatively small component that stamp duty represents. However, that is something we need to look at. I would like to assure the House that the Government is actively looking at a way that will address the specific needs of the rural community but in such a way that will not present a continuing dent in our revenue.

**Mr VENNING** secured the adjournment of the debate.

### EXPIATION FEES

**Mr GUNN (Eyre):** I move:

That the regulations under the Summary Offences Act 1953 relating to traffic expiation fees made on 1 July 1993 and laid on the table of this House on 3 August be disallowed.

It is my clear view that the collection of on-the-spot fines is becoming nothing more than a revenue raising measure by the State Government, which is cash strapped. These increases are neither desirable nor warranted and in no way will they effect safety on the roads. They cause personal hardship to normal law abiding citizens who commit some minor traffic offence and have one of these on-the-spot tickets issued to them. I believe a caution should be given in relation to these offences. I have been told that discussions are taking place between various Government departments in relation to these fees. However, this Parliament is not aware of that course of action.

I have suggested before—and I say again—that the increase in the number of on-the-spot fines is causing the police, who were held in high regard by the public, to be held in contempt, because there is a general view that the police have been issued with orders to issue as many on-the-spot fines as possible for the most trifling and minor offence. On the last occasion when I brought before the House a Bill on this matter, we were subjected to the nonsense of the member for Napier, who did not quite understand the information supplied to him by the Police Department. However, this motion proposes that we call a halt to what has been nothing more than an excessive desire of the Government to use the Police Department as an agent for the State Taxation Office. Certainly, in many cases the name on the side of these vehicles should be changed to 'Collector of public revenue, agency of the State Taxation Office', because that is all they are.

The system is so pitted against the average law abiding citizen that it is impossible for them to defend themselves. The cheapest way out for them is to pay these on-the-spot fines. It is too easy to issue these fines to unsuspecting members of the public, most of whom do not know their rights and who are somewhat intimidated when they are approached by a police officer—not because the police officer is intimidating in his actions but because the very presence of a police officer in a uniform causes them concern. Therefore, they are not aware of their rights.

I believe that the excessive use of these on-the-spot fines has gone completely beyond the original intention of the law. Obviously, these matters will have to be reviewed, because too many tickets have been issued. Last year the Auditor-General's Report gave a breakdown of the number of infringement notices issued, a comparison being made with the previous year. For some unknown reason, this year the

Auditor-General's Report has not referred to that; there is no mention of it.

**Mr S.G. Evans:** You're going to write and ask him why.

**Mr GUNN:** Well, I am going to write to the Auditor-General to ask him why he has not given that information, because it is information that the Parliament should have and is entitled to have, and it should not be hidden. An interesting document on the last reading list from the library is headed 'Highway robbery'. I recommend it for your serious perusal, Mr Speaker, because it shows the increase in the number of on-the-spot fines issued since their inception.

We all recall how the former member for Stuart performed; he named police officers in this House soon after the scheme was implemented. I wonder what he would be saying today if he continued to adopt that line; he would be on his feet all the time if he wanted to bring to the attention of this Parliament the misuse of this system—the over issuing of tickets, the revenue collection and the grossly unfair way in which normal law abiding citizens have been unduly and harshly penalised. The law is never meant to be enforced in a harsh and unreasonable manner, but it is enforced in that way in many of these cases, and in my judgment the time has come to say 'Enough is enough.'

I commend the motion to the House, and I call upon the Government, those administering the scheme, to use a bit of commonsense. I have been through the exercise of asking questions about whether police officers are given written or verbal instructions, and I have been given all sorts of information. A couple of weeks ago, I spoke to a recently retired police officer who is now running a business in my electorate, and what he had to say to me was very interesting. He indicated clearly that you were frowned upon and less than popular if you did not issue a fair number of these tickets.

**Mr S.G. Evans:** If you're a police officer.

**Mr GUNN:** If you're a police officer. He let the cat right out of the bag, because he did not agree with it himself. Recently, another police officer said to me, 'If I am transferred to the traffic section, that's it for me.' The police themselves are unhappy with the situation. I commend the motion. I wish to address a number of other motions today. I raised this matter on behalf of the public who are concerned about what is going on.

**The Hon. T.H. HEMMINGS** secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### COURT AND TRANSCRIPT FEES

**Mr GUNN (Eyre):** I move:

That the regulations under the Supreme Court Act 1935 relating to court and transcript fees made on 1 July 1993 and laid on the table of this House on 3 August 1993 be disallowed.

I hope that most members of this House believe in democracy and a fair go. If people of limited means are brought before the courts, surely they are entitled to have the opportunity to read the transcript of evidence given against them: it should not be a luxury or the preserve of a few wealthy people or those who are funded by an outside body. The current arrangement is an absolute disgrace, and if members take the trouble to ascertain the cost of obtaining the transcript of a full day's court hearing I am sure they will agree.

Those of us who have had the privilege to serve on the Legislative Review Committee, who are aware of the evidence that has been given and the concerns of those people

who practise in the courts, will have come to the same conclusion I have reached. It appears that the only persons who are against this proposition are the Attorney-General and his advisers. Why should an individual have to pay \$500 to \$600 a day to get the transcript of a court case? The cost is absolutely outrageous. I do not intend to say any more on the subject, because hopefully in the next few days the very well researched report of the Legislative Review Committee, which addresses a number of these matters, will be tabled in this House. I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr McKEE** secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### FIREARMS

**Mr GUNN (Eyre):** I move:

That the general regulations under the Firearms Act 1977 made on 29 April and laid on the table of this House on 4 May 1993 be disallowed.

The purpose of this motion is to try to convince the Government that the greatest thing in legislation, whether it be subordinate or general legislation, is commonsense with a clear and precise understanding of what you are doing when you bring forward regulations that have both a short and long-term effect.

These regulations are a hotchpotch of nonsense. They have caused great inconvenience to the public and the law-abiding gun owners of this State and will do absolutely nothing to prevent criminals from owning firearms or misusing them. As I think Chief Superintendent Brown said in a radio interview, these regulations and this new Act will not stop criminals from illegally obtaining firearms. If that is the case, why are these regulations before us today? Did the Minister clearly understand what he was agreeing to? I doubt it. Why has he been so pedantic? Why has he not accepted the reasonable, logical and sensible arguments that have been put to him regarding these regulations? Why has he proceeded at all costs? Is it because he did not understand the advice given to him by the Police Department? Is he prepared to agree to everything that the police officers have recommended? They are not unanimous in their view of what should take place. Did the Minister not take enough trouble to research this matter?

He will need more coaching than he will receive from the member for Gilles to get out of this one, to absolve himself from the political and practical mess that he has inflicted upon decent law-abiding citizens of South Australia: the firearms lobby and gun owners, people who belong to sporting clubs. They are not criminals, and they do not set out deliberately to break the law. The overwhelming majority of them are ordinary, decent, hard working, good living South Australian citizens. All they want is to be able to continue, in a sensible way, to participate in their sport and to be involved in practical hunting. People in the rural sector need to be able to use firearms in the course of their duties without being hindered by Government bureaucracy. That is all they want: nothing unusual, no great demands.

However, what has happened? We now have these new regulations under which people are sent out renewal notices which, in many cases, cannot be filled in accurately by the law-abiding citizen. These regulations are turning normal law-abiding citizens into people who are liable to transgress because they will not part with their firearms. In some cases, they cannot accurately fill in these forms. They have been given misleading advice and incorrect information when they

have telephoned the hotline. I will cite an example. If you own a Ruger 10 shot semi-automatic .22 rifle and if in response to the questionnaire you state on the form that you want to use it for hunting when in actual fact you want to use it for target shooting, you will have committed an offence, because you are not allowed to use it for that purpose. It is not possible to zero in rifles. That is how stupid this is. That is what this Minister and members of the Legislative Review Committee have agreed to because they either did not understand or did not want to understand.

Why is it necessary to have these foolish permit arrangements for the purchase of ammunition? I will cite two examples. Probably the most isolated shop in South Australia is the one situated on the Maralinga lands in Oak Valley. The person responsible for running the store went to the supplier of ammunition to buy some .22 and .243 bullets. The supplier said, 'I can't supply them; you'll have to go to the police station.' He went to the police station and was told he could not buy them. He could not buy a few .22 bullets. That is what this Minister has done, and that is how stupid the law is.

The few people who live at Oak Valley, who want to shoot the odd kangaroo or rabbit in order to live, cannot buy .22 bullets because of this Government. Last week when I was at Coober Pedy a gentleman said to me, 'What's wrong? Why do we have these stupid new firearms laws? Last weekend the elderly people could not buy .22 bullets to shoot kangaroos. What's wrong?' I said, 'This is the intelligent Government that you have. They've done it. They were warned, but they wouldn't listen.' The Minister and every member of the Labor Party present today will have to wear this because it is nonsense.

They are two of many examples which could be given regarding these laws and the way in which they are being implemented. There is no sense in all this. I pose the question to the Minister: is one person who may have a permit to get ammunition to be allowed to buy on behalf of the whole community, say, 5 000 .22 bullets and hand them out? We do not yet know the answer. We want to know, because that is what will happen. Not only will there be a black market in bullets, there will be a black market in firearms. These regulations will make it even more so, because instead of going through the stupid system of getting permission to purchase a firearm people will bring them in from interstate. They cannot be stopped from going to Tasmania or elsewhere and legally buying firearms and bringing them into this State. There is no law against it.

*The Hon. M.K. Mayes interjecting:*

**Mr GUNN:** It is correct. The Minister is so naive.

*The Hon. M.K. Mayes interjecting:*

**Mr GUNN:** I am not talking crap.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr GUNN:** That is how arrogant and insincere the Minister is. He has accused me of talking crap. I take strong exception to it. He has reflected upon me.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Chair is not sure whether the honourable member is asking for a withdrawal. The Chair is not even sure whether the comment was directed to the honourable member.

**Mr GUNN:** I am very happy to let it go. I will let the people of South Australia make a judgment in relation to this matter at the earliest opportunity. The Liberal Party in Government will remodel these regulations so that people will not have to go through the nonsense of getting a permit to reasonably purchase ammunition and long arms. We will

simplify this stupid form which has currently been issued to people.

*Mr Ferguson interjecting:*

**Mr GUNN:** It was your Government. It was the Labor Party which let the AK47s into this country. They did nothing about it. Senator Tait was the one. So, do not start talking nonsense to me. It was not the Liberal Party: it was under your administration. They could have stopped it but did nothing about it, and they are using that as a pretext to try to impose unreasonable conditions on decent, law-abiding citizens with these foolish regulations.

I call upon the Minister to suspend these regulations and put them in a sensible form so that decent, law-abiding citizens are not inconvenienced, are not harassed and are allowed to go about their sport or other activities they are involved in without this fear of losing their firearms—losing them because they do not qualify or because of the hassles I have already mentioned (there will be many others) in relation to the purchase of ammunition.

Why have we gone down this track when the last five, six or seven murders in this State have been committed with knives, not by shooting? We only have to read the *Messenger* to see what has happened: is the Minister now going to ban knives? The sensible thing to do is allow those people who currently own firearms to renew their licences if they have not been convicted of any serious offences. They should be able to purchase firearms.

*The Hon. M.K. Mayes interjecting:*

**Mr GUNN:** I am not out of time. The only one who will be out of luck will be the Minister.

*The Hon. M.K. Mayes interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister is out of order and the member for Eyre will direct his remarks through the Chair.

**Mr GUNN:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. His colleagues in Queensland have not gone down this track. They are not going to upset all their shooting fraternity as the honourable member has done. They are politically far more astute than he is.

So, in conclusion: the Minister has one last chance to apply commonsense—if he does not, then the incoming Liberal Government will, without weakening the need to deal with criminal activities. Commonsense is the greatest thing that governments can apply.

*The Hon. M.K. Mayes interjecting:*

**Mr GUNN:** The Minister has said to me across the House that the blood will be on my hands. That is outrageous, untrue and unworthy of any Minister. He is unfit to be a Minister, and the electorate of Unley will deal with him as it should.

*The Hon. M.K. Mayes interjecting:*

**Mr GUNN:** I am very happy in Eyre.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Eyre will come to order. The debate has nothing to do with Eyre or Unley. Time has expired, anyhow.

**Mr McKEE** secured the adjournment of the debate.

## ECONOMIC AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Adjourned debate on motion of Mr Becker:

That the seventh report of the Economic and Finance Committee on an inquiry into the use of external consultants by Government departments and statutory authorities be noted.

(Continued from 8 September. Page 624.)

**Mr HOLLOWAY (Mitchell):** I believe that the report of the Economic and Finance Committee into the use of external consultants by Government departments and statutory authorities is one of the most important that that committee has made and, together with the report into executive salaries (which will be released later this week), I believe it will make a very important contribution towards the better running of our statutory authorities and the public sector generally.

The report on consultants was particularly important because it undertook a thorough review of all the Government departments and statutory authorities that had used consultants. It made a number of important recommendations that will improve the use of consultants in the future. Many problems were uncovered concerning the use of consultants, and various authorities responded in a variety of ways. It was quite clear that some Government departments and authorities had very good procedures in place for engaging and monitoring consultants, but in a number of other departments the situation was certainly less than was desired. The committee recommended greatly improved procedures so that throughout the public sector generally there would be much better monitoring and consistency in the engagement of consultants.

As I said, the report was one of the most detailed that the Economic and Finance Committee has undertaken and it took some months to complete. The member for Hanson spoke on this matter previously and indicated how certain authorities had not been particularly diligent in keeping records and monitoring the progress of consultants. The most important thing, of course, is that the recommendations made by the Economic and Finance Committee be adopted, because significant among those recommendations are much better procedures for checking consultants. It appeared that, while the committee was actually undertaking its investigations, there had been a large drop-off in the number of consultants actually being employed by Government.

Indeed, I think it was clear that a number of departments were waiting for the report to come out to set these new guidelines. The very existence of the report in itself was sufficient to ensure that much better procedures would be undertaken by departments, because from the time that the report was initially undertaken by the Economic and Finance Committee it was clear that a number of changes to Government guidelines and policies had been made, all of which would seek to ensure that consultants would be much better engaged in the future.

I believe that this is an important report. Of course, the report was brought down during the break, and it is the first time that that has been done. Bringing the report down then enabled it to be published earlier, and it also allowed the departments to receive notice of the committee's findings so that they could respond earlier to the report, and that is a very desirable thing. The committee certainly waits with great interest to see the responses to the report, because we believe that if the recommendations are adopted by the Government they will lead to a much better use of consultancies.

One of the big problems we had during the inquiry was the definition of 'consultant'. It is certainly a very difficult term to define. There was no doubt that a number of Government departments were defining 'consultancies' in terms of 'tenderers' and 'tenders'. It is not easy to draw a distinction between a 'consultant' and someone providing a service under tender. That definition problem gave the committee some difficulty, particularly when it came to presenting the statistics in respect of the overall use of consultants within the Public Service.

Certain consultancy areas were of specific concern to the committee, and I refer in particular to the use of legal consultants for some of the larger individual consultancies. The committee recommended that in those cases the officers and the expertise of the Solicitor-General's office should be employed to a much greater extent to ensure that the taxpayer receives good value from the use of its legal consultants. Similarly in other areas, particularly in advertising and so on, there were some concerns.

When the committee examined in detail some of the consultants used—and one I well recall involved the Lotteries Commission—it was quite incredible to find the things that consultants were doing in the most intimate detail, and I refer to tasks that one would normally expect to be done by the officers of the particular agency. One can only hope that as a result of this report the use of consultants will be more closely watched in future.

Another issue that comes to mind in relation to the use of consultants is that it is not just a question of the payment to the consultant. The fee is not the end of it: there are costs associated with engaging consultants, letting tender documents and so on. It is important that, if we are to examine and compare the costs of using consultants as opposed to using the ordinary offices of the Public Service, we are aware of the costs involved in engaging, monitoring and assessing those consultancies. Those costs should be taken into account when we look at the benefits of any consultancy. It is also important that we examine the efficiency and performance of consultancies. That was one area in particular where the committee was concerned to see the adoption of much better practices so that we can assess whether consultants achieve not only what they are engaged to do but that they do it effectively enough so that in any future engagement their performance can be properly assessed.

All in all, I believe that the report of the Economic and Finance Committee into consultancies will lead to a great improvement in this area. After all, well over \$100 million has been spent on consultancies over the five-year period in question, so we are talking about a large amount of money. Another of the specific issues considered by the committee was the engagement of retired public servants as consultants. That is an area that I believe needs to be examined very closely. There was certainly evidence that some former public servants very quickly after either retiring or leaving with a package—which was the worst case, of course—had then been re-engaged as consultants with the department. The committee believed that that was not an appropriate practice and has made recommendations to ensure that there is much greater control in that area whereby consultants are, first, genuinely required for the job and, secondly, are not employed just after receiving a TSP as some way of obtaining maximum benefit from the taxpayer. Again, the committee made some recommendations that should tidy up that aspect of consultancies.

It was quite a detailed investigation, and I believe that the recommendations in the report, if they are adopted by the Government, will lead to much improved practices. They could and should lead to much better value for the Government from the hundreds of millions of dollars that it spends on consultancies. Hopefully it will lead to a reduction in the cost of engaging consultants. I am pleased to support the report of the Economic and Finance Committee. I believe it will be hailed as one of the most important reports that this committee has put out.

Mr S.G. EVANS secured the adjournment of the debate.

### OPERATION HYGIENE

Mr S.G. EVANS (Davenport): I move:

That in the opinion of this House there should be an independent inquiry into Operation Hygiene.

I moved a similar motion to this in the previous session of Parliament, and I said at that time that I would bring the matter back before the House at this time. Today I will refer mainly to a letter I received from a person who has an interest in this area. I will not refer only to the matter of Fuller and Pearn, who are the two officers I referred to in the previous debate. I believe that those two gentlemen have now been released from gaol. I am not arguing this in terms of whether they should be in or out of gaol—I am arguing that there should be an independent inquiry into the whole Operation Hygiene exercise.

I will not read all of the two articles in the *Advertiser*, both of which appeared on Saturday 25 July 1992 and which were written by David Hellaby. I hope members will take an interest in this and look at those two articles, where it is clearly indicated, for example, that the original 139 page report compiled from 500 pages of evidence was expurgated by the incoming NCA Chairman, Mr Peter Farris, QC, and reduced to a mere 11 pages. He ruled the original to be an illegal and deficient report.

Those findings were handed down during the National Crime Authority's investigation of what one might call doubtful operations within police forces, including the South Australian Police Force. At that time Mr LeGrand was appointed to investigate 56 people in South Australia, some of them top policemen, and during that investigation the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioners and others were interviewed. I refer to a letter written to me, which states:

We renew our request for an independent inquiry to Operation Hygiene. In our view there is sufficient justification for such an inquiry arising from the situation of Stephen Fuller and Malcolm Pearn, convicted and imprisoned on the uncorroborated evidence of two criminal former police officers who, between them, admitted to 68 criminal offences.

I will not go back to those two gentlemen unless time permits later, except to refer to the letter under the heading 'Disadvantage to Fuller and Pearn through effluxion of time' as follows:

The lapse of time between the alleged events (1986) and trials in 1992 place the accused Fuller and Pearn at serious disadvantage in defending themselves against the charges, particularly as police records which could prove their innocence have supposedly been destroyed.

In relation to Robert John Oxley, under the heading 'Plea bargaining/charges not proceeded with', the letter states:

Former Sergeant Robert John Oxley was charged with 38 offences. When he went before the magistrate he was charged with 7 offences only (*Advertiser* 8 May 1992). Although Oxley gave no assistance to investigating officers, it was stated that his guilty plea 'had saved the expense of a trial and because of the lapse of time it may have been difficult to prove some of the crimes'.

So in the case of Oxley the effluxion of time would have made it difficult, in the opinion of the authorities, to prove the crime, but in the case of Pearn and Fuller that was not accepted as an argument. The case went on. The failure by Operation Hygiene to reveal corruption prior to 1968 is also of concern. The letter further states:

Oxley admitted offences as far back as 25 years ago (1968). After the Oxley hearing Mr Rofe QC (now Director of Public Prosecu-

tions) said that he accepted Oxley was not a 'ring leader', that criminal activity was already 'ingrained into the system' and not invented by Oxley who was 'merely a junior officer'. It is obvious therefore that Operation Hygiene failed to uncover corruption which existed before 1968 when the very great majority of those charged were not even in the Police Force.

The third point raised in this letter relates to B. Kitson and J. Neill and the likelihood that police officers suspected of corruption were not investigated. The letter states:

Two senior constables, Kitson and Neill, pleaded guilty to minor offences in 1978 claiming that they would receive no back-up unless they joined a clique of corrupt officers. John Neill continues to claim that in 1973 during his first appointment at Darlington Police Station he and his partner had gone to a reported break-in. While waiting for the owner to arrive two detectives in an unmarked police car had arrived, walked inside the premises and taken several cartons of cigarettes. When Neill reported this incident to his station sergeant he was given to understand that, 'if he wanted a career, it was best to say nothing'. On another occasion Neill had gone to a break-in at a butcher's shop where he witnessed the station sergeant helping himself to metwurst. He was told that it was 'okay, everybody does it.' It appears to be highly unlikely that the two detectives and the station sergeant were ever spoken to. Certainly they were never charged with these offences. An independent inquiry is required to ascertain whether these officers were ever investigated and whether they are still in the Police Force.

The letter also refers to Ivan Phillips and his early release from prison, as follows:

Phillips was granted 6½ weeks early release from prison in order to give evidence at the trial of Fuller and Pearn. This appears to contravene the policy that the earliest time for release is after one third of the sentence has been served. Did the Minister of Correctional Services authorise Phillips' release ahead of time? Why was Phillips not returned to gaol to complete his sentence after giving evidence?

The letter also makes reference to Glenn Hunt under the heading 'Claims of corrupt activity not followed up'. It states:

On his release from prison, 9 March 1992, Hunt claimed that corruption was rife in the Police Force and that more needed to be done to eliminate it. He alleged senior police were involved in drugs and were keeping money from break-ins. In a *News* report of 20 November 1991 Hunt said he had given Internal Investigations information about a vast number of offences they had not acted on.

The letter also refers to Justice Stewart's report, which I referred to in the early part of my comments today. The letter states:

Former chairman of the National Crime Authority, Justice Stewart, told the Parliamentary Joint Committee on the National Crime Authority (*Advertiser*, November 1991) that 'the South Australian Police Force investigations into matters of alleged corruption was like a B-grade movie'. He also said that NCA member, Mr Mark LeGrand, had told him that the planned report on internal police investigations might have had an effect on the career of Police Commissioner, Mr David Hunt. Mr LeGrand was appointed the NCA's member for South Australia in January 1989 to investigate 56 people, 25 of them serving police officers, most of them senior and including the officer in charge of the Internal Investigation Branch. Justice Stewart's 139 page report was suppressed for four days after he ended his term as Chairman and replaced by a much reduced, severely expurgated version. The original report was clearly a document of substantial importance to the proper administration of the Police Department and criminal justice in this State, based as it was on 500 pages of evidence given under oath by police officers. In view of its significance, why was this report rejected and replaced by a mere 11 pages?

We need to think seriously about that. To reduce a report from 139 pages down to 11 must put a doubt in the mind of anyone who is looking for fair play. There may be a reason for it, but only an independent inquiry could ascertain that. Under the heading 'Claims by certain officers affected by Operation Hygiene', the letter further states:

a) that a senior Correctional Services officer was approached by internal investigation officers with a request that Phillips would not be returned to gaol if he defaulted on his home detention conditions. This action, if it occurred, constitutes a very serious offence.

That allegation should be investigated. The letter goes on:

b) that in several instances the Internal Investigation Branch reneged on promises regarding immunity from prosecution.

c) that some guilty officers were not charged and remain within the Police Force.

d) that there is evidence of CIB detectives being guilty of larceny who have not been spoken to or charged.

e) that there was at least one officer who, although innocent, pleaded guilty to avoid the expense of a trial and the stress upon himself and his family.

f) that serving police officers are afraid to speak out about corruption for fear of retribution and that officers who have resigned are afraid to say too much especially if they are in a job requiring a licence application to be vetted by the Police Commissioner.

g) that a police officer, pressured to give evidence against another, said he hardly knew the man and was told 'It doesn't matter what you say. It doesn't matter if it's the truth or not, as long as it is bad.'

h) that wives were harassed by investigators in an effort to gain information about the alleged corrupt activities of their police officer husbands.

The above material represents a serious indictment of the way Operation Hygiene has been handled. Urgent action is required to establish an independent inquiry into the malpractices which have occurred.

That information has been submitted to me by individuals who believe that what happened should be investigated. I want to return to Phillips and Holmes, the officers who gave evidence against Pearn and Fuller. I made this point in a previous contribution in this place. Under the heading 'Collusion between Phillips and Holmes', the letter states:

There is a distinct possibility that collusion between Phillips and Holmes occurred in fabricating the evidence against Fuller and Pearn. Ample opportunity was available for telephone contact and visits following the arrest and charging of Phillips. Both admitted in court that they had met on at least one occasion.

We have to remember that these people were giving uncorroborated evidence on the basis that they would not be charged with many offences they admitted had occurred. It is obvious that people with that sort of record are likely to engage in collusion if they are given the opportunity to meet or converse on a telephone.

Next, I refer to the feeding of allegations to Holmes, and I made this point in a previous speech. The conduct of police officer Feltus in feeding the allegations against Fuller and Pearn to Holmes during the interview was irregular and improper, as was the obvious prompting and leading of the witness from the statement of Phillips that Pearn and Fuller had been involved.

The other matter is quite serious, and I believe that the evidence shows quite clearly that it involved what one calls perjury, or at least lying—but perhaps I cannot use that term here, so I refer rather to speaking the untruth. The letter states, 'Lie to sentencing judge by Holmes.' At the time he was sentenced for the Aberfoyle Hub offence, the one in which he implicated Fuller and Pearn, Holmes told the judge that he had committed that crime only. However, investigating officers knew (and this fact is available for all of us to find out) and the Crown should have known, that at that stage he had admitted to at least 16 other offences. I do not know whether that is right, but this letter states that he lied under oath to the sentencing judge. That is perjury, in my view.

Some people are saying to me—and it was said in this House when I raised the matter earlier—that I should bring up further information other than talking about Pearn and

Fuller. I have done that today. All I ask is for an independent inquiry. I know it costs money, but there are two men who have served jail sentences and, if they are innocent, they deserve the opportunity to prove that that is the case, given all the other things about which people can give evidence to prove they have occurred—and I have cited today from the letter that was submitted to me. I ask the House to support the proposal that we have an independent inquiry into Operation Hygiene to clear everyone's name, from the top of the Police Force to the bottom.

**Mrs HUTCHISON** secured the adjournment of the debate.

## DRIVER EDUCATION

**Mr VENNING (Custance):** I move:

That this House supports the registration and comprehensive insurance of vehicles used in SACE driver education courses being fully funded by the Department of Education as a curriculum resource.

For some time past, it has been the practice of the Education Department to carry the cost of comprehensive insurance and registration for cars used by secondary schools and area schools in the year 11 SACE driver education program. For the most part, these cars are bought with funds provided by the respective school councils, but officially they belong to the Minister of Education. It is stated in the second paragraph of section 119.3.4 of the Education Department's administrative instructions and guidelines that registration, third party insurance and comprehensive insurance of cars used in driver education courses must be arranged by the school or school council.

It appears that recently the department has begun to interpret this clause as meaning that the school or school council should actually meet the cost of registration and insurance. The Port Broughton school, in my electorate, has for sometime provided a SACE approved year 11 driver education course. The car used for this course, although bought with funds raised by the school council, officially belongs to the Minister, and for sometime the Education Department paid the cost of comprehensive insurance. However, recently the school became aware that this was no longer the case. This information came to the school indirectly. There was no official letter notifying it of a change of policy, and in fact an inquiry revealed that the insurance had run out and the car was being used while uninsured. The result is that this valuable resource lay idle for sometime and the year 11 children at that school were unable to take advantage of the driver education program. I believe a similar situation exists in many other country schools.

As a valuable adjunct to road safety in South Australia, the driver education course deserves the same support as do other curriculum resources, such as school computers, the insurance cover of which is paid for by the department. I bring this matter to the attention of the Parliament as a matter of principle. Country schools were doing a valuable job with this resource, and I hope the Parliament will support a return to the way it was when the department fully funded the insurance and registration of the vehicle that is owned by the Minister. I urge the Parliament to support the motion.

**Mrs HUTCHISON** secured the adjournment of the debate.



## ALICE SPRINGS TO DARWIN RAILWAY

**Mr GUNN (Eyre):** I move:

That this House calls on the Commonwealth Government to take all necessary steps to ensure the construction of the Alice Springs to Darwin railway line commences as soon as possible.

It is one of the most amazing sets of circumstances in which this country currently finds itself that we have tremendous opportunities to the north—in Asia—yet we have failed to take one of the most practical, sensible and commonsense courses of action—to construct a railway line from Alice Springs to Darwin.

On the road between Darwin and Alice Springs, we see the old Katherine railway station, and others; when we realise they are only museums, it sheets clearly home how naive and stupid this country is, and one wonders why it wants to continue to shoot itself in the foot. In Darwin we can see the large and well organised Indonesian Consul's office, clearly demonstrating that that part of Asia is interested and is there to do business with this country. When one talks to senior people, Ministers and others, in Darwin and finds out that there is an ongoing, regular and consistent contact with Indonesia and Asia, one sees clearly the urgent nature of the construction of this important transport mode.

It is no longer acceptable or sensible for eastern Australia to put unwise and unnecessary barriers in the way of this project. The time has long since passed when we should accept the advice of Labor Party spruikers such as David Hill and others who were given a job to can this project. They did it successfully, but to the long-term detriment of this nation as a whole and to this State in particular. This country must position itself to ensure not only that we can provide those raw materials and finished products to our Asian neighbours at the cheapest possible rates but also that they arrive in the best possible condition, as quickly as possible and in a reliable fashion. The construction of a railway line from Alice Springs to Darwin will allow this country to have a most efficient and reliable form of transport into the front door of Asia through our back door.

There is absolutely no reason known to any logical or sensible person why we should delay further. I understand that the Commonwealth Government has belatedly taken steps to provide the money to survey the last section. That is well and good. But unless it grasps the initiative and gets on with honouring the promises and commitments which were made in 1911, when South Australia surrendered to the Northern Territory, the survey is a waste of taxpayers' money—and, heaven help us, the Government has wasted enough of taxpayers' money in other ways.

My concern is that, if this country is to achieve its maximum output and benefit from our vast resources, we must take decisions that, even if they are not economically viable today, will position us to take advantage of the opportunities that are available to us in the future. The infrastructure that was put into this country between the end of the Second World War and the early 1970s was established with Government support. At that stage, we were not down the road of economic rationalism and user-pays: we were building the country, and we built it and created thousands of jobs. People were able to look after their homes. We did not have 11 per cent of the community on unemployment relief. This project is one of those national projects that will have long-term benefits for the people of this country and this State, within rural South Australia and the Iron Triangle.

Given the development that is taking place in the Northern Territory (and we know there are plans to build a new harbor facility; the Northern Territory wants to be involved and it is prepared to make a commitment) it is absolutely amazing that the Commonwealth Government appears to have neither the wit nor the wisdom to recognise the benefits. I accept that this country, unfortunately, is dominated by Sydney and Melbourne. Over half the Federal members of Parliament come from Sydney and Melbourne, but surely at least some of them have enough wit and wisdom to understand that this country is bigger than the metropolitan areas of Sydney and Melbourne, because those two cities cannot themselves continue to prosper and develop without the rest of Australia.

If the rest of Australia is to play the significant, important role which it should play, we have to develop these public utilities which, in my view, in a relatively short time would be viable. They would provide one of the great train journeys of the world. Just imagine getting on a train in Sydney and being able to go right to Darwin, or from Perth to Darwin: they would be among the great train journeys of the world. There would be a massive waiting list to utilise those facilities. We would be able to have huge trains, particularly with the road/rail concept which has been developed by Australian National, and hopefully it will be able to maintain it. We have the infrastructure: computer-programmed trains; a fast, efficient rolling stock; and the best track in the world. We have the opportunity to take into Asia the products of this country, creating thousands of jobs and helping to improve the standard of living in this country. Surely, any sensible person would realise that this is a project of national importance.

I well recall attending a public meeting at the Adelaide Town Hall when Paul Everingham commenced this program. He was then successful at convincing Malcolm Fraser not only that the project had merit but that it should go ahead. He committed the Commonwealth to that project. I remember talking to John Howard, who said that Malcolm Frazer had come back from Darwin and said, 'You're going to have to find the money to build the project, because it is essential.' We then had that infamous election campaign in 1983, when the Leader of the Labor Party, on radio in the Iron Triangle, promised to go ahead with the project but, as soon as he got into government, he dishonoured it. The comments he made were absolutely unequivocal. There was no talk about an inquiry or about getting David Hill, the Wran appointee to the New South Wales Transport Authority. There was none of that: that was all hatched out afterwards to try to kill the project.

History will judge Bob Hawke for his foolishness and it will judge this Commonwealth Government if it does not come to its senses. It is in the interests of all the people in this country that we ensure that we do everything possible to make sure that we are internationally competitive. We can no longer accept the view of some people that the rest of the world owes us a living. Unfortunately, it does not, and it will not. What we must do is to take advantage of the opportunities—and there are vast opportunities with those expanding opportunities in Asia, and the gateway is through Darwin. Those people want to be involved. They have good relations, and they are cultivating those relations. The building of this railway line will bring tremendous economic advantage to the people of South Australia.

Why should we continue to have ourselves hog tied? It is like asking a race horse to gallop with hobbles on. We have hobbled ourselves; that is how foolish this escapade is. We

have been hobbled by short-sighted Federal politicians, most of whom believe they are so important that they do not want even to understand logical commonsense.

**Mr Ferguson:** You are being churlish.

**Mr GUNN:** No, I'm not. Unfortunately, if you send your best friend to Canberra for six months, he hardly wants to know you. Those people really do get a misplaced sense of importance. One of the worse decisions made in this country was the building of Canberra, and we are paying for it dearly. This project is a clear example of academic theory being put over commonsense, logic and practical reality. If we continue with this attitude, the country will continue to languish in the doldrums, and the young people will not have the same opportunities as those of us who currently sit in this House, because the opportunities we had when we entered into the work force when this country was developing were many and varied. We require development. To have ongoing, effective, consistent development, we must have public infrastructure.

Playford developed this State by building powerlines and pipelines, and we can see what happened: there was tremendous benefit to the people. Those advantages and benefits have been frittered away. The Commonwealth Government, between the end of the Second World War and the 1970s, developed and went forward by building public infrastructure. The same attitude should apply today. I commend the motion to the House and look forward to the unanimous support of all members.

**Mrs HUTCHISON** secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### EDUCATION ASSISTANCE

**Mr GUNN (Eyre):** I move:

That this House calls on the State Government to immediately increase the financial assistance to the parents of isolated students who qualify for State Government assistance to the same level that applies in Queensland.

The purpose of this motion is to give the House the opportunity to afford justice to all citizens of this State. If this community is to spend hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars on rightfully educating the majority of students in this State, those who live in the isolated parts of South Australia are entitled to have the same access to education facilities as those of us who live in close vicinity to large towns, small regional centres or the metropolitan area. Education should not be denied to people because of the financial standing of their parents or because of isolation. Education in a democracy is a right. It is a way of people improving their station in life, and it is in the interests and to the benefit of all South Australians.

I believe that the current arrangements are unfair and that the allowance should be increased. This form of support in South Australia was brought in by the Tonkin Government in about 1980 as an allowance of \$500. The current allowance for the 1993 school year is \$722. At the end of April 1993, 365 people were receiving the benefit at a cost of \$264 000. It is anticipated that there will be a slight increase in student numbers next year.

In Queensland, the Education Department assists students with the following financial arrangements: a textbook allowance, a living away from home allowance, a remote area tuition allowance, a remote area travel allowance and a remote area allowance. These programs are designed to give students the opportunity to access the education system

without putting an intolerable or impossible burden upon their parents.

I believe that people who live in isolated parts of the State should be allowed to attend high schools and colleges with the support of the State Government. There have been some improvements, but they are insufficient. As a first step, I believe that the amount should be doubled and that then it should be trebled: it should increase from \$700 to \$1 400 to \$2 100 a year per student, if they qualify. That is the very least amount that should be provided. I do not want to unduly take up the time of the House by going into tremendous detail.

*Mr Ferguson interjecting:*

**Mr GUNN:** If anyone was responsible for getting the original \$500, without being too presumptuous I think I might have been. It is disappointing that this Government, having had the opportunity to do something about this project in the current budget, has failed to do anything. I put this matter on the Notice Paper on a previous occasion—it was debated in the House—so that the Government could take the matter into consideration during its budget discussions, but it did not do so. I do not know whether it does not care or whether it does not understand, but the people who live in isolated communities are not being adequately considered.

**Mr Ferguson:** It isn't in your policy.

**Mr GUNN:** The honourable member does not know what is in the Liberal Party's policy. His share of the State Bank debt (\$130 million) would have fixed the education problems of isolated communities in my electorate. If every member concerned bore the responsibility for \$130 million, the problem would have been solved. Let us compare the situation with Queensland. A primary school student in Queensland receives in excess of \$1 366 more than a similar student in South Australia who receives \$700. That extra \$1 300 would raise the figure to about \$2 100, which I recommend. Queensland primary school students receive tuition, travel and other allowances which students in this State do not receive.

A secondary student in Queensland receives \$911 more than a secondary student in South Australia. That extra allowance would give a significant amount of assistance to parents who are suffering, because it does not matter whether parents have an income: tuition and travel fees must be paid. If you live a long way from a centre, whether you own, lease or manage, etc., does not make any difference: the costs must be met. If you live at Cook and are involved in the railway industry, you have just as much right to send a child to the high school at Port Augusta or wherever you choose so they can matriculate at a level that will allow them to participate in tertiary education. Students who live at Cockburn or anywhere else in South Australia have the same right, but they are denied that opportunity because of their parents' financial position.

I thought that this Parliament was about justice, equity and commonsense and about giving the people a fair go. We have seen the sorts of crazy and foolish schemes in which this Government has been involved in the past—all sorts of escapades of little or no value. Educating the students of this State to the highest possible level and giving people the opportunity to improve their station in life can only help secure the State's future. If members opposite do not think that rural South Australia is in difficulty, let me say this: in 1987 the rural debt amounted to \$10.7 million; in 1992, it was projected to be \$15.7 million, an increase of almost 50 per cent in that period. So, it can be said that many people in

those areas do not have sufficient financial resources. If it is good enough to provide assistance in the built-up areas of the State, it is good enough to provide it in the isolated and regional centres of South Australia so that those people can share in the massive amount of money that has rightly been appropriated by this Parliament, and we must ensure that it is appropriated fairly, reasonably and properly, so that all sections of the community can reap the benefits.

A number of schemes exist, such as the itinerant teachers' scheme, which is an excellent program. When one considers the difficulties that people at Yunta and other places have in procuring the odd facility or shed so that students can come in from the stations and experience what it is like to be in a classroom, one would think that we were asking for the crown jewels. Scoundrels such as Marcus Clark and villains like SGIC have squandered taxpayers' money and have got off scot-free, yet these poor people just want to give their children a slight advantage in life, but it is not possible. It is a public outrage. For instance, in the case of a request to maintain a school bus one would think that we were requesting that the whole of the STA be shifted.

This Government has sat by while villains have ripped off the community and, in my view, stolen their money without being brought to justice. I hope they are pursued and put into gaol, because the long-term effects of their decisions on future generations of South Australians are an absolute disgrace. It appals me that my constituents and others will suffer because of these villains—that is all they are. They have no right to walk the streets as free people. They should be brought to justice. I commend the motion to the House.

**The Hon. T.H. HEMMING**s secured the adjournment of the debate.

### CHILD ABUSE ALLEGATION

**Mr BECKER (Hanson):** I move:

That this House calls on the Minister of Health, Family and Community Services to make available to Mr Bruce Yates of Lockleys all documents held by the Department for Family and Community Services relating to the alleged child sexual abuse of his children Zoe and Angus.

I do not move this motion lightly. I think it is an absolute tragedy that for many years allegations have hovered over Mr Bruce Yates and that he has had to take legal action to prove his innocence; in addition, he has experienced difficulty in his dealings with the Department for Family and Community Services in obtaining information which is his right.

We applied under the Freedom of Information Act to have all the documents released to Mr Yates. As part of my application I sought, first of all, a break down in the cost of such an application, because it took a considerable amount of time to obtain the first quote, and when I received that quote I was absolutely amazed that the department could hold so much information and that it would take so long to collate it and at such a huge cost.

The Minister, who was the champion of the freedom of information legislation in this House, is quite proud of making information available and accessible at a reasonable cost to the public, but in the case of Mr Bruce Yates the cost of the legal action over the years in an endeavour to receive compensation for the action that he has had to take—because he has won on every occasion—has taken its toll on him financially.

*Mr Brindal interjecting:*

**Mr BECKER:** As the member for Hayward says, emotionally it is something that we just cannot count, and the cost of the physical and emotional damage caused to this person would be horrendous. It also involves his children, his whole family and circle of friends who have endeavoured to assist Mr Yates in every way possible. I was amazed at the attitude adopted by the department in coming up with all sorts of obstacles and not providing the various pieces of information; in fact, I received a letter saying that I was named on the files and that the information would not be made available to Mr Yates unless my approval was given.

I find it absolutely intriguing that, when a member of Parliament telephones a department and is put through to an officer who is asked for an explanation as to what is going on and why certain action is being taken, this is all recorded and put down on a confidential file or dossier. I hate dossiers being kept on anybody. Being asked, 'Do you give approval for the information concerning yourself to be released?'—and not having seen what was recorded in my name—I naturally wanted to see what had been recorded, because there is no opportunity to correct any of that information. I do not really know how far Government officers go or what some Government departments do in keeping a dossier on the average citizen in this State but, no matter what is kept there and in what form it is kept, what chance is there of seeing it or correcting it?

Debate adjourned.

### GOVERNMENT'S PERFORMANCE

Adjourned debate on motion of Mr Meier:

That this House condemns the Government for its abysmal record of financial mismanagement, record unemployment, deterioration of essential services and broken promises and urges the people of South Australia to vent their anger on the Government through the ballot box at the next State election.

(Continued from 25 August. Page 483.)

**Mr S.G. EVANS (Davenport):** This motion is fairly self-explanatory, and the community acknowledges that this Government has been a failure in serving the people of this State, making proper use of financial resources and creating employment for a large number of people, especially young people, who are without work and who, if this Government continues in office, will have little prospect of getting work.

I believe that if this happened in any other community or country that was not as passive as the Australian community—if a Government had squandered so much money, destroyed so much of the State's economic base and created so much unemployment, virtually condoning all this by allowing it to continue and not seeking to make changes to improve it—there would be massive protests and perhaps even violence. That is how serious the situation is. Yet many people in the community are at a loss to know what to do. They are waiting for the ballot, but the Government will not tell us when we will have that opportunity.

The motion refers to the deterioration of essential services. We all know that many of our water mains around the metropolitan area and in the country have reached the end of their economic life and they are bursting. In fact, they burst with such force that anyone in close proximity at the time could be killed: there is no doubt about that. Some new mains have been installed in the main street of Blackwood because the old ones were bursting about every fortnight. That

situation exists right throughout the metropolitan area and the force upon bursting, as I said earlier, is dramatic.

The sewer mains are in a similar condition, although we do not have the problem with sewer mains exploding because they are mainly gravitation mains. There are only a few rising mains, which have pumps on them pumping the raw material to a higher point in order to gravitate further down. Although also in a poor state, they will not cause us a lot of problems unless they happen to burst into a creek or an underground water table where a leakage would cause a health problem. That is unlikely, however, and I do not use that as a strong argument.

In my own area the Principal of Blackwood High School was reported in the local paper during the last fortnight as saying that \$1.2 million was needed for maintenance to bring the school up to standard. That school, with 1 300 students, has had a few broken windows in recent times and, in fact, requires an outlay of \$1.2 million to be brought up to a suitable standard. I do not think anybody can condone that.

Every member in this Parliament has people contacting their offices asking, 'Do you know how we can get a job?'—mainly young people, but quite often people who are over the age of 40 and who have only ever used one set of skills. They find it very difficult to obtain work with those skills and to enrol in courses that can help them develop other skills. In our university system people who want to study, say, law and who have the ability are told, if they are an adult, that they must have an honours degree before they can be enrolled. Even though they have one degree, they have to have the second before they can be enrolled. That is partly a Commonwealth problem but, if we are going to have higher education and are going to be the clever country, we have to make the opportunities available.

Right throughout the country—it is not just this Government—we are bringing in students from overseas. I do not necessarily oppose that, because they are full fee-paying students and, in a sense, we make a profit out of it. But it is pretty hard for other people who are unemployed, and who seek further education, to be told that there are no places for them because somebody from another country has had enough money to gain a seat in that learning institution which those people might have been able to occupy. That is pretty hard to accept. Unless we are placed in that position ourselves it is difficult to understand, unless of course it involves a member of our own family. What could we have done with that \$3.15 billion if it were still available—even \$2 billion of it?

A massive amount of work could have been done in this State, and jobs could have been created for people. However, a few people who were responsible allowed it to go away and be lost. When I say 'go away', I mean it that way, because if the money had been lost in South Australia someone else in this State would have had it. However, it is not here—it has gone overseas or interstate; it has left us. It has put a big hole in the operations of this State for many years to come. I support the motion. I did not intend to speak to this motion, but people know why I have, and I know that other members may wish to speak to it. I ask members to support an excellent motion moved by the member for Goyder.

**The Hon. T.H. HEMMINGS (Napier):** Obviously, I will not follow the advice that the member for Davenport has urged upon the House. In fact, I am very disappointed in the motion. It is no secret that I have a lot of time for the member for Goyder. He is a person who, prior to coming into this

place, was a schoolteacher; he was well loved by the people of Yorke Peninsula; and he was considered to be a man of integrity—not that I am saying that he is no longer in that category.

I looked upon his career and progress in this House with great interest. I felt that he would one day play an important role in the affairs of the fascists on that side of the Parliament. However, it seems that his career path started to take a downward spiral the day that he was dumped from the shadow ministry. You may well recall, Sir, that I made a rather impassioned speech on that occasion, commiserating with the honourable member with respect to the despicable way in which he had been treated. It seems that perhaps my commiserations were misplaced. Perhaps the member for Victoria, the then Leader who did the knife job on the member for Goyder, was correct. Perhaps he realised that the member for Goyder was just a flash in the pan and not destined for greatness as are some people—such as you and I, Sir.

One of the reasons why he was dumped from the shadow ministry was that he was starting to put before the House motions such as the one we have before us today. This mishmash of rhetoric has been strung together and, in effect, it says nothing. On the other hand, I could be wrong, because it does say a lot about the Liberal Party—it says that it has nothing to offer the community of South Australia. It does not say, 'We have this and this and this, and we want you to vent your anger at the ballot box.' I would have thought that all members of the Liberal Party in this lead up to the election would have more to say.

I was rather surprised when I came back—and you may be aware, Sir, that I have been away for a while—to be told on very good advice that there may be an election on 27 November, which I worked out meant that I had only another four days to come into this place. I am working on the fact that we will get through the budget, the Premier will announce the election, we will prorogue Parliament and then I will work on ensuring that my replacement in Napier is well and truly elected to this place. However, I digress.

One would have thought that this Notice Paper would be filled with different policy proposals by the Liberal Party, but there is nothing. If I may refer to the previous debate, it involved a member opposite urging this Government to put something in its education policy about looking after people who live in outback Australia, yet the Liberal Party's own policy does not do that. That is what we have all the way through. There is not one proposal or policy that could in any way convince the good people of Semaphore to switch their vote from you, Sir, and support the local Liberal Party candidate. I am sure that they would not do that, Sir. They would be stark raving mad if they deserted you, Sir.

That is what we have. In effect, it is a frank admission by the member for Goyder—and obviously by the member for Davenport, because he said nothing about it—that they have nothing to offer the people of South Australia. Members opposite have nothing to offer in respect of education, health, economic development, industrial relations and employment. We know that the people of South Australia are quite correctly crying out for a change in their employment prospects. But what do we have? We have the Employers' Federation in effect saying that its members will not invest in this State until there is a change of Government. It has no time for the Liberal Party at all, because it is still waiting for the policies of members opposite to be outlined.

What else do we have? We hear about privatisation. I understand that the member for Adelaide—the Liberal Party's spokesperson on health—has said that the answer to the health problem is to privatise the cleaning ladies. That is the Liberal Party's only health policy: privatise the cleaning ladies and all will be well. Nothing else is coming from members opposite to in any way encourage the people of South Australia to vent their anger through the ballot box. I find that rather sad.

During the Address in Reply debate I said that it is quite possible that the people of South Australia will vent their anger against us at the ballot box as a result of certain events. If you recall, Sir, I said at the same time that that would be unfortunate because if they did that they would suffer far worse than their perceived suffering under this Government. I know that there is some uncertainty and some anger out there. For the member for Goyder to put forward a string of rhetoric without in any way offering anything positive to the people of South Australia does a disservice not only to this Parliament but also to those gentle people of York Peninsula whom he so ably represents, because they want some leadership from the member for Goyder, and at the moment he is providing no leadership whatsoever.

If no leadership is forthcoming from the honourable member, from where will it come? Will it come from the member for Hanson? Will the honourable member be able to stand up after I have finished my contribution and tell us how we will rejuvenate the State? Let us face it, six months ago he was going to join me in retirement until someone gave him renewed vigour to stand again for Parliament. It may be that the honourable member will break all records in being the person who retires and stands more than anyone else in this Parliament. Will we hear from the member for Hanson about the way in which he will renew the confidence of the people of South Australia? This motion is a load of garbage; it deserves to be rejected, as I am sure it will be, and I look forward to something a little more positive from the member for Goyder.

**Mr BECKER** secured the adjournment of the debate.

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

#### GROUP ASSET MANAGEMENT DIVISION

Adjourned debate on motion of Mr S.J. Baker:

That this House questions whether the State Bank or the Group Asset Management Division (Bad Bank) are being operated in the best interests of taxpayers and businesses.

(Continued from 25 August. Page 484.)

**Mr HOLLOWAY (Mitchell):** The Deputy Leader is not going all the way and saying that GAMD and the State Bank's operations are so dreadful that we should oppose the proposition—he is saying that we should put a question mark over it and leave it in limbo. He is not prepared to come out and say that something reprehensible or undesirable is going on; he is simply saying that we should question it. He did not make a very good case when he spoke to this motion.

The member for Mitcham came up with two examples in his speech, and he used those two pieces of anecdotal evidence to try to support his motion. The Group Asset Management Division now has—and has had—hundreds of loans within its portfolio, some of them large and some of them very small. All the statistics and information about GAMD's operation came out recently in its annual report.

The officers of GAMD and the State Bank appeared before the Estimates Committees in recent weeks, when the Deputy Leader of the Opposition certainly had plenty of opportunity to ask questions.

In his contribution the member for Mitcham mentioned just two cases where he claimed that the State Bank had acted prematurely and had not had a full return. The truth of the matter is that the Deputy Leader was personally briefed on the two instances that he raised under a confidentiality release from the clients and accompanied by the customer, and he is well aware of all the facts and the background in respect of each case. It is a sad fact that, in the commercial field, businesses right across the commercial spectrum fail from time to time, regardless of the considerable efforts put in by management and bankers to avert such failures. That is the sad reality. However, there are always two sides to a story.

It is very easy for people who have problems with a bank, where they run into commercial difficulties and the bank seeks repayment, to allege maltreatment by the bank and to use the political process to reverse what would be normal banking behaviour to try to get the bank to lay off. We have seen plenty of that over the past few years, particularly within the rural sector where people have got into a lot of trouble. Admittedly it may not always be their fault. In some cases the banks certainly made loans to people rather rashly, particularly during the 1980s, but nevertheless those loans were entered into and the contracts were signed by the individuals concerned.

When its clients get into trouble the State Bank attempts to work through those problems with the client, as do other banks. It is not in the interests of any bank to try to foreclose and drive people out of business and therefore lower the potential return that the bank might receive. Banks must take a hard commercial position, and they have to look at things logically. The taxpayers must be protected, because the Group Asset Management Division and the State Bank have a Government guarantee. They are responsible to the people of this State to act in a way that maximises the return to the people of this State.

In all cases, and certainly in the cases mentioned by the shadow Treasurer, the bank takes all reasonable steps to recover moneys outstanding, consistent with the circumstances surrounding each case. I know that the bank is well aware of the human factors involved in the cases that the member for Mitcham raised, and the bank rejects his claim that it is in some way indifferent or not concerned about the human factors involved. The fact is that officers of the State Bank regularly discuss difficult lending situations with an array of customers, and in the end these matters are usually resolved with a cool head. The officers of the bank who deal with these problem loans are especially chosen for the job, and they are people of the highest calibre. It is extremely difficult to deal with these problem loans, and that is why the Group Asset Management Division was formed. It deals with problem loans, and its officers were appointed because of their ability to deal with these problems.

The member for Mitcham will have to do a lot better than he did to convince the House that in some way the Group Asset Management Division is not acting in the best interests of the State. He will certainly need more than a couple of pieces of anecdotal evidence which have been raised in detail with officers of the bank, accompanied by the customer. He will certainly have to do a lot better than that to sustain his point.

The member for Mitcham also made other errors during his contribution. He made some allegations against the bank in respect of concessional home loans. The fact is that the State Bank administers concessional loans and the HomeStart scheme on behalf of the Government. The last loans under the State concessional loan scheme were advanced in July 1991. No new loans are available under this scheme. The State Bank also acts as an agent for HomeStart Finance Limited and processes lending applications under the terms and conditions and within the guidelines established by HomeStart Finance Limited. So the concessional housing and HomeStart schemes are separate, and the terms and conditions applying to each are separate and do not necessarily apply to each other.

In administering these loans the bank has to comply with the guidelines that are set down by the Government. So, again the criticism by the member for Mitcham that in some way the State Bank is not acting in the best interests of the taxpayer is really not sustained. He fails to understand the situation with respect to HomeStart. The member for Mitcham has not made a convincing case. He will certainly have to do better than that. The annual report of the Group Asset Management Division gives a lot of information about the success of that division in relation to the disposal of problem loans. The report points out—and I do not have the figures with me, but anybody can get them from the report—that the return on the investments that have been dealt with so far has been greater than the predicted level. I think the return was something like 67 per cent on those assets that have been dealt with, compared with an expected return of 60 or 62 per cent.

The factual evidence shows that the Group Asset Management Division and the State Bank have been operating in the best interests of taxpayers and the businesses that they deal with since that organisation was brought into operation following the problems of the State Bank. That is the objective evidence.

There has been nothing other than a few anecdotes to support the case put by the member for Mitcham, and I think his lack of conviction in moving this motion is illustrated by the fact that he merely says we should question whether the State Bank or the Group Asset Management Division are being operated in the best interests of taxpayers and business. If he has more concrete, factual evidence, he should put up or shut up. This motion should be opposed.

**Mr S.G. EVANS** secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### MITCHAM HILLS ROADS

Adjourned debate on motion of Mr S.G. Evans:

That in the opinion of this House an improved road system must be created in the Mitcham Hills including upgrading of Old Belair Road.

(Continued from 25 August. Page 485.)

**Mr HOLLOWAY (Mitchell):** This motion relates to the District of Davenport. Members who are not familiar with the Mitcham Hills region should be made aware that Old Belair Road has in recent years been substantially upgraded. I well recall the condition of that road some three or four years ago. At that stage, this motion would have been well deserved, because Old Belair Road was one of the worst roads. There were potholes, it was windy, there were no effective safety barriers and so on.

However, that road has been considerably upgraded since then and some millions of dollars of taxpayers' money has been spent, quite appropriately, on improving that road, at least from the James Road intersection down to the start of Fullarton Road. A new bridge has been constructed in that area over Brownhill Creek, and roundabouts and traffic lights have been installed. So the whole Mitcham Hills road connector between Fullarton Road and the James Road intersection has been considerably upgraded over the years.

Of course, improvements to the road network in the Mitcham Hills will inevitably mean that compromises will have to be made between the demands of locally generated traffic and through traffic from outside the Mitcham Hills area and the need to preserve the sensitive Hills environment. Old Belair Road is constructed on the side of the Brownhill Creek valley; it is a particularly steep area and in that sort of terrain it would not be easy to construct a four lane freeway, as I believe the member for Davenport would wish. As well as the steepness of the terrain, which would mean massive expense in trying to upgrade that road beyond the level to which it has been upgraded already, and the high cost, other problems include major environmental impacts due to the extensive coverage of trees and other vegetation as well as the vast area of parks and reserves, given that this road centres upon the Brownhill Creek recreation park. Any construction there would have a massive environmental impact.

There would be minimal benefits to the Hills residents, as through traffic would be attracted from outside the Mitcham Hills area. Travel time savings would be reduced by increased delays where the Hills road meets the more congested road on the plains, and that could outweigh the benefits of such a road. At the moment, the single lane Old Belair Road links with several roads at its base. If Old Belair Road were to be widened to four lanes, as the member for Davenport specifically suggests, it could well cost—

**Mr S.G. Evans:** Read it again.

**Mr HOLLOWAY:** I reject the observation of the member for Davenport. He knows this area well and he would realise that Old Belair Road has been substantially upgraded over the years. Millions of dollars of taxpayers' money has been spent on it, and the widening of that road down to its base would not necessarily help traffic flow: it would simply get cars to the bottom more quickly, but a bottleneck would exist.

The member for Davenport would be well aware of the morning congestion on roads such as Fullarton Road, Unley road and so on due to the traffic that converges in those areas. So just fixing up the access road to the Hills would not necessarily make it easier for his constituents to get into the city, because the major trunk roads through the city on the plains are congested at peak hours, as one would expect. Given that the weakest link is likely to be in that area, the widening of Old Belair Road will not necessarily greatly improve the situation but it will cost masses of money and lead to huge environmental impacts on that area. That was the point I was making to the member for Davenport.

The honourable member proposed that a new road be constructed to the east of the railway through Hawthorndene. That would be very expensive and would have a major impact on the amenity on the adjacent highly sensitive residential development, because anyone who is familiar with that area would be well aware of the impact that a major road would have. I am not altogether sure that the member for Davenport's constituents would agree with his solution for the problems of that area. In fact, in the 1970s and the early 1980s, the community rejected the then Highways Depart-

ment scheme to widen Old Belair Road and Main Road between Belair and Blackwood to four lanes because of the unacceptable impact on the environment and because of concerns about increases in through traffic. That was in the fairly recent past when there had been proposals by the Highways Department to upgrade the roads in that area. That road has subsequently been upgraded, but there was considerable opposition at the time from the honourable member's constituents because of the environmental impacts. Major upgrading schemes to the arterial road links through Coromandel Valley and Upper Sturt have been rejected for similar reasons, as the honourable member would be aware.

The other point that needs to be made is that the existing arterial roads in the Mitcham Hills cater adequately for travel demands during most of the day; whilst traffic queues are often relatively long for short periods during peak hours, actual travel times are not unusually high compared with times in other parts of the urban arterial road network. Furthermore, there is now a greater realisation in the community generally that a more appropriate response to the problem of peak congestion is to encourage changes in the demand for travel rather than to increase the road capacity. I have referred, for example, to car pooling, which can have a great effect in reducing the number of vehicles on the road.

The member for Davenport did suggest that new technology has the potential to reduce travel demands by enabling more people to work at home. I believe that, before we spend the tens of millions of dollars that it would cost to build roads like that across the hills face, we need to look at other alternatives, particularly given the demands for funds in other parts of the Adelaide inner and outer metropolitan area. At present the Department of Road Transport is monitoring conditions on the existing roads in the Mitcham Hills area with a view to implementing minor improvements where appropriate; for example, the main road through Coromandel Valley was widened in some places recently.

The other point that needs to be made is that the State Government is responsible only for arterial roads; the remaining roads in the area are the responsibility of the local council. Where the roads in the Hills are the responsibility of the Government, the paved surfaces of the arterial roads are generally in good condition. They are certainly a lot better than those on roads in my electorate, such as Cross Road, which is in appalling condition, but fortunately it is part of this Government's program to upgrade that road in the near future. There are plenty of examples of roads such as that which are in worse condition than the ones the member for Davenport mentioned.

**Mr S.G. EVANS (Davenport):** I thank the member for Mitchell for his comments, but I only wish he had read or at least referred to what I said without trying to construe something else into it. In the second paragraph I said:

In talking about upgrading Old Belair Road, I am not advocating a top class road. If we did that, we would have an argument from those who drive heavy buses and trucks that they should also use that road.

At no time did I advocate a freeway or a four-lane freeway. What I did suggest is that, at the bottom section of Old Belair Road, we could take a cutting through the old quarry—not the hills face zone section where the road is now—and create another two lanes there. Then at the top of Old Belair Road, where it meets James Road, which is about half way up, we could use the left-hand side link, that is, James Road, for one way up, and the two lanes that are there at present as the

right-hand side link for down traffic, one way. Then we would have to make only a small section of road to accommodate that operation. It would be expensive; I am not denying that. However, the amount of traffic coming through the area is quite dramatic. It is unacceptable when you have queues of six or seven kilometres in the morning, especially in one of the foggiest places of the State which is also wet, drizzly and steep. It is just not suitable in this modern day and age to have these circumstances.

I acknowledged that erecting a road on the eastern side of the railway line in between Blackwood and Glenalta would have an effect upon the environment. I said that it was not a short-term thing: Governments need to buy properties gradually as they come on the market and not sell them, as this Government did. Such properties were obtained for traffic corridors all through the metropolitan area, and the Government sold them to make a fast buck. It should not do that but it should buy them and keep the properties until it has all of them, and then make a road adjacent to the railway line. The cars would not make any more noise than do the trains going through the area. That would take out all the through traffic out of the main street of Blackwood, and it would eliminate two rail crossings.

With National Rail putting in standard gauge, increasing the amount of freight by 50 per cent and increasing the size of the trains considerably (because the curvature of some of the permanent way will be decreased), trains will be able to haul through the Hills about 3 500 to 4 000 tonnes at a time. One would have to sit at the two crossings. If we could eliminate those two crossings, we could eliminate a danger spot for a lot of people and make it easier for the train crews to operate, and only commonsense in the long-term will do that. That is what I was saying.

The honourable member suggested that I proposed a freeway or a four-lane road through the area. If he knows the area of which he claims he has some knowledge, he would know that the other end of the corridor, Main Road, Coromandel Valley, is the old horse/wagon track that was used in the summer months, because it goes through the valley, and Coromandel Parade down to Murray's Hill Road is the old winter track, because it runs along the top of the ridge where the rocks are and over a historic bridge called Horner's bridge, and that those two roads are not much better than Old Belair Road.

We are not asking that those roads be upgraded because, if they remain as they are and if the upgrading of South Road and Ayliffes Road is an improvement and encourages greater use, people will be discouraged from coming through Mitcham Hills because of the bad conditions that prevail on the other side of Blackwood, the southern side. That is what I was advocating. If the Government is hell bent on having another 6 000 people living in Craighburn, which seems to be its goal, all those vehicles will have to travel from that point through to the city via Shepherds Hill Road, Old Belair Road or Belair Road.

All I am saying is that it is part of the responsibility of Government to start planning for these things. It does not have to have them done by tomorrow but at least it could start planning. It should not come along and say it has spent \$1 million in the past seven years and that is great. I have travelled the road since 1939, and the only upgrade of Old Belair Road since 1939 was the million bucks that has been spent in the past seven years. If anyone is proud of that, they should not be. I ask the House to support the motion.

The House divided on the motion:

## AYES (20)

Allison, H.	Armitage, M. H.
Arnold, P. B.	Baker, D. S.
Baker, S. J.	Becker, H.
Blacker, P. D.	Brown, D. C.
Cashmore, J. L.	Eastick, B. C.
Evans, S. G. (teller)	Gunn, G. M.
Ingerson, G. A.	Kotz, D. C.
Lewis, I. P.	Matthew, W. A.
Oswald, J. K. G.	Such, R. B.
Venning, I. H.	Wotton, D. C.

## NOES (23)

Arnold, L. M. F.	Atkinson, M. J.
Bannon, J. C.	Blevins, F. T.
Crafter, G. J.	De Laine, M. R.
Evans, M. J.	Ferguson, D. M.
Gregory, R. J.	Groom, T. R.
Hamilton, K. C.	Hemmings, T. H.
Heron, V. S.	Holloway, P. (teller)
Hopgood, D. J.	Hutchison, C. F.
Klunder, J. H. C.	Lenehan, S. M.
Mayes, M. K.	McKee, C. D. T.
Quirke, J. A.	Rann, M. D.
Trainer, J. P.	

Majority of 3 for the Noes.  
Motion thus negatived.

## LAKE EYRE BASIN

Adjourned debate on the motion of Hon. Dean Brown:

That this House:

- (a) rejects the concept of world heritage listing for the Lake Eyre region because it does not guarantee protection of environmentally significant and highly sensitive areas, in particular the Coongie Lakes and the Mound Springs, but does jeopardise pastoral and mining pursuits important to South Australia; and
- (b) believes more energetic and speedier protection of the State's environmental and economic interests in the Lake Eyre Basin are necessary and so recommends the adoption of the Liberal Party's policy on this issue.

(Continued from 8 September. Page 625.)

**The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD (Baudin):** When I heard this motion, and even prior to that when I read a good deal of the media coverage on it, I thought there was something fishy about it, because in a sense I have been there and done that. Members who have been here for some time will know that during my almost seven years as the Minister for the Environment and Conservation I took a good deal of interest in the north of the State. I was fortunate to be able to visit the Coongie Lakes area on two occasions, to visit some of the Mound Springs, to see the Cooper and the Diamantina and other parts of that area of the State which is the subject of this motion by the Leader of the Opposition. Indeed, I was involved, with the support of the Government and I assume this House, in the negotiation of a regime of controls for that area which not only potentially but actually is probably rather more stringent than that to which the Leader of the Opposition objects and about which he seems to have certain fears.

I refer, of course, to the negotiation and setting up of the Innamincka Regional Reserve, which effectively placed a highly productive part of the State under the National Parks and Wildlife Act. One would have thought that the very interests who have raised querulous voices in relation to world heritage listing for the Lake Eyre Basin would be even

more querulous in relation to that matter. However, it went through and was accepted with a great deal of support. Where some support was lacking, it was not from the producer side of things but rather from the green side of things where some environmentalists said that we should have gone further and made the area a national park in the fullest sense of the word.

The area is productive because it produces natural gas for the State and also because it supports a pastoral industry, the cattle raising industry in the north of the State, which does not rely on improved pasture but rather on grazing on the natural grasses of the area and which is, therefore, subject to some regime of controls by the Lands Department to ensure that there is no overgrazing and the eventual elimination of the chenopod shrublands in that area. In addition, an increasing amount of tourism is coming to the area. That is even truer of the Lake Eyre Basin generally as it encompasses a wider area.

However, we were able to negotiate with the oil and gas producers and the Kidman Pastoral Company to set up the regional reserve—admittedly, not over the whole of the basin but over what might be regarded as the most environmentally sensitive part of the basin (the Coongie Lakes, the north-west arm of Cooper Creek and some of the areas downstream from the Coongie Lakes)—with the active cooperation of the oil and gas producers, the Kidman Pastoral Company and a number of other people. So, I find it rather strange that what, in a sense, could be regarded as a more modest proposal, because it will bring in its train a rather less intense regime of controls than what is already in force in the regional reserve, should be subject to so much concern and worry.

There is a sense in which, of course, that which the Leader is calling for has already been taken into consideration. I am reminded that our Minister of Environment and Land Management held discussions with the Federal Minister for the Environment to seek Federal support to conduct a survey and feasibility study to establish the environmental values of the South Australian portion of the basin. Of course, that will proceed and it will determine the appropriate controls that should be placed in the various areas of the basin.

The basin covers a wide-ranging area. In fact, in a sense—and there is always the problem of definition; that is why I am a little guarded in my comments—it drains a larger area of Australia than does the Murray, although the total amount of water involved is considerably less than the Murray and is far less dependable. That is why we have to be so careful. In addition, I remind members that the rivers which form part of the basin and which flow to Lake Eyre and Lake Frome almost without exception rise outside the borders of this State. That must be the cause of some concern to us. Does it sound familiar to members—a large basin, which empties into South Australia but which has its origin outside the State?

Of course it does, because there is the parallel again with the Murray. We all know about the environmental damage which we have to put up with and about which we had very little say until the setting up of the Murray-Darling Ministerial Council. The same is and could be true of the Cooper, the Diamantina and the other rivers which flow into South Australia.

I know that in my time as Minister the Lands Department was very alive to the possibility of water diversions from the Diamantina and the Cooper, particularly the Cooper, in Queensland. It could happen. The Cooper flows every year: it is only rarely that it flows right to Lake Eyre, but it flows every year, and any significant diversions of water for



pastoral purposes or whatever in Queensland would considerably impoverish the environment in South Australia.

So, I think we need controls over the whole of the basin—modest and sensible controls, negotiated controls—to ensure that the other States behave themselves in this particular respect and our stake and our interest in the north is protected. That very pastoral industry, about which some members seem to be supportive, could suffer considerably were there to be environmental vandalism of the sort that I have described occurring in the other States from which the water flows.

For these reasons, I do not share the concerns of the Leader of the Opposition because I think they are very largely already addressed in the statements that have been made by the Prime Minister, by the Minister of Environment and Land Management here and, indeed, by the Premier. I wish to place the following amendment before the House. I oppose the motion and instead I am urging on the House that we should consider and pass the following amendment:

That this House defers consideration of the concept of world heritage listing the Lake Eyre region until a detailed assessment is made of whether listing would provide protection of environmentally significant and sensitive areas, in particular the Coongie Lakes and the Mound Springs, and would not jeopardise ecologically sustainable pastoral and mining pursuits important to South Australia; further, that this House believes energetic and speedy protection of the State's environmental and economic interest in the Lake Eyre Basin are necessary, and therefore supports the South Australian Government's proposal to carry out, with the support of the Federal Government, a major survey into the environmental values of the basin and the options for its ecologically sustainable development.

This amendment has the merit that it recognises what has already been said. It recognises what has been negotiated between the State and the Commonwealth, but it does not just say 'No'. It does not just throw up all of the shutters and say, 'We should not go ahead with world heritage listing.' A number of very significant areas in Australia are now world heritage listed. We only have to consider, for example, the Great Barrier Reef and Kakadu: both of those areas rely very much, so far as their economy is concerned, on tourism. I do not hear anybody suggesting that the tourist industry will be substantially damaged by world heritage listing.

World heritage listing is a concept which allows productive pursuits to proceed while ensuring that the basic environmental values are sustained, which environmental values are the reason those productive pursuits are there in the first place. For that reason I believe that the motion falls short of the mark and that my amendment is what this House really needs to adopt.

**Mr S.G. EVANS** secured the adjournment of the debate.

### LIFELINE

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. D.C. Wotton:

That this House congratulates Adelaide Central Mission's Lifeline on having obtained its 30th anniversary, commends and expresses thanks to the paid and volunteer staff who have given many thousands of hours in helping people in crisis and wishes the new Friends of Lifeline organisation well in providing further support for this magnificent community service.

(Continued from 8 September. Page 628.)

**Mrs HUTCHISON (Stuart):** I support this motion, which seeks to congratulate the Adelaide Central Mission's Lifeline on having obtained its 30th anniversary. In doing so I would like to refer to the time and effort given by thousands

of volunteers throughout the State, but perhaps I could also concentrate on the volunteers and those people who have looked after the Lifeline service in the northern area of Spencer Gulf, which is an area of particular interest to me.

I know the work that has been put in by those volunteers in my own area, I know the hours of training they have undergone and I know the constant stress they have been under whilst working for the Lifeline service. It is not an easy job, as I have been told time and time again by the people involved. It can be very traumatic and it draws them into talking to people, to assisting them in many areas in their everyday life and, in a lot of instances, to perhaps saving lives, because the service is there as a support for those people who may have nowhere else to go. In these troubled times that service has been of particular and increasing interest to a large number of people in my own area.

People in Port Pirie and Port Augusta—and I know that the member for Custance may also have spoken to some of those people in Port Pirie who look after the services there—have mentioned from time to time that the community input into those services has been valuable. A lot of the time they need to rely upon the local communities to assist them with funding to continue that service, and I know that people in my own area have actually come to the fore and assisted in keeping the service going.

There has been a need also to increase the number of volunteers to assist and, whilst supporting this motion, I would assure people who feel that they could give some assistance to a community effort that Lifeline is a very worthwhile one with which they might become involved. There can never be enough volunteers in this area, and in the Port Augusta service the very willing band of helpers there have had to spread themselves thinly and have worked enormously long hours to ensure that the service continues. They have done that over and above the hours that they have been required to work, for the simple reason that they know that there is a great demand for that service to continue and they are prepared to give freely of their own time and effort to ensure that it does.

Providing a service such as this for 30 years is a significant achievement, which certainly deserves the commendation of all members of this House. I am sure that all members have at some time had a person come into the office who has been experiencing a problem and needed the sort of assistance and counselling provided by the people at Lifeline. I know that in my own office on a number of occasions people have come in either to say how much they appreciate the service or to ask for some sort of assistance in counteracting some very serious problem which they have confronted in their everyday life.

I commend the honourable member for bringing this motion to the House. It is one that is well worthy of acceptance by all members. I also express my sincere appreciation of the service provided by Lifeline both in my own area and in the State as a whole.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen):** I thank the honourable member for her kind words of support in adding congratulations to the Adelaide Central Mission's Lifeline on having attained its 30th anniversary. I believe the honourable member has voiced the views of all of her colleagues, I would hope on both sides of the House, in expressing thanks to the paid and volunteer staff who have given many thousands of hours in helping people in crisis through this organisation.

In conclusion, because of the lack of time, I want also to wish the new Friends of Lifeline well in providing further support—because I know that support is ongoing—for this magnificent community service. Again, I congratulate the Central Mission and I ask all members of the House to support this motion.

Motion carried.

### CYCLING TEAM

Adjourned debate on motion of Mr De Laine:

That this House congratulates the Australian Cycling Team, and in particular the South Australian members of the team, for their history-making performance in becoming, for the first time, the number one cycling nation in the world at the current World Cycling Championships in Hamar, Norway.

(Continued from 8 September. Page 630.)

**Mr S.G. EVANS (Davenport):** I congratulate the member on moving this motion and I support everything he said in relation to it. I think it is sad for all of us to know that in recent days in the Perth competition, which was of world standard and which involved riders from all over the world—and I think two Frenchmen came first and second—about 40 riders went down in one pile-up and 20 were quite badly injured. It is sad when that happens, and it is hard to comprehend that so many top cyclists can be brought down in such an incident. I am sure all members join me in expressing regret that that accident occurred to such brilliant sporting people. That is all I need say in supporting the honourable member and congratulating him on moving the motion. I am sure all members agree with the views that he expressed.

**Mr De LAINE (Price):** I would just like to thank the member for Davenport for supporting the motion, and I ask the House to do likewise.

Motion carried.

### ENVIRONMENT AND LAND MANAGEMENT MINISTER

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. D.C. Wotton:

That this House condemns the Minister of Environment and Land Management on his failure to provide a coordinating role for recycling programs and give sufficient attention to the urgent need to obtain markets for recycled goods and further condemns the Minister for attacking local government regarding its role in creating recycling programs and threatening heavy-handed legislation while refusing to take a more responsible role in this important matter.

(Continued from 18 August. Page 340.)

**Mr S.G. EVANS (Davenport):** I am sure that those members who take an interest in the environment would have read recently in the newspaper that, if Governments—not others—do not work with industry to find markets for recycled goods, we will have a major problem. All the talk about recycling and a coordinating role is wonderful. I believe that Mitcham and Marion councils are working together, as are Burnside and others. They are all moving down the right track of starting to recycle and separate wastes, quite often with the cooperation of their ratepayers. In fact, I would say that that is so in the vast majority of cases.

The Minister has shown a lack of interest in this area. It is like the cat legislation, where the Government is trying to pass the blame on to someone else. Recycling allows people to use some of our wastes to produce useful products, and the

Government has to be active in this. It is no good the Minister's saying that it is the fault of local government. If Governments, both Federal and State, do not find a way to offer some form of subsidy or incentive for businesses to seek markets and uses for recycled goods then we are wasting our time, because we will have huge stockpiles of recycled goods. I refer to plastics and paper. Metals are not really a problem; it is mainly the different kinds of plastic products.

We will have these stockpiles with no-one using them. We have put all this energy into asking volunteers—scouts, guides, community groups and environmentalists who go out and collect rubbish on the roadside and in our parks—to make a huge effort. We have then patted them on the back and said, 'You have done a wonderful job.' At the same time the Government has done virtually nothing.

Whichever Party wins the next election will have to make this issue a priority. I know that the member for Heysen will make it a priority in Government. The Government should take notice of Parliament. It is not just a matter of picking up the rubbish, sorting it and recycling it as a product unless we can sell it. I hope that we realise that that is the most important aspect of this issue and that the Minister will take a keen interest in it at least until the next election; it will not really matter after that because he will not be there to make these decisions.

**Mr ATKINSON** secured the adjournment of the debate.

### RURAL SECTOR

Adjourned debate on motion of Mr Meier:

That this House recognises the extent of the rural recession and the importance of rural South Australia to our economy and social structure and urges the Government to implement both short and long term policies which will ensure the rural sector is once again restored to a place of importance.

(Continued from 18 August. Page 341.)

**Mrs HUTCHISON (Stuart):** I wish to amend the motion as follows:

Delete all words after 'structure' and substitute:

'recognises the Government's short and long term policies aimed at reviving South Australia's rural sector'.

Whilst I recognise its good intent, the motion moved by the honourable member does not recognise the fact that short-term and long-term policies have been put into operation by the Minister and the Government. I am sure that no-one would deny that agriculture is a key component of the economy of this State. I am quite sure that no-one on this side or the other side of the House would deny that. I believe that in an average year agriculture, in its raw unprocessed form in South Australia, contributes around 6 per cent of the value of all goods and services produced—that is, the gross State product—and that is a quite substantial proportion. Agriculture in Queensland contributes a similar percentage to that State's gross State product.

For Australia, the agriculture sector contributes around 4 per cent in an average year to the value of all goods and services produced in Australia, and therefore in relative terms agriculture is more important to the economy of this State than to the nation overall, or to Victoria and New South Wales in particular where it typically contributes only about 3 per cent of the gross State product, which is only about half of the South Australian figure. So taking it into context

overall between the various States it does contribute significantly to the economy of this State.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics indicates that last season agriculture production was valued at \$2 303 million in South Australia. In terms of South Australia's export earnings, agriculturally based products contribute over 50 per cent of the State's foreign income, which is around double the foreign income earned nationally from such products. Again this highlights the relative importance of agriculture to this State's economy. The current Minister and previous Ministers have recognised that fact, and if people were honest about it they would say that there has been a good contribution by the current Minister in terms of what he provides for agriculture in this State and the plans that he has laid down for it. Some members opposite, as they always do, are saying that that is not correct. They are wrong: it is correct.

A number of international and domestic factors contribute to our agricultural sector maintaining its key role in South Australia's economic activity. We are not an island—we are part of a world economy, and therefore our agricultural exports are at the mercy of what happens in overseas economies. The GATT talks have always been very important to us here in South Australia because of our reliance on export earnings from agriculture. Two of the key domestic factors are productivity growth in both on-farm and off-farm activities and flexibility with farmers continuing to adapt their production activities to changes in relative market prices which can thereby enhance their own as well as the nation's economic performance.

To a large degree our agricultural people cannot judge what prices they will get from year to year because they are at the mercy of world markets. If the member for Murray-Mallee thinks that he can stop acts of God and make provision for them to an extent where he can improve matters, I think his ego is running away with him. Because the agricultural sector is so highly dependent on world markets for the sale of our major commodities we need to look very closely at the factors that influence those markets when we consider the future outlook for our agriculture.

The present Minister has had a number of meetings with representatives from countries on the other side of the world to try to increase and diversify our markets. We cannot continue to rely on the limited number of markets we have had in the past. A lot of work has been done on researching new markets, which is what we need to do. If members opposite think that they can sit back on their laurels and not do that, I would say they are doing a great disservice to this State, and they need to look at their own actions further down the track.

*Mr Lewis interjecting:*

**Mrs HUTCHISON:** The member for Murray-Mallee is showing his ignorance.

*Mr Lewis interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Murray-Mallee is out of order.

**Mrs HUTCHISON:** Many factors influence the world agricultural and resource commodity markets. Of these, I believe that the first and the most pressing is the timing and extent of the world economic recovery, and again we are at the mercy of what happens in the rest of the world. It will depend on a return to strong economic growth in the major developed economies of North America, Europe and Japan as well as the maintenance of growth in the developing world, especially in the rapidly industrialising economies of the East and South-East Asia, which is where we have been concen-

trating to a large degree in the recent past. We need to look at world economic growth, the Economic Community's reforms to common agricultural policy, and the Uruguay round of the GATT negotiations, which I mentioned earlier. I believe some breakthroughs have been made in those talks, and I look forward to some sort of resolution of the problems that we have faced in the past with regard to that.

We also have the developments in the Asia-Pacific region, which is part and parcel of what we need to look at to enhance the growth of our export markets for South Australia for the good of all South Australians and not only the agricultural community. There are also developments in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union that we need to look at as well, and I know that the Minister has been looking there to see what those markets can offer with respect to South Australian products. Our farmers are some of the most productive in the world and the best in the world, but that is not always the case when it comes to countries dumping products on other countries. So, whilst we have the best quality products it does not always follow that we are able to access the markets that we need and that we deserve because of the quality of our products and the productivity of our farmers.

It is quite clear that these international issues are outside the direct control of the South Australian Government. Nevertheless, the Government has strongly supported the Federal Government in its role as chair of the Cairns group of agricultural exporting nations in its efforts to secure a satisfactory outcome to the GATT negotiations, which we come back to all the time because they are so important to us. Both State and Federal Governments are providing financial support to the rural sector. In South Australia significant financial support was provided to primary producers through the jointly funded Commonwealth-State Rural Adjustment Scheme and the State funded Rural Industry Adjustment and Development and Commercial Rural Lending scheme. These matters were addressed by the Select Committee on Rural Finance to which members on both sides of the House contributed.

Some very practical matters in respect of the way funds were allocated to individual farmers around the State were raised with us, and quite a bit of evidence was given to the committee about the need to change the way that occurs. After the select committee had finished its deliberations I believe there were some changes to that which were agreed by the Farmers Federation and which were quite productive for the people of the State. I believe that my motion, which seeks to recognise the Government's short-term and long-term policies aimed at reviving South Australia's rural sector, should be supported because this Government has on record the proper policies to try to enhance the productivity of the State with regard to its rural produce and world markets.

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

**Mr VENNING (Custance):** I am totally opposed to the amendment. The member for Stuart said this Government has done a lot for agriculture in this State. Words absolutely escape me, which is pretty rare, in discussing the member for Stuart's amendment. For 10 years this Government has neglected this sector, and the proof is absolutely everywhere. You would have to be totally biased or totally blind not to see that. The member for Stuart—the last member for Stuart enjoying her last days in the Parliament—ought to go out and ask her constituency, even those in Port Augusta, what they

think of this Government. The honourable member ought to be trying to save her political skin by taking up the case for the agricultural people in her constituency.

This Government has done precious little for agriculture. The present Minister, of all Ministers, is a great talker—every time he gets on the media he talks about his portfolio and he waffles. It is obvious that he trained as a lawyer. In trying to act as the Minister of Primary Industries, in the past few weeks especially, he has proven that he does not understand and he cannot deliver. This Government is closing down the Department of Agriculture. It is there for everybody to see. It was already the lowest funded department in Australia, yet the Government spent \$1 million on a 'you beaut' airy-fairy consultancy which came out with some ridiculous decisions, most of which the Minister to his credit is ignoring.

That is another million dollars blown. What is another million dollars to a Government like this? To the people in the agriculture sector, it is vital indeed. The Government is skinning the department to the bone, with the offering of TSPs. I asked the Minister during the Estimates Committees when the next round of TSPs would be offered, because the Government has already offered TSPs, skinning the department of its expertise. It has offered them at any level and taken away some of the finest expertise in the department.

In the past few months this Government has removed the former Director-General, the 2-I-C and five of the key scientists in the department, and then it says it is really considering agriculture. When I asked the Minister a few weeks ago in the Estimates Committee when the next round of TSPs would be offered, and to whom they would be offered, the Minister said that he could not answer the question and would put it on notice. It is now three weeks later. I thought it was etiquette in this House, given that we will be debating the estimates later tonight and tomorrow, that the Minister would have answered that question in writing, but he has not done so, purely because he does not know; if he does know, he does not want to tell me. Once again it puts the lie to the member for Stuart's amendment.

I have a lot of admiration for our Department of Agriculture over many years. It has gone from one of the best performing departments in Australia—even in the Commonwealth—down to one where the morale and the level of funds are so low that I am amazed it can perform at all. Whenever he is questioned, the Minister continually waffles with lawyer-speak.

Grants for agriculture are often discussed on the radio. The last one was a \$5 million Rural Industry Assistance Finance and Development Grant, for on-farm value adding and farm innovation. There was a great fanfare by the Minister, but how much was offered? This is a proved fact. A total of \$225 000 was actually offered and, of the six applicants, one was the department itself and another was the South Australian Farmers Federation. Only four private people were able to avail themselves of that offer. Many of my constituents rang me and told me they had been refused. Once again, it was a very shabby exercise in fanfaring—a lot of noise and waffle, but very little delivery.

With respect to rural counsellors, the Minister was on the radio this morning saying that this Government is supporting rural counselling and that funding is ongoing. We know that the counselling service has not had the guaranteed funding. The Minister, by waffling and using absolute lawyer-speak, goes around and around the point, leaving everybody frustrated and totally bewildered as to the direction of the Government.

I refer now to the Barley Board. I am very concerned at what has happened with the Barley Board because of the varieties that have been offered, particularly Chebec barley, which was touted as a new malting barley. Growers bought the barley at great expense last year, and last week we heard that Chebec barley has been downgraded to feed grain. Why was this not done last year? Thousands of dollars could have been saved by farmers, and the member for Stuart has the temerity to stand up and say that the Government is considering the rural sector. I could go on and on with issues such as that, where this Government does not know, could not care or has failed.

My final point relates to the training of young farmers in this State, particularly to Rural Youth. We have seen that organisation go from a membership of about 6 000 with a full-time work force of six, paid by Government, down to the current 150. It is an absolute disgrace. No wonder our farmers are at an average age of 59 years. I could go on, but I have nothing but indignation for this amendment moved by the member for Stuart. I fully support the motion moved by the member for Goyder.

**Mr HOLLOWAY** secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### **SOUTH AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT FINANCING AUTHORITY**

Orders of the Day: Other Motions, No. 14.

**Mr S.J. BAKER (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):**

In view of the changes notified in the budget, I move:

That this motion be read and discharged.

Motion carried.

#### **PENSIONERS**

Consideration of the Legislative Council's resolution:

That the Legislative Council, as a matter of urgency:

1. Expresses its grave concern at the adverse financial impact on thousands of South Australian pensioners holding certain financial investments resulting from Federal Parliament's amendments to Social Security and Veteran's Affairs legislation, and calls on the Federal Parliament to enact repealing legislation.
2. Directs the President to convey this resolution to the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Federal Opposition.
3. Resolves that a message be sent to the House of Assembly transmitting the foregoing resolution and requesting its concurrence thereto.

(Continued from 7 September. Page 577.)

**Mr S.J. BAKER (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):**

The House would be aware that a resolution was passed in the Legislative Council and referred to the House of Assembly for its agreement. I am pleased to support this motion. What the Federal Government was attempting to do was absolutely scandalous. We have thousands of people in South Australia who draw a very meagre income from shares, yet not only was the income of those shares to be taken into account but also capital appreciation was also being brought to bear as income.

I do not know any country in the Western world where the elderly citizens would be treated so shamefully. It is only strong opposition from the Federal Liberal Party and some others from other Parties who have joined together that has ensured that justice prevails in these circumstances. We did not hear members opposite decrying the measures of the Federal Labor Party. We did not hear them standing up to be

counted and saying that this measure is wrong, it is unjust and it will deprive those people who can ill afford it.

We all encourage savings. Recently surveys have indicated that the level of savings has deteriorated by 20 per cent in the past two years. That is a dramatic decline. At the same time, the Treasurer of this country is saying we have to improve the level of savings. There are some recognised ways of improving savings; there are recognised ways of improving the wealth of this country. Besides putting the money in the bank, there are other measures such as superannuation funds and share investments. This is a very important form of investment, particularly for many of those people who have held their shares for years. Quite often they have been very modest investments at that.

Most members of this Parliament at some stage have held shares. They have not discharged them when they have deemed that the share market is at its top and they should sell out. Many of them invest their shares for life. They hold them as an asset. They believe it is an investment in their own country—in the production of this country. Let us be quite aware that, when we are talking about investment in shares, we are normally talking about investment in Australia and its future. For the Federal Prime Minister and the Federal Treasurer to determine that those people who had retired and had share portfolios should then be subject to the iniquitous changes they were prepared to bring in reflects poorly on the Australian Labor Party. I know that some members opposite have expressed concern, but their voices were not loud enough. It was only the combined opposition in the Federal Parliament that managed to change the mind of the Government.

It is important to understand that the mind change reflects only on retrospectivity, so the changes that have now been agreed to as some form of compromise relate only to those shares which have been bought very recently and from there on. But I would have thought there was a principle here. I believe that income from shares should attract taxation, as it does, and the pension should be lowered if it is beyond the threshold. So, there are ways and means of ensuring that people do not hide their income through share transactions. There are ways and means to ensure that the social security system is not called upon to provide more and more resources. But at a time when interest rates are at an all time low—at least in the past 20 years—and when those retirees are really struggling to earn a decent income from their investments, I find it appalling that the Federal Government should move in the fashion that it has.

This motion is important. It is important to lay the ground rules. It is important for this Parliament to express its point of view on this matter and to say quite clearly to the Federal Government that the taxing of capital gains on shares for pensioners or the reduction of pensions because of the unearned income is not on. The Parliament should reject that proposition that the Federal Prime Minister and the Federal Treasurer are promoting and, indeed, will further pursue. At least because of the opposition, we now find that the retrospectivity has been withdrawn. We now find that those people who have kept shares for 20, 30 or even 5 years will not be caught under those provisions, and for that we can be thankful.

**Mr HOLLOWAY** secured the adjournment of the debate.

## SELECT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

**The Hon. R.J. GREGORY (Minister of Labour Relations and Occupational Health and Safety):** I move:

That the time for bringing up the final report of the committee be extended until Tuesday 16 November.

Motion carried.

## APPROPRIATION BILL

**The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD (Baudin):** I bring up the report of Estimates Committee A, and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

**The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD:** I bring up the minutes of proceedings of Estimates Committee A, and move:

That the minutes of proceedings be incorporated in the votes and proceedings.

Motion carried.

**The Hon. J.C. BANNON (Ross Smith):** I bring up the report of Estimates Committee B, and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

**The Hon. J.C. BANNON:** I bring up the minutes of proceedings of Estimates Committee B, and move:

That the minutes of proceedings be incorporated in the votes and proceedings.

Motion carried.

**The Hon. R.J. GREGORY (Minister of Labour Relations and Occupational Health and Safety):** I move:

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

**Mr S.J. BAKER (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** When considering the estimates, it is important to understand the context in which we discuss those matters and the outcome of the budget itself. When I debated the budget, I said that it was a fraud: it was a fraud on the people and a fraud on our future. I have not changed my mind about that. In fact, the Estimates Committees reinforced the opinion that I expressed at the time. It has no vision; it has no future; and it does not take us anywhere. It involves a mad grab for money from whatever sources the Government had available to it. Therefore, in plain and simple terminology, it is a crook budget.

Whilst the illusion of responsibility was created, that was far from the truth. I remind members that the budget survives only because of a number of measures that were taken by the Treasurer. The State revenue is increasing in real terms by 13.6 per cent, from \$1 886 million to \$2 231 million in this year. The first instalment of \$263 million of the State Bank bail-out is being kept off budget to fund redundancies. The sum of \$300 million is being ripped out of the State Bank. The amount of \$20 million is being taken from SGIC when \$42 million worth of losses were incurred. The sum of \$142 million, which was not readily apparent when the budget was brought before this Parliament, is being taken from special deposit accounts over and above what we would have expected.

So, the Government is claiming a surplus of \$120 million for the 1993-94 financial year but, without these one-off corrections, the deficit would have exceeded \$200 million. In fact, if we take into account the impact of the special

deposit accounts, the deficit would have exceeded \$300 million by some considerable amount. Despite promises of no tax increases, land tax rates for property holdings greater than \$1 million are set to increase by a massive 32 per cent. On the employment front, despite promises that the Government would control the size of the public sector and reduce it by at least 3 000 people, 1 500 in the past financial year, we found out that only 683 were no longer employed and that very few of those 1 500 targeted separation packages had occurred.

In relation to the SAFA accounts, we found that another fiddle had been done by removing the \$421 million equity interest from Woods and Forests and SATCO and given back to the Government to avoid a write-down of its value and so cook the books. Borrowings increased dramatically again; they increased by \$866 million to meet the \$316 million shortfall in the budget last financial year and the \$550 million for the State Bank indemnity. Again, we heard the problems suffered in relation to the Collins Street property, with further losses totalling \$66 million. To remove those losses from the SAFA accounts, they were transferred to the GAMD, so that SAFA could again show an abnormal profit situation in the future.

So, much financial manipulation has occurred in the past 12 months, and its origins are quite simple: it is a deliberate attempt by the Government to cook the books to enable it to run through the election, even though we know that it is technically bankrupt and that it does not have the answers, yet it will continue to play the role it has played in recent years and try to fiddle the figures to provide a more rosy picture of State finances than exists.

That was the background and the information that was known at the time we entered the Estimates Committee. As usual, I found the Estimates Committee to be very productive, because we were able to canvass a number of important issues to which answers have been provided. Importantly, the fifth bail-out now looms larger than the Government suggests, because if we look at last year's results and translate them into what this year will bring, given the very little movement in property values—and they may reduce even further with the latest land tax increases—we can assume that the \$113 million left of the \$3 150 million bail-out will be quite inadequate, and that that will prove to be the case.

The State Bank building, which was estimated originally to cost about \$60 million and then \$80 million, eventually cost \$125 million plus the cost of the land component. That was the cost of the actual building, but since that time it has accumulated further interest costs to take the total cost to \$208 million. Of course, property values have been downgraded dramatically recently due to loss of confidence in South Australia and other States; however, South Australia appears to have suffered a more dramatic decline in property values than has occurred in other States. So, the State Bank building will have a massive write-off, which could be as much as \$140 million.

We discovered that the State Bank made a profit of \$87 million prior to adjustments, but it came to our attention further that \$40 million came from money markets, securities and investments operated by the global treasury of State Bank. Of considerable concern is that that amount of \$40 million was earned on a massive investment of \$4 145 million, of which \$1.5 million was invested offshore. So, that amount of \$40 million came from money market and securities activities which, according to my terminology, is playing the market and subjecting the bank to further risk.

That matter will have to be examined further when we are able to look at the books.

SAFA was not shy, either, in its money market dealings. It had \$3 800 million in the marketplace from which it also earned a profit of about \$40 million. If we total the money market and securities activities of SAFA and the State Bank, we find that about \$8 billion is being played on the market, and that must be cause for concern. We have been told that there is no risk, no sweat, that nothing can go wrong, but we have heard those guarantees before. Reviewing the quality of the borrowings and loans of each of these cases must be a priority. We have heard it all before. We have heard that whatever the State Bank and the South Australian Government Financing Authority do is appropriate, but we no longer believe it. With \$8 billion worth of assets being played on the market I have some concerns and they must be satisfied.

During the Estimates Committee, the Treasurer undertook to provide the letter of exchange from the Commonwealth regarding the State Bank bail-out of \$647 million, but surprise, surprise, we have no letter; instead, we have been given a further explanation that is consistent with the information that has already been provided to the Parliament. So, despite the Treasurer's saying, 'I will provide you with the letter', again we are left with an explanation and no letter. I demand that that letter be provided, because some funny business is going on at the ranch.

As we are all aware, the original proposition of \$647 million (\$600 million in 1993 money terms) was meant to go toward meeting debt reduction, but the rules have changed. The first bank bail-out is now meeting redundancy payments. According to this budget, the second bank bail-out of \$150 million is going straight into current revenue. This must be questioned. We want to see the letter of exchange that took place, because what the Parliament was told then is not what is happening now. We would like to know more about this agreement than we have been told. It is a great way to do business: you have a simple exchange of letters and then you can change the goal posts as you continue. It may well be that the State has benefited from this deal, but we must assume that there was a binding agreement at some stage, and that agreement has been broken for whatever gain. We want to see the letter of exchange and the terms under which that bail-out was negotiated.

Another important item of information that came out of the Estimates Committee concerns special deposit accounts relating to occupational superannuation, targeted separation packages and the further indemnity payment for the State Bank. These special deposit accounts involve \$600 million: three accounts with an asset of \$600 million sitting in them. We learnt from the Estimates Committee that those special deposit accounts are not earning interest in their own right; that interest is being transferred into the budget. We may question whether the occupational superannuation fund, which is so limited in this State and which was guaranteed to be fully funded by 1994-95, can afford to have its interest earnings paid into the recurrent budget. That must be highly questionable, despite the information provided by the Treasurer which suggests that it is being paid into the recurrent budget until such time as the matter of taxation on occupational superannuation has been satisfied.

Questions were asked about the number of guarantees that are outstanding and the total sum that has been guaranteed by this State Government. The Opposition and the people of South Australia would like to know the answers to those

questions. In response to a question during the Estimates Committee the Treasurer said that we could not have the list because they did not know whether it was quite correct as it was still being audited, and that we may have it by the end of this year. I suspect that the figures are so large and daunting and represent a considerable liability should something go wrong that the Government does not intend to issue that list prior to election. Again, we have no information. We need information; the people deserve this information and we did not get it.

In relation to catastrophe insurance, the Treasury has opened its arms and taken in the accounts of the Electricity Trust of South Australia, the South Australian Housing Trust, the Festival Centre and a number of other authorities. The only authority to escape its grasp at this stage appears to be the Metropolitan Fire Brigade. If there was a major catastrophe within, say, the Electricity Trust, it was covered on the international market—we had coverage for that—but now it is drawn into the same net with the remaining \$24 billion worth of assets of the State Government, and the total amount of coverage for catastrophe insurance remains at \$375 million. This is another disaster waiting to happen. It is absolutely vital that this State be covered for this eventuality.

I can share a secret here, although it will not be a secret any more: SGIC feels there is a risk about earthquakes, the international insurers feel there is a risk about earthquakes, and an excess of \$1 000 has now been put on all household policies should an earthquake occur. It has not received publicity, but I think it is an important matter, because the international insurers, given that they have been exposed to some very large risks in recent times—given the impact of the Newcastle disaster—are now saying that Adelaide is at risk and we have to cover ourselves appropriately. There is a premium to be paid, but let us ensure that we are covered adequately.

We know that occupational superannuation payments under the superannuation guarantee scheme amount to only \$138 million. That is what has been paid into the special deposit account, but the liability is now over \$300 million, and of course there is underproviding. So, the Government says, 'We will not meet our liabilities, we will not affect the budget; we will put off the payment day so that the next Government faces the problem', yet this has blown out to such an extent that it is becoming far more difficult to afford, and we need to be able to fund that area right now so that we do not have galloping liabilities. That is because the Government promised originally that the superannuation scheme would be funded by 1994-95. Again it is another broken promise.

At the same time the superannuation liabilities of the State Government have exploded from \$3 545 million at 30 June 1992 to \$4 264 million at 30 June 1993: an increase of \$719 million. A substantial part of that, of course, was due to the discount factor, which is now lower than it was previously and will continue to decrease and cause further problems in the future because of the prevailing low interest rates and low inflation.

Under the heading of 'Lies, lies and more lies', we have the statement of no taxation increases, yet property holders of over \$1 million are being subject to a 32 per cent rate hike. The highest rate in Australia for land tax is 3.7 per cent. The Treasurer said it affects only 2 per cent of taxpayers, but I would remind the Treasurer that thousands of tenants ultimately have to pay the bills. It is interesting to note that 75 per cent of the land tax paid in this State is paid as a result

of the rates imposed on or about to be imposed on those properties of \$1 million or more.

Another interesting item is that the GAMD has not done its budget for 1993-94. Everybody plans for the future, or I hope they do. We expect corporations to do it, we expect Governments to do it, yet we have the astonishing revelation from the Manager that no budget had been done for 1993-94—and that, of course, was in relation to what the ultimate bail-out figure would be if matters continued to deteriorate. So, it was quite apparent that the \$113 million left in the indemnity would be well and truly exceeded.

We also heard about the structured finance vehicle called Ollago. We already know about Kabani, the off balance sheet company, and the financial deals associated with that. We believed that was all past. But not this Government. It has now developed a new vehicle called Ollago, which means that it is a structured finance arrangement where two financial institutions have actually paid the bills and the State Bank is required to come up with the \$208 million during 1996.

There is an amount of \$30 million Government guarantee associated with the State Bank, but the Treasurer guaranteed that that matter is still being negotiated and there is no given formula, yet we have a revenue item of \$30 million stuck in the budget. A large number of other items came to our attention during the budget and Estimates debates. It is important to note that this State cannot continue to operate with a Treasurer and a Premier who have no financial competence and who display such financial ineptitude. It is absolutely vital, as revealed in those Estimates, that we get this State's finances under control, for not to do so will mean that we will indeed be bankrupt and declared so by international bankers. So, the message from the Estimates is that we need a change of Government and we need better financial management.

**Mr OLSEN (Kavel):** In responding to this Appropriation debate I want to canvass a couple of issues: first, to consider the operation and functions of the Estimates Committees; and, secondly, to look at some budgetary measures, particularly as they relate to South Australia and repositioning South Australia for its economic future, which singularly the budget fails to address in any meaningful way.

First, in relation to the Estimates Committees, I think I mentioned during last year's debate my concern at the way in which the Estimates Committees were operating and the abuse of the system and the procedures by Government Ministers and members. That was no more evident than in the Estimates Committee of which I was a member, in dealing with a range of questions on business and regional development and economic development matters—the key issue facing South Australia now and over the course of the next decade. Time and time again we witnessed questions being asked of the Minister where the Minister had prepared in advance three and four-page answers, and I think at one stage—and the record will note—that of a 30-minute period during which I timed the questions and answers of the Minister of Business and Regional Development the Opposition had about eight or nine minutes. The member for Albert Park could confirm this because he was a member of the Committee and he will attest to the fact—

**Mr HAMILTON:** On a point of order, Sir, I do not intend to confirm anything the honourable member says.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr OLSEN:** Indeed, there is no point of order. He was a member of the Committee. He sat in and did not object to my drawing to the attention of the Estimates Committee that over a 30-minute period the Opposition had seven, eight or nine minutes total response time from the Minister. The rest of the time was taken up by questions—dorothy dixers, no doubt—of the Minister, who just coincidentally had three and four-page answers typed out in advance. That is an abuse of the Estimates Committees.

The objective is: there is a set time for any Estimates Committees before which any Minister has to appear. How do we minimise the risk factor for the Government and the Minister of the day? We do it by allocating the time, getting the dorothy dixers, with exceptionally long answers to the Dorothy dixers, so that the available time during which the Minister will be questioned and scrutinised before the Committee actually contracts to a point where the Minister cannot be tackled in any meaningful way, unlike the Estimates Committees that operate interstate and certainly in the Federal Parliament.

I can speak with a little authority on the Senate Estimates Committees: they operate well, and no Parliament, parliamentarian or interest group in the community would deny that the Senate Estimates Committees are anything other than productive and that they afford a total scrutiny of the Government, the Ministers and departmental officers as to the way in which they operate before those Estimates Committees. The reason they are most effective is that there is no time limit for Ministers to get dorothy dixers up and abuse the system by taking out the time available for the Opposition to ask its questions.

I sat on a number of our recent Estimates Committees and there were a series of questions that we had prepared in advance that we wanted to ask the Ministers, but we were unable to do so simply because time had beaten us. The Ministers know time can beat us if they plan their response to the questions effectively and they have their departments spend hours, days and weeks in advance preparing those answers to block out the time. But in the Senate it does not work like that, because the Estimates Committees in the Senate will sit until every member of those Senate Estimates Committees has asked every question they want to ask of the Ministers and departmental advisers. In that way members cannot abuse the system. One is totally accountable and totally responsible before the Estimates Committees, and that is why they work so satisfactorily.

If we want this Parliament to have a primary role over the function of Government rather than the other way around, we have to give Parliament the capacity, through the Estimates Committees, to pursue Ministers and their departmental advisers, question them and hold them accountable to the Parliament and therefore to the taxpayers and the public of South Australia. The only way to do that is to remove the capacity to abuse the system, which is what I have seen over the past two years in South Australia.

*Mrs Kotz interjecting:*

**Mr OLSEN:** I agree with the member for Newland, and I hope that in the not too distant future we will be able to have open and honest Government, frank Government, accountable Government, and responsible Government, because members opposite know full well that under the guise of commercial confidentiality over the past 10 years we have not had open, frank, honest, accountable and responsible Government. That is why we have a \$3.15 billion debt hanging on one property as a result of the State Bank and its operations in South

Australia, let alone the money that has been lost in a range of other 'commercial' enterprises that this Government has entered into over the past 10 years. As the Arthur D. Little report said, it was the wrong policy direction for a decade that has certainly done this State a great disservice. It is a great disservice by a Government that has walked away from accountability and responsibility for the financial management of South Australia.

The key issue that South Australians want to know about is job security and protection for the future. This budget and the strategy incorporated in it are silent on creating an environment for job security and job creation for South Australians, because it does not recognise the fundamental basis of job creation; that is, job creation comes from business enterprises. Business enterprises cannot and will not create jobs unless they are profitable and unless there is restored incentive and encouragement for business enterprises to create job opportunities. We have removed the flexibility, and as a result of that we have removed any encouragement or any incentive for people to employ.

That is why the 56 000 small business operators in South Australia employing something like 48.7 per cent of the total work force in this State have been discouraged from creating job opportunities. It is because of the hurdles, the impediments, the regulations and the restrictions we have applied to the small business community. Until and unless Governments start retreating from putting up hurdles—whether they be taxes, charges, costs or regulations—for those small business people will not in any meaningful way create job opportunities for South Australians.

To that extent this budget remains silent on a meaningful strategy to create jobs for South Australians. Is it any wonder that in recent statistics it was identified that South Australia had the lowest growth rate of any State or Territory—that must hurt—in Australia? Why is that? If people look at the economic horizon in South Australia and if they look at the security and the prospects for their children, they see that the prospects are better elsewhere. That is an environment—

*Mr Hamilton interjecting:*

**Mr OLSEN:** If you want to talk about mineral development, the only Government that has ever put mineral development on the agenda in South Australia in any meaningful way was the last Liberal Government with the Roxby Downs/Olympic Dam project. If you remember rightly—

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr OLSEN:** If the member for Albert Park remembers rightly—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member must address the Chair and not use the second person pronoun.

**Mr OLSEN:** Mr Deputy Speaker, you full well know that I corrected myself immediately I said 'you' and referred to the member for Albert Park.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I hope that the honourable member is not defying the Chair.

**Mr OLSEN:** I am not; I am just pointing out to the Chair that I corrected myself.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I am asking, and I think I have been—

*Members interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! We are going to have order here or this debate will take a sudden turn for the worse. I asked the honourable member to address the Chair properly, and it is in the Standing Orders that he should do so. He was



using the second person personal pronoun 'you', and I ask him to address the Chair as he should.

**Mr OLSEN:** Indeed I will, Mr Deputy Speaker. As the record will show, I have referred to you, Sir, on a number of occasions in the 10 minutes that I have had so far, and on only one occasion did I use the word 'you', and I immediately corrected myself and referred to 'the member for Albert Park'. Your promptness is commendable, Mr Deputy Speaker, but I responded immediately I used the word 'you', as the member for Albert Park would well know.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**Mr OLSEN:** That is a title—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr OLSEN:** We must have wealth generation in South Australia. We have to stop apologising for those businesses that are profitable, because only out of profitable businesses will we generate job opportunities. I repeat: this budget is silent on wealth generation, wealth creation, job generation and job creation in South Australia. The way in which we will do that is to recognise that most important sector, the small business sector, which the former Premier referred to as the 'economic engine of South Australia'. I do not disagree with that, but we have seen only lip service rather than Government action to generate support for the economic engine room of the economy of South Australia.

The Institute of Chartered Accountants referred recently to those issues which were important to the small business sector and which must be put on the agenda. They included the high level of taxes and charges that need to be reduced. This budget does not provide any meaningful reduction in taxes and charges on the small business sector. In fact, we see an increase in land tax that will have an impact on a range of small business operators in shopping centres throughout the metropolitan area of Adelaide. It is a rate increase greater than the CPI; a rate increase that takes the level of land tax in South Australia to the highest rate of any State in Australia. Is that any way to ensure that small business has an even and fair chance of being profitable in a depressed economy, an economy like South Australia's that is operating on a lower base than any other economy in Australia? No, it is not. It is an impediment and a further hurdle and restriction to the support of small business within the community.

We see a range of other taxes and charges that have a direct impact on small business. The simple fact is that, if Government is to reduce the cash flow of those small businesses through taxes and charges, they will simply not create jobs. The other issue is that employers need flexibility in relation to the employment of people. The trouble is that under the current system there is not the flexibility for employers to employ and not to employ—to put people on and to put them off as circumstances dictate.

Members opposite like to talk about those in the business community as people who sack wholesale, without regard to the impact on employees. I can assure you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that most small business operators who work side by side with employees year in and year out have great difficulty in terminating employment in the workplace. They are not like the big plants or factories where it is impersonal. It is very personal for the 56 000 small business operators when, as a result of circumstances, they have to retrench employees. I suggest that the record would show that many small businesses avoid retrenchment to their detriment, and that in fact many fold because they try to hang on longer because of the personal relationship between them and their employees. Members opposite have no regard for that and no

understanding. I suppose I can understand that because none of them, in terms of the ministry, have had any—

*Mr Hamilton interjecting:*

**Mr OLSEN:** I beg your pardon.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member will not be drawn by interjections, and I ask the member for Albert Park to desist.

**Mr OLSEN:** None of them have employed people, and none of them would know the impact, the cost impediments, the restrictions placed on small business people, the lack of flexibility in the current system and the personal trauma of putting off someone with whom you have worked side by side year after year. Many people avoid putting someone off to the detriment of their business, and many people and many businesses have collapsed as a result of people not willing to take that step. But that is not given any regard in the decision-making of Government simply because members of the Government do not understand it—they have never been in that situation.

*Mr Hamilton interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the member for Albert Park to desist.

**Mr OLSEN:** I have not been a trade union official, but I have been a member of a trade union.

*Mr Hamilton interjecting:*

**Mr OLSEN:** The Australian Bank Officials Union. When I was a bank employee in my early years I was a member of the union.

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr OLSEN:** I was a member of the union. When I became employed I joined the union of the bank that I worked for, so I have been a member of a union. In relation to the view put forward by the member for Albert Park—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**Mr OLSEN:** I am not shaken on the fact that I was a member of a union. I was pleased to join. I did so for a particular purpose and it served its purpose. In their single-minded determination members opposite ignore the fact that employers also have a legitimate case that needs to be considered. Members opposite clearly do not take that on board.

**Mr Venning:** It's a one-sided affair.

**Mr OLSEN:** It is a one-sided argument, and we see that clearly in the Government's policy direction. There is no debt management strategy in South Australia. That is identified in the economic development plan to be released at the end of this week. The economic development plan clearly identifies the fact that international investors look at South Australia and worry about investment in this State simply because there is no economic development strategy and there is no debt management strategy, and as a result it is a higher risk to invest in South Australia than any other State in Australia because of the prospect of higher taxes and charges to cover that debt level. That works against investment in plant and equipment and modernisation of plant and equipment to make us internationally competitive to access those export markets.

Until and unless we get a proper debt management strategy in place, Moody's and Standard and Poor's will not give South Australia an appropriate credit rating that will bring down our debt servicing costs. Until and unless we receive a proper credit rating and achieve a reduction in our debt servicing costs we will not be able to reduce the taxes and charges that impact upon the small business community. It is the small business community that has the capacity to create jobs for South Australians of the future, to generate

some confidence and overcome the psychological barrier that persists and prevails in the South Australian economy. We have to break through that to crank up this economy. We must get it off its knees and offer incentive and encouragement for people to employ again, and that will only happen from the small business sector.

The economic development plan to be released on Friday identifies the simple fact that Asian investors look at South Australia and see that it takes longer to obtain business approval in this State than any other State in Australia. So why would they want to invest in South Australia *vis-a-vis* any other State of Australia? We need to tackle that. A survey undertaken by the Economic Development Board of our major Asian partners identified the fact that we are the bottom rung of the ladder in terms of the approval process to get projects up and running. If they have to undertake environmental impact statements and feasibility studies, which can amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars, why would they invest in South Australia given that set of circumstances *vis-a-vis* other States or *vis-a-vis* South-East Asia? There is an international market place within which we have to compete, but we are not doing that because this Government is not prepared to tackle some of the hard issues to put us in a position to compete.

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

**Mr INGERSON (Bragg):** A couple of administrative exercises came up during the Estimates Committee that concerned me, and I refer to the tabling of documents in relation to long questions that all shadow Ministers asked of the Ministers. They were detailed questions that related to committees and membership of committees. We found that no member from either side of the House could table questions. In essence we had to do a deal with the Minister so that those questions could be answered by the Minister. I understand that they cannot be put into the *Hansard* record. That is one issue that we should look at in modernising the Estimates Committee system. It seems to me a pretty logical thing to do. Of course, the reverse is also true: technically a Minister cannot table any information that he might provide to the Committee and also have that recorded in *Hansard*. They are two simple administrative issues that we should look at to ensure that, in all future Estimates Committees, those issues are corrected by the Standing Orders Committee, which administers the Estimates Committees exercise.

I have never had the privilege of serving in the Senate. I did try once but failed. It appears that the Senate has a very intriguing approach, whereby members just sit there and ask questions until the Minister is exhausted. As Senator Bishop often finds, at the end of the process we might actually get some straight answers.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**Mr INGERSON:** There is no question about who set the thing up. It was set up with good intent by the Liberal Party. After 10 years of the Labor Government's abusing the system, when we get the opportunity next year to straighten it out we will make sure that some of these issues are taken on board and improved. I spent two interesting days in Estimates Committee B with the former Premier as Chairman. It was interesting because I never thought he had a sense of humour, but on several occasions he showed some sense of humour, and he showed that he was an excellent statistician. He brought a new role to the chairmanship of those Committees. Over the past two or three years I was on

Committees with older retiring previous Ministers who did not show quite the same grace to the Opposition in terms of the chairmanship of those Committees.

In the Department of Labour Estimates there were a couple of very interesting questions that, in essence, were ducked by the Minister. The first related to the Industry Commission's draft report. Whilst there was a very long-winded answer from the Minister, when you read it, it referred to a couple of visits to Canada and a couple of directions that may or may not be taken in occupational health and safety. However, the key issue of whether there should be one authority was really passed over by the Minister.

What I mean by one authority is there is a strong recommendation in that draft industry commission report that it would be a much better system if we had both prevention through occupational health and safety and actual compensation and rehabilitation relating to accidents in the workplace all brought together under the one authority.

In his reply, the Minister suggested that New South Wales had found that this system was no good and was considering change. I telephoned the New South Wales authorities last week to find out how they viewed the Minister's comments, and they told me that they are very happy with the way the system is progressing. They believed there were some tremendous advantages by having inspectors in the workplace not only to check up on breaches but to encourage the owners and the workers to improve occupational health and safety in the workplace. In other words, there is a broadening of the role of inspector. It expanded their interest; it enabled them to be there as enforcers; and it also enabled them to be there to encourage all members of the workplace to improve their standards and consequently reduce the number of accidents.

Further, a question was asked in relation to WorkCover costs, and Mr Owens clearly stated to the committee that there is no doubt that the improvement of occupational health and safety has a significant effect of reducing claims. There is no question about that. We support that argument and believe that we have a long way to go to improve occupational health and safety in the workplace, and there is a long way to go to convince the managers and owners as well as the work force that those improvements not only are of benefit in terms of cost to the company but are of significant benefit to the overall workplace and particularly to the workers themselves. Mr Owens made one very important point: in discussing the performance of WorkCover, he said:

Two years ago when we had 57 000 claims, the annual cost of funding WorkCover was about \$280 million. In the past year, when claim numbers were down to 39 000, the cost of operating the scheme was about \$220 million.

Obviously, there is a \$60 million difference between the two. As I have been saying, and I note also that Mr Owens has been saying, it is the reduction in the number of claims which has brought the WorkCover system under control and not, as the Minister has been claiming, administration improvements, changes to the Act and also occupational health and safety. The reality is that \$60 million has been saved because the claims have dropped from 57 000 a year to 39 000.

Whilst I do not want to predict that there will be an increase, history has shown that, when we come out of recessions, there is a significant increase in claims, and that would suggest that we will go back into deficit very quickly with the existing workers compensation scheme run by WorkCover if there is not a continual reduction and management of occupational health and safety. So, it is important to

note (and we are very happy to support this aspect strongly) that WorkCover has at last become fully funded, but our concern, the concern that I expressed right through the select committee's hearings and the concern I expressed last week is that we have a result because the number of claims here has been reduced to a far greater extent than interstate.

One other point that needs to be made when we look at the workers compensation scheme that is run for the private sector through WorkCover is that at the moment there is a very large number of small operators in particular who are not making claims on the WorkCover system. I said this last week, and it is a reality that, because of the bonus penalty scheme, small businesses are not making claims. They are taking a punt that the small, up-front costs they are currently incurring will not develop into long-term claims. There is no doubt that that is significantly effecting a reduction in the number of claims and it may (but I hope not) again show a significant turnaround and put the scheme back into the red.

It has also been suggested to me that many claims in the system are not apparent when statistics on the number of claims are collated. In other words, claims are locked into a very slow processing system and we are not seeing them come through the system when the actuarial results are taken.

The other interesting point was that the Minister spent some time telling us that the stress levels in the Education Department have been a disappointment. It would have to be a disappointment to every member of the select committee as well, because the select committee spent a considerable amount of time looking at the reasons for stress and at the ways and means in which there can be an improvement. The Minister and other members of the committee were told by Dr Clayer, who worked for the Government, I understand, that better management of claims in the Education Department would be the quickest and easiest way to reduce problems of stress. It was also pointed out to us at that time that management of the patient does not occur for two or three months. It is staggering to me that, some two years after that argument was put to the select committee, we still have the Minister saying that he is disappointed with the results in the Education Department.

The industry commission report on WorkCover which recommended possible changes to schemes around Australia referred to an examination of benefits to ascertain whether the existing structure for the payment of benefits under workers compensation in this and other States was the best way to do it. Reference was made to the need to have a structure that recognised that the serious and long-term injured should have a higher rate of benefits over a longer period of time. It was recommended that the partially permanently injured and the short-term injured should also have different scales of payment.

There is no doubt that the whole process of payment of benefits is back to front. It is absolutely wrong that people who are injured for a short time should get 100 per cent of their benefits but those who are seriously injured and are badly disabled, perhaps permanently, should get only 70 per cent or, in some States, 60 per cent of the benefits over a long period of time.

It seems to me that the whole process is back to front because the short-termers, who in essence are injured at work—and there is no question about compensation—should get less than those who are genuinely injured and who will never work again; they should get better benefits. I have always believed that that should be the case. The general direction that has been set down as a recommendation of the

Industry Assistance Commission is the way we should be looking to pay workers compensation benefits to workers in the future.

The commission also made the interesting comments that journey accidents should be totally removed from the scheme and that any free-time accidents should be removed, and I support both those recommendations very strongly. It is a disgrace that people can claim squash, tennis or golfing accidents or accidents that occur when they are out in their lunchtime jogging and keeping fit as part of workers compensation. Those sorts of things must be cleaned up so that we can have a scheme that can afford to pay better and more logical benefits to those who are genuinely injured long-term at work.

The other committee of which I was a member involved the Minister of Tourism. That was an absolutely fascinating committee. The Minister obviously got out of the wrong side of the bed on that day. He had decided that he was going to grandstand, as only the Minister of Tourism can do. He decided that he would like to make a song and dance about the Grand Prix. He decided that, for some fictitious reason, the Opposition might pull a stunt on that day. Coming from the Minister of Tourism, who has been known to pull more stunts, to be involved in more fabrication of more issues than any member of this House, that is quite an amazing statement. However, in the end, the truth prevailed.

The Minister had to admit begrudgingly to the Committee that there had always been bipartisan support for the Grand Prix, and I suspect in my time in this House there will continue to be. I only hope that his partisanship does not cause us any difficulties in negotiating the Grand Prix for this State in the medium to long-term. I hope that, when Dr Hemmerling does go to talk to Mr Ecclestone in the next week or so, the truth of the matter, that is, the support for the Grand Prix of both Parties (and I believe sometimes, depending on which parkland it is held in, that of the Democrats) is made known to Mr Ecclestone.

The other fascinating thing about the tourism estimates was the throwing around of money by the Minister. In listening to the proceedings of that committee, one could believe that money was coming out of a hat. The sum of \$2.2 million went to the Barossa, and someone then asked, 'Well, what about the \$2 million extra in marketing that is not in the budget?' The answer was, 'That's all right; that's come out of the Economic Development Authority.' Then \$500 000 was spent, again in the Barossa Valley, for the new centre; \$300 000 was spent at Port Augusta for the Arid Zone Botanic Park; and suddenly \$10 million came out for an extended runway at the airport, and so it went on. Some \$16 million that was not heralded in either the economic authority budget or in the tourism budget suddenly was plucked out of the hat. It is fascinating that all this money will suddenly end up in tourism projects that have been talked about for the past 10 years.

**The Hon. T.R. GROOM (Minister of Primary Industries):** I move:

That the time for moving the adjournment of the House be extended beyond 10 p.m.

**Mr HAMILTON (Albert Park):** I welcome the opportunity to enter this debate. It was not my intention to do so, but my good friend the ex-Senator was very provocative, and I thought, 'Well, Kevin, don't miss the chance.' Of course, the member for Bragg, who stood against me in 1982, also

entered the debate, and I thought he too was rather provocative. I thought that perhaps I should make a contribution from this side of the House to put on the record how I feel about some of the statements that have been made.

I listened intently to the criticisms of members opposite about the budget Estimates Committees and how they were run. I remind the House that in 1980 it was the Tonkin Liberal Government that set up the budget Estimates Committees. If my memory serves me correctly—and I hope it does—it was the member for Hanson who, after visiting California, advocated this procedure. I can remember the long hours we spent in Opposition, from 1979 to 1982, rigorously trying to question the Tonkin Liberal Government Ministers about estimates. It was relay after relay of members on the other side of the House, between 1979 and 1982—

*Mr Meier interjecting:*

**Mr HAMILTON:** Contain yourself; you'll get a go in a minute. We had to spend many hours, from 2 o'clock in the afternoon when the House sat right through until between 5 or 9 o'clock the next morning. So the member for Goyder, who was not here at the time, would not have experienced that, but I did. To protect the Ministers—

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr HAMILTON:** I cannot hear what the member for Goyder is saying, because I have a bit of industrial deafness—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The chair has no industrial deafness, and the honourable member has been interrupting all day. I remember warning the honourable member before, and I again draw his attention to the fact that interjections are out of order.

**Mr HAMILTON:** I could not hear what he was saying, but you, Mr Speaker, obviously can, and I thank you for your protection. I can remember the many hours we spent here trying to question the Ministers of the Tonkin Government. To protect themselves, they decided to change the system. Let me remind the House of the statements that were made by the then Premier (pages 682 and 683 of *Hansard* of 27 August 1980). The then Premier and Treasurer, the Hon. David Tonkin, moved that Standing Orders be suspended for the remainder of the session in relation to Appropriation Bill (No. 2) and the Public Purposes Loan Bill. He said:

With regard to providing more time in which this House can consider the budget, the Government believes that the establishment of Estimates Committees, in the terms proposed, will provide greater opportunity than ever before for all members to inform themselves of the details of public financial management.

That was in the *Hansard* of that time, and that is fact. It related to the Estimates Committees. That was the proposal and, indeed, the Liberal Party set up that process in the Parliament.

I remember vividly as a humble backbencher sitting back in awe of this Parliament and thinking, 'How will I question this Government opposite?' Time after time, Government members of the day frustrated the will of the Opposition and, like the traditional Paddy's dog, when the tail turned they could not wear it. So, let them not sit here and grieve about the system that they themselves set up. They were the ones who stipulated the time allocation, with only one day on which to question Ministers in the Estimates Committees; it was not members on this side who did that, because the then Leader of the Opposition expressed opposition to that on page 685 of *Hansard* of 27 August when he stated:

However, I sound a note of caution in that we are embarking on an experimental path and until we have gone through the first set of

estimates and the first budget consideration we will not really be able to assess whether or not the procedure proposed is adequate or has improved our consideration of the budget.

That was in 1980. Some people have a short memory, but for some things I have a very long memory.

Members opposite talked about Dorothy Dixers. There is no doubt that all Governments of all political persuasions provide questions for their colleagues to ask. I am a realist, and I do not hide behind anything; I have seen this practised by members on both sides of the House. So, let us not hear these cries of 'Foul play' from members opposite. As to the questions asked by me, I believe it is a good opportunity for any member of Parliament who is concerned about their electorate to raise any problems that exist, because they should address those problems first. Their electors put them in this place. They are the ones who every three or four years elect us at the ballot box as their representatives. My commitment to my electorate over a period of 14 years is well recognised—my electorate comes first. If there are any issues on which I can grill Ministers, whether in Opposition or in Government, I will do so. I will come back to that matter later if time permits.

I listened to the comments of the member for Bragg about grandstanding. On each day that I attended the Estimates Committees there was a stunt by the Opposition with a diatribe and vitriol being directed at the Minister. The member for Fisher launched a diatribe, a prepared contribution, against the Minister of Education, Employment and Training.

*Mr Such interjecting:*

**Mr HAMILTON:** I recall the honourable member reading, sitting there and flicking over the pages. If he tells me that it was not a prepared contribution, I am Billy the goose, and I am certainly not that. I vividly recall him sitting in the Upper House reading a prepared contribution. So do not let him tell me that it was not a prepared contribution. It was a stunt-a-day contribution.

When the member for Bragg started to attack my colleague the Minister of Tourism, it was a joke, because we knew that the television cameras had been organised in the gallery for that stunt. I have seen it often. Let us not kid ourselves. We all know when a stunt is on, because suddenly there is a lot of activity and members on either side try to get a bit of publicity for themselves.

Let us come back to the member for Bragg, who spoke about industrial relations, a matter to which I am strongly committed. I was annoyed recently by the lack of publicity in the media regarding industrial deaths and accidents in this country. In the past five years, there have been 240 deaths in this State and numerous injuries to workers in the workplace. With few exceptions on the other side, we do not hear a great deal about these traumas and tragedies and their impact upon families. I am not saying that business is not affected—I know that it is—but it would be refreshing to hear from Opposition members some criticism of employers who are not prepared to toe the line in terms of occupational health and safety.

*A Current Affair* on Channel 9 the other night highlighted that more time is lost in this country and at greater cost to business houses through industrial deaths and accidents than industrial disputations. But do we hear about that in this place? We do not hear it from the other side. Recently, I visited Western Australia to listen to what that State is prepared to do. Despite all the promises made by the Court Government, workers from the Midland workshops in the

railway industry said that Court was a 'bloody liar', because he promised that the Midland workshops would be a centre of excellence, with about \$18 million to \$25 million being spent on upgrading the plant. Two months later the announcement was made to close the plant down with no consultation or discussion with the workers or the union. Bang! Down came the guillotine.

To compound matters and make them even worse, whilst I was there—and I invite any member opposite to have a look—the Liberal Government decided to cut out pieces of concrete along the steps of Parliament House and insert squares where metal stanchions could be erected at will. All they have to do is take off the caps, put in the metal stanchions and run a steel cable through. That is a reality. To my amazement, whilst I was talking to the Hon. Fred McKenzie, who is now retired, a police inspector pulled up with a minibus full of police officers who were, I was told, being instructed on how to control people outside Parliament. Is this an indication of what we are about in this country in terms of industrial relations?

I turn now to the somersaults and gyrations of members opposite, including the member for Bragg, who say that they do not support the Kennett line. Before the Victorian election, in the *Advertiser* of 25 August 1992, the member for Bragg stated:

Deputy Opposition Leader and industrial spokesman, Mr Graham Ingerson, was responding to a pre-election policy statement by the Victorian Opposition Leader, Mr Jeff Kennett, who has promised to rewrite the employment conditions of 600 000 Victorians working under State awards. Mr Ingerson said the Opposition supported the proposals 'in principle' and would release its own radical pre-election statements on industry and WorkCover before Christmas.

As a trade unionist said to me the other day, 'They are bloody liars.' Is it any wonder that workers are angry? The workers do not believe them. Why will they not release their policy? The member for Bragg said he would release the policy on WorkCover: he has not done so in terms of industrial relations. The *Advertiser* of 30 June 1993 stated:

Unions accuse Libs of hidden labour agenda.

I go back to 25 February 1982: very few members opposite want to recall the industrial relations attitude of the now Leader of the Opposition, then Minister of Labour, when he would not release the Cawthorne report on industrial relations in South Australia. It took a Labor Government, when it was re-elected in late 1982, to release that report. So, workers in this State cannot trust Opposition members.

We know that the Liberal Party has been instructed by Freehill, the consultants involved in the Victorian and Western Australian exercises, to keep quiet: 'Don't tell them what you're going to do, but when you get into power this is what you do in terms of workers compensation'! Let me give an illustration. Under the common law Bill before the Parliament in Western Australia, if a person has less than 30 per cent of compensatable injury there is no common law claim. That means that if a person loses a foot, an arm, or a leg below the knee, they have no common law claim.

When it comes to contracts, they are offering incentives for workers to go outside the award system, but once they have been outside the award system for 12 months what will they do, as they have done in the Pilbara so often? Once they are outside the award system they have no protection, and if they want to challenge the contract they have to employ their own legal counsel to take on the employer; there is no Industrial Relations Commission to protect them. What chance has an average worker of taking on the employers?

Zilch! They will drag employees through every court they can to frustrate the will of the worker.

I do not believe that many workers in this State really comprehend the extremes to which the Liberal Party will go to reverse the role that workers in this country have had for over 100 years with protection in the industrial scene. I do not care a great deal for myself, but I care for those workers out there: if they do not have the protection that currently applies they will get slaughtered industrially in terms of conditions.

Let me leave the House with this final illustration. In Western Australia under the Liberal Party if a person has a disability the employer can pay that person what they (the employer) want. It is not based on any intelligent interpretation or ability of that particular person: it is what the employer believes they can pay. The system is crook; it is one of the roughest rorts I have ever heard of in my life. I just hope that workers in this State do not fall for the same diatribe and nonsense that they have had in Victoria and are currently going through in Western Australia. I challenge members to go and talk to the trade union movement in Western Australia.

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

**Mr SUCH (Fisher):** The Estimates Committee process is an interesting one, and I suppose that is putting the mildest label on it. Nevertheless, despite its faults and the fact that we are obviously close to an election—and that will colour the behaviour of members participating in those Committees—it is and has been useful in at least assisting in the extraction of information from Government Ministers and departmental officers, and that information is something that is not easy to obtain during the remainder of the parliamentary year. At least during the Estimates Committee period we can obtain information which I believe the public of South Australia is entitled to know, and for that reason alone the Committees are worthwhile, but one would hope that in the future the system can be improved.

I was fortunate to lead a Committee on behalf of the Opposition, relating to the area of education, and despite and contrary to what the member for Albert Park asserts I have never yet read a speech in this Parliament. I always undertake some preparation, but I usually speak on the basis of some prepared notes. I have never read a speech and I do not intend to, and I certainly did not do so during the Estimates. I would like to put that on the record.

During the Estimates Committee relating to education and youth affairs, etc., I outlined the current situation facing young people in South Australia and highlighted the level of unemployment and the fact that this Government had basically sold out the young people. That set a tone for the Committee, which included an incredible reaction from members opposite, who were obviously stung by what I had to say and it struck a very sensitive nerve because, as members of the Government, they clearly feel guilty as to what has happened to the young people of this State, where we have over 39 per cent of the 15 to 19-year-old age group who are unemployed.

The Government tried to defend that situation in the Estimates Committee and say that things have changed and that it is a different situation now from what it was a few years ago because we have higher school retention rates, and so on. No-one disputes that times have changed, but the fact is that we have exceptionally high youth unemployment, and if we look at particular sections of the State—for example,

in the southern area and in the northern suburbs—we find that the unemployment rate among young people is even higher than 39 per cent.

I challenge any member on the Government side to say that that is acceptable. It is not. It is a tragedy and something that could and should not be accepted by the people of South Australia, and it is something that we will address very quickly on coming to Government.

The Government has made much play—and this was mentioned during the Estimates—of its intake of trainees, but it is interesting to note that it has not done anything significant in relation to young people and traineeships until the dying days of the Government. It is amazing what an election can do. So, what we have seen in recent weeks is an announcement that the Government is taking on 1 000 trainees. The public needs to know, of course, that the bulk of that funding is coming from the Commonwealth. So, the State Government is not putting much money at all into the traineeship scheme: it is piggy-backing on the back of the Commonwealth, using Career Start and JobSkill programs and then basking in the glory of supposedly creating traineeships for young people when, in the main, it involves Commonwealth money.

Furthermore, it suggests that half of those involved in the traineeships that it has created in recent times have obtained jobs when, in fact, that is not the case at all. There is a hope amongst Government officers that possibly half of those trainees may get a job within Government, but there is certainly no guarantee of that. If one reads the fine print, one finds that the Government is saying that it will take 'up to' 1 000 trainees; it does not say it will take all 1 000. It is very careful in the way it has worded these statements to create the impression that it is doing something for young people when in fact it is doing too little too late.

During the Estimates Committees I highlighted some of the things that are happening to young people in this State. Despite what the Government has done to them by way of denial of opportunity and jobs, it is quite surprising and quite amazing that the behaviour of young people has been as good as it has. However, we still see much evidence of negative, anti-social behaviour by a small minority of young people, and that is often expressed in terms of graffiti, vandalism and arson. That raises a very serious aspect that needs to be addressed by this community. This Government has not been able to do that, and it is something that I am working on at present. I refer to getting young people, in particular, to understand that schools, STA buses or whatever, belong to them.

We need to create amongst young people a sense of ownership; the concept that they actually own STA buses, schools and kindergartens and that to destroy them, damage them and to put graffiti on them is quite an irrational exercise because they are damaging their own property. Yet the instilling of that very simple message, which could be conveyed particularly to primary and secondary school aged children, has not been undertaken by this Government. It has sat back and allowed these problems to escalate without trying to tackle the issue and without trying to create amongst young people a sense of ownership of community assets. If one owns something and has a sense of ownership, one is less likely to want to damage it by graffiti or in other ways.

However, this Government, whether it is in relation to vandalism, graffiti or whatever, has had no answers and has basically sat on its hands. What we see when we travel on STA buses or when we visit schools is a continuation of

vandalism by a very small minority of disturbed and angry young people. What we have in this State is a continuing and tragic situation affecting young people. Their future has been impaired, and they have lost hope because of what this Government has done, and also to a large extent because of what it has not done. This Government has not created the opportunities; it has not provided the challenges; and it has not provided the jobs.

During the Estimates Committee the Minister made great play of the fact the Liberal Party was not asking a lot of questions in relation to preschool kindergartens. That was not by intent. The fact of the matter is that, when one has something like a fraction of a day to a deal with approximately one-third of the State's budget, there is no way one can do justice to the enormous area which comprises education, employment and training. I am the first to acknowledge that the area of kindergartens and the Children's Services Office is very important. In many ways it is the pioneering area in terms of education. The so-called higher levels of education could learn a lot from the early childhood education area in terms of a human focus within those learning environments and a focus on group learning, group techniques and so on. Ironically, as a community, we often tend to regard the early years of education as less important, when they are more important than some of the so-called higher levels. That extends, as I indicated, to some of the methods which those in the early childhood area have pioneered and in which they are very proficient.

I think that, in focusing on education, it is a sobering fact to look at the faces of bright young children as they enter the preschool area and then look at some of the teenagers as they emerge from the secondary school area. One sees the transformation in their faces—the bright happy faces of those early years have been lost. We should take a serious look at what happens to the children during those years of formal schooling.

Recently, as part of Pet Week, I attended many primary school assemblies in my electorate, and I had the privilege of speaking to school children. It gives one great satisfaction and provides a great uplift to see those young children who, whilst it might be a cliché, are our greatest resource and asset. Those young children deserve better than what they have had from this Government and what they have received from it in terms of education and the way in which the system operates. As I visit those schools I feel even more strongly committed to ensuring that they get a better deal from the next Government, which will be a Liberal Government.

I do not have time to raise all of the issues that arose during the Estimates Committees. However, one issue in relation to the education system was an indication by the Government that it is reviewing the School Card system. During the Estimates Committee the Minister accused me of being racist because I questioned the fact that an Aboriginal person, irrespective of income—even if they are on \$100 000 a year—automatically receives free books and so on for their child or children. I put the other point of view and suggested that it is racist automatically to give someone free books for their children simply on the basis of their racial origin. The Government admitted that it gives free books to people irrespective of their income simply on the basis of race. That is totally unacceptable; it is demeaning and a put down to Aboriginal people.

The Government also had to accept a point that I highlighted, because I had a letter from the department, that the School Card is given to people whose hot water service

breaks down. The cost of the School Card system has blown out, and it is not surprising when the criteria allow someone to get free books simply on the basis of their refrigerator or hot water service breaking down.

The Government had to acknowledge during the Estimates Committee that that system needed to be reviewed and was going to be reviewed. No-one on this side of the House would suggest for a moment that people in need should be denied a School Card for their children. However, this society must get back to a system that assists those in genuine need but does not encourage or assist people who want to rot the system. In fact, the needy require more assistance, and that can be provided if we take it away from those who are not deserving of it.

Many issues were raised during the Estimates Committees. One that has been a hobby horse of mine for a long time is the cost to the community—and I hinted at this before—of vandalism and arson at schools, which has cost in excess of \$30 million over the past 10 years. In the past week we have had damage to a school at Port Augusta and in the past few days damage to Blackwood High School. That is a totally wasteful and destructive activity; it assists no-one. For years I have been suggesting that we use modern technology to deal with the problem. Victorian authorities have used hidden miniature video cameras.

They are moved around randomly and they have been very successful in reducing the cost of arson and other vandalism in Victorian schools. We find—and once again the Government was only flushed out—that it is going to run a trial at Aberfoyle Park High School, which happens to be one of my local high schools. The Government will trial hidden video cameras in the very near future at that school in an attempt to cut down the incidence of arson and vandalism. But, why has it taken so long for the Government to come to the point where it can utilise some modern technology to deal with a modern day problem?

Some of the issues that arose during the Estimates Committees relate to further education, and we discovered once again that this Government still does not have the legislation ready to introduce to this Parliament to establish the Vocational, Education and Training Authority, which is required if we are to get Federal funding for training in this State. This Government has known that that is a requirement; the authority is needed to coordinate the institutes and the various industry training groups, yet it has not got off its backside to get that legislation organised and into this Chamber. In fact, the indication was that it will be sometime next year before it is ready, and in that case it will be a different Government introducing it.

We were told during the Estimates Committees that all the institutes are to have the same logo. That is quite a short-sighted approach, because if the institutes (the former TAFE colleges) are to be recognised for what they do as individual

institutes and if they are to get the credit for their achievements and the excellent work they do, surely they should have individual logos. They should be identified as individual separate establishments, but this Government, with its nanny approach, insists that all institutes have exactly the same logo. That means that, for example, the institute which is established in the Riverland-Barossa regions cannot identify itself in a way which is appropriate to that region, nor can Spencer and the other institutes. I cannot understand the reasoning and the logic for foisting on them a common logo and treating them like high schools. If the institutes are to be seen as equal to but different from universities, surely they must be granted some autonomy, freedom and flexibility to develop their own identities. We discovered that is not to be the case under this Government.

One of the aspects that was covered in the Estimates Committee relating to health was the matter of funding for extensions to the Flinders Medical Centre. In the budget papers there was no provision for funding of capital works extensions at the Flinders Medical Centre. There was no provision for the much needed expansion of the accident and emergency facility. At the moment we have people being treated in corridors and being examined without having the benefit of a private screened off area; the facility is desperately in need, yet there is no reference in the budget whatsoever to the funding of the capital works extension.

However, we find as a result of some probing by Polly Haynes, a journalist with the Messenger Press, that the Government is actually going to fund those extensions starting this financial year. I regard that as a gross abuse of the budget process: there is no reference to funding in the budget papers, yet bingo, with an election not far away, the Government suddenly discovers that money is available and it will start to fund that facility. I welcome the funding of the facility but I deplore the way in which the Government has not referred to that funding in the budget papers, yet it is flushed out at the last minute prior to an election with an acknowledgment that it is to provide some funding towards that facility. We have seen a sneaky attempt by this Government to try to trot out just prior to the election and claim credit for an expansion of the Flinders Medical Centre when there has been no reference at all in the budget papers to that funding. The Government has been exposed and shown to be quite deceitful, and to be engaged purely in an electioneering exercise just prior to the State election. The Estimates Committees have been a mixed bag.

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

**Mr OSWALD** secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### ADJOURNMENT

At 10.37 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday 7 October at 10.30 a.m.