

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 12 April 1994

The **SPEAKER (Hon. G.M. Gunn)** took the Chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

TIERNAN, MR JOE, DEATH

The **Hon. DEAN BROWN (Premier)**: I move:

That this House expresses its regret at the recent death of Mr Joe Tiernan, former member for Torrens, and places on record its appreciation of his short but meritorious service to this House and, as a mark of respect to his memory, the sittings of the House be suspended until the ringing of the bells.

In moving this motion, we are all very conscious today of the vacant seat in the House of Assembly. We are all very conscious of the fact that we have lost one of our own colleagues, a colleague who has only recently come to the House but a colleague who in that very short period has made a significant mark on this House and on his electorate of Torrens. Joe Tiernan was a real dynamo. He was a person who loved people, who worked for people and who strove to help overcome the problems of people. One has only to look at Joe's interests in life: the education of our children, the TAFE system for young South Australians, his involvement in the car club, in cubs and then in scouts, and in the RAAF and the many other interests that he pursued. They all represented being out there with people and helping people.

I personally have lost a friend, a friend who over the past 12 months I had come to admire, because of his hard work for the people of Torrens. Joe would ring me late at night about their concerns. In fact, on the last day that this Parliament sat, Joe came to me in the dining room and specifically asked whether I would come out and meet some friends who had a new invention. He wanted to help those people develop a closed conveyor system for the food industry and allow it to expand here in South Australia. It was so typical, because later that night even though the House was up and most of the members had left Joe was still here working. Joe met a delegation I had from China later that night. Again that expressed the enthusiasm that he showed for everyone and everything that he did.

As a person he brought to this House some timeless values: a belief in the worth of all individuals, a loyalty to his country, a respect for the institutions of the country and an adherence to truth as a fundamental of all personal and professional dealings. It is a sad loss for all of us. I want to record in the *Hansard* the appreciation that I know all members of this House have, particularly all my Liberal colleagues who worked so closely with him in his electorate and who were so dedicated because of Joe's enthusiasm to ensure that he won that seat and then who, after the election, worked with Joe to ensure that there was very effective representation. To Myra and to his three sons, Thomas, Sean and Mark, we express our deepest regret and sympathy. We have all lost a friend, a colleague and a great South Australian.

The **Hon. LYNN ARNOLD (Leader of the Opposition)**:

I second the motion moved by the Premier. In doing so, on behalf of the Labor Party I wish to express our sorrow at the passing of Joe Tiernan and to convey our condolences to his wife, Myra, and his three sons, and to all members of his family and his friends. It is especially poignant when a

member of Parliament dies while still serving as a member of Parliament rather than after having retired. Fortunately, it does not happen often, but sadly it has happened on this occasion. I think the last occasion on which a current member of the House of Assembly died was about 20 years ago.

The poignancy is even greater given the short time in which Joe had to establish himself in this Parliament. However, short though it was, it is true to say, as the Premier has alluded, that immediately upon his election to this Parliament, Joe landed on his feet running, energetically serving and representing his constituents and the Party of which he was a member. In doing so, he earned the respect of all members of this place—certainly that of his own colleagues in the Liberal Party but also that of members of the Labor Party. We respected his energy and his enthusiasm. It became clear to my colleagues and I, although most of us had not had the opportunity to know him before he entered Parliament, that he was a very interesting and lively personality. Joe quickly took part in parliamentary debates in the very best spirit, which is a lively one, and also in the corridors of Parliament he was a good person with whom to converse.

I attended the funeral, and it was certainly to be noted from the attendance at the church in North Adelaide that Joe had established very many friendships over the years. The church was full. That was not only an indication of how many friendships he had established, but it was full of people from a very diverse range of areas, backgrounds and interests, and that attested to his own diverse range of interests. I had not known a lot about Joe's past until the eulogies were delivered on that day. They certainly attested to a person of diverse interests and a wide range of activities.

Joe first came to Australia from the United Kingdom as a visitor, hitchhiking, after his parents had come here. At that time, I guess he determined that he wanted to call Australia home. Of course, many years later he did so. He firmly made Australia his home and contributed to the building of this community. In the intervening period, not only as a result of his service in the RAF but also as a result of service in the private sector, he worked in a number of places such as Kuwait, which must have been an interesting place for him to work. I am sure he had many interesting stories to tell about his time in that country.

Upon his return to South Australia he became involved at the Edinburgh base, an area which of course is in my electorate and one which I know well. I know that those who work and live there have a strong attachment to the air base and the community that revolves around it. He was drawn to activities in the TAFE sector. As it transpires, I was his Minister for TAFE over a number of years that he worked within that sector. I had come across Joe in that context, but as I say I did not know him well. I know from his work in the Riverland and in other colleges of TAFE, such as the Parafield campus, that he was respected by his colleagues as someone who brought great energy to his job, and that energy saw it as a vocation.

It was also clear that he was very actively involved in the community, not just in relation to those matters of self interest but in relation to the building of his community, and thereby providing opportunities for others to gain benefit as a result of his community service. That again was attested by the presence of the many people from wide and varied walks of life at his funeral, and also by the notices that appeared in the *Advertiser* on behalf of so many different groups. It was also very clear that politics was in his veins, as it is hopefully

for all of us. He wanted to express that and did so, and he brought to politics the same energy that he brought to so many other things.

It is with regret that the politics that was in his veins was of a different colour to that which is in my veins but, nevertheless, all of us as politicians respect the political fire in the belly which takes place regardless of the Party which one chooses to follow. Joe fought a campaign in which he was a very significant personal player in terms of winning the seat of Torrens from my Party and, after that, he showed no less enthusiasm upon his election to this place.

So, while it is very sad indeed that he was untimely taken at the age of 52, and while he served a relatively brief time in this Parliament, there can be no doubt that he left his mark and that he will be remembered, and that those memories will be good memories for all those who knew him. Once again, on behalf of my Party, to Myra, to his sons, and his extended family we express our condolences.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Deputy Premier): I, too, wish to express my condolences to the family of Joe Tiernan. Joe was with us for a very short time but I sometimes reflect, having known Joe for about 12 months, that it seemed as though I had known him for many years before that because he put more into 12 months than most of us put into 10 years of life. Given his history, I believe that had he arrived with the first fleet or been here 200 years ago he would have been the first to cross the Dividing Range because that was the nature of Joe Tiernan. He lived life in the fast lane but in a very positive sense; there was always a challenge, he was always there and he wanted to push back the barriers.

His passion for life was something that I held in very high regard. Whenever there was a difference of opinion between us, we would have a battle but we would sort it out and reach some mutual conclusion. He was a person of considerable talent and substance in that, if there was a difference of opinion, it was sorted out on the spot without any beg-your-pardons and, in fact, after the event Joe's good humour always prevailed. He was probably one of the most energetic people I have met. As I said, he lived life in the fast lane. If we look back on his life we see that he spent much of his life in England, Kuwait and then Australia, and we notice that he would never settle down and do one thing for any length of time. He was never satisfied with accepting his position in life and he always found new challenges.

Not only was he energetic but he had many other attributes. The fact that he entered the boxing ring and was quite a champion at boxing I suppose befitted him very well for the Parliament. He was a student of both low and high flying and I understand that he set the record between the Riverland and Adelaide, and that was in keeping with the character of Joe Tiernan, who I will remember with a smile on my face, because whilst it is sad for everyone around Joe—his family and friends—to lose a person of Joe's calibre, we can say that we noticed him while he was here because he did make a contribution.

It has already been said that Joe represented people with a great deal of energy, and I know that that earned the respect of members opposite. Joe was the sort of person who would go and discuss matters and in fact be interested in other people, and I believe that is one of the great attributes of a politician. A true politician should have an interest in all people rather than just those who attach themselves to his or her side of politics. He was certainly committed; not a day went by that Joe did not do something for someone else.

I know how special Joe was to Myra, his widow, and I know that a gap will be left. I can only say to Myra that the people in his life were very lucky to have had such a close and meaningful relationship with someone such as Joe. Many of the people we know around us never have that experience so they really do not know what it can mean to have a very strong family relationship. I know that his sons, Mark, Sean and Thomas, will miss their dad dearly, because he was larger than life: he was always battling and pushing back the barriers. It is with regret that we note Joe's passing. Joe was a very special person, and this Parliament recognises that.

Mr ASHENDEN (Wright): I also would like to pay my tribute to Joe. I have known Joe probably as long as any member in this House. I will never forget the first time I met Joe, when he joined the Highbury branch of the Party, when I was the member for Todd. He was like a breath of fresh air in that branch. He came there with all the characteristics that have been mentioned here today. At first I think he came as a bit of a shock to that branch—it was a fairly staid branch and the members had been there for a long time. To have someone like Joe come in with so many good ideas and so much enthusiasm really was a marvellous breath of fresh air.

I have never forgotten the first time I met Joe and the first time he came to our meetings. From that time on Joe and I would frequently be in contact to discuss all sorts of things. I was absolutely delighted when he was elected to this House as the member for Torrens. I know from the dedication that he provided to the Highbury branch and his work, when I was the local member and subsequently, that he really did have a very genuine interest not only in politics but also, as others have said, in people. I have never known a man to whom people take so easily as they took to Joe. One could not help but like him; he had a nature that took one in. As I said, I really am very proud and pleased to have known Joe as a friend and as a colleague.

I will never forget the last week of sitting of this House, when Joe and I, as we frequently did, bounced ideas off each other and talked about different matters, and perhaps how we could best work to achieve the goals that were important to us. On the Wednesday evening, Joe and I talked about some plans that he had in terms of his electorate and other issues which he thought were important and which he wanted to bring before the House. I was absolutely staggered on the Thursday morning to learn that the man with whom I had spent so much time would no longer be available for me to share that time.

Joe's work for both the Party and the Parliament will never be forgotten. If ever I saw a man who was going to be in Parliament for as long as he wanted, it was Joe. He really did work very hard in his electorate, for his electorate and for his people. I am sure that in the short time he was here that commitment was very highly regarded by those in his electorate. As I said, I genuinely believe that had Joe been spared he would have been the member for Torrens for as long as he wanted. I do not think that anyone can pay a greater tribute to Joe than to say that.

To Myra and his family I extend my deepest sympathy, because I know what a loss it must be to them. They were much closer to Joe for much longer than I was and they would have seen even more of him than I did. I pass on to them my condolences and my deepest sympathy.

Mr MEIER (Goyder): I, too, express my condolences to the family and friends of Joe Tiernan; this Parliament has

suffered a great loss with his passing. Adjectives that can be used to describe Joe are almost endless: he was courteous, energetic, vibrant, humorous, understanding, forthright, reliable, resolute and honest. He was an excellent member of Parliament and will be sadly missed. I got to know Joe especially after becoming Whip and liaising with him and many other members. It is interesting how you can sum up people, particularly when it comes to their maiden speech.

I was asking members how long they were going to speak and I had an answer from each member in one way or another, but I well remember Joe's answer. I asked, 'Joe, how long will you speak—about 30, 40, 50 minutes?' He said, 'It will be 43½ minutes.' I said, 'Joe, I was not looking for that sort of answer. I just thought you would give me an approximate answer.' He said, 'No, 43½ minutes.' I do not know how it happened, because there are not meant to be interjections in maiden speeches, but if we look at Joe's there were one or two interjections and it was actually a good half plus minute longer than 43½ minutes, and I thought, 'Joe, I know exactly how to work with you. I know that when you say something, that is what it will be.'

His humour came out in a variety of ways. Joe was one who, if I was looking for people to grieve, often said, 'John, I will grieve; no problems.' Perhaps that simply supports the other members who said that Joe represented his electorate in a wonderful, energetic and very solid way. But in one particular grievance debate he started off by saying:

On behalf of the electorate of Torrens, I bring to the attention of this House a major concern within the community that, unfortunately, is getting worse every day or, as my father used to say in his good Irish brogue, 'worse and worse and worse'.

He went on to explain some of the problems that certain people were causing in or near his electorate. There is no doubt that Joe has left us with a reminder that we, too, are here on this earth for a very short period of time. All of us were shocked when a man of 52 was suddenly cut down without any prior notice. I guess we on the Government side can take real heart from what Joe said in his maiden speech. In fact, he left us with a real challenge, when he said:

I say to my Liberal colleagues, the Ministers and our team Leader, the Premier, 'We are on the right track; keep it up, and faster please. Ignore the knockers, the pessimists and the South Australian Labor Party; control the economic rationalists and promote the economic humanists; support the family unit; and, most critically, continue to listen with understanding to the people of our State, particularly our youth.'

Joe was a great person in this Parliament. To Myra, Thomas, Sean and Mark, and all the family and friends of Joe, we extend our deepest sympathies. It is a great loss that Joe is no longer with us.

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON (Minister for Tourism): Joe Tiernan was a short-time friend of mine: I knew him only in the past 18 months, but Joe was a very special friend because he was the sort of person who was prepared to go out of his way to talk to you during the good times and during adversity. Joe was the most enthusiastic person I have ever met. He was loyal and exceptionally honest. Whatever Joe believed in, he was prepared to stand up for and be counted on.

Probably more than anyone in this Party I know what sort of influence Joe has had on me in relation to industrial relations, because it was many of Joe's strong thoughts about needing to understand the human involvement in industrial relations that, in the end, convinced me and our Party to take a much different road in terms of industrial relations in this

State than perhaps we might have before. I remember his continual late night calls, as Myra would know, when he would ring and give me at least half an hour's advice on where I was right but, on many occasions, on where I was wrong.

It was that sort of encouragement that Joe was still continuing until last Wednesday evening. As the Premier said, a few of us were here late on that evening, and I was with a few guests, and we ran into Joe at about a quarter to nine. He was still encouraging me to make sure that I did not back off on industrial relations: 'Make sure, Graham, that when you're right you continue to stand up for being right'; and, in his Irish way, enthusiastically saying, 'Don't worry about any of those people putting pressure on you, because tomorrow we'll win.'

I will miss Joe Tiernan. With regret, I stand here today to pass on my sincere sympathy to you, Myra, your family and all your friends.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources): I rise to briefly support the previous speakers. Joe Tiernan was a person for whom I had tremendous respect. I was privileged to be paired with Joe during the campaign. My electorate (the electorate of Heysen) worked very closely with the electorate of Torrens, and during that period I came to know Joe very well indeed. His enthusiasm was amazing, as was his energy. The love and respect that he had for people was equally amazing. He achieved a goal that he continued to strive for—to continue to serve others as an MP and to serve his constituents. I add my condolences to Myra and their sons, to Joe's sister Rita and her husband Barry and to the extended family.

The SPEAKER: I thank honourable members for their comments. I would like to extend my own personal condolences to Joe's family. Joe was a constituent of mine in the mid 1970s and, therefore, I got to know him very well. I will ensure that the comments that were made here today are made available to his family. I ask members to support the motion by standing in silence.

Motion carried by members standing in their places in silence.

[Sitting suspended from 2.28 to 2.45 p.m.]

DEBITS TAX BILL

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

ASSENT TO BILLS

Her Excellency the Governor, by message, intimated her assent to the following Bills:

Administrative Arrangements,
Correctional Services (Prisoners' Goods) Amendment,
Statutes Repeal (Incorporation of Ministers).

AKRITIOIS, MR TERRY

A petition signed by 3 135 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to further inquire into the circumstances surrounding the death of Mr Terry Akritiois was presented by Mr Cummins.

Petition received.

SOUTH ROAD TRAFFIC LIGHTS

A petition signed by 319 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to install traffic lights on Main South Road at Old Noarlunga was presented by Mrs Rosenberg.

Petition received.

YOUNG FARMERS' INCENTIVE SCHEME

The Hon. D.S. BAKER (Minister for Mines and Energy): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. D.S. BAKER: The Premier announced a key component of the Liberal Government's election policy, the 'Let's get South Australia really working' package of programs, on 6 January 1994. An important initiative included in that package of programs is the Young Farmers' Incentive Scheme. The objective of this new Government initiative is to encourage young farmers either to stay on the land or to have the opportunity to purchase, lease or share-farm land. Support will be available by way of an interest rate subsidy on commercial borrowings to assist with rural land purchase, with leasing of rural land or with sharefarming rural land.

The interest rate subsidy is available for rural land purchased for three years to a maximum of \$20 000 per annum, and for leasing or sharefarming rural land for five years to a maximum of \$20 000 per annum. Cabinet has now approved the final guidelines and funding allocations for the Young Farmers' Incentive Scheme. Funding of up to \$7 million will be provided from the rural industry adjustment and development fund, a fund for which I, as Minister for Primary Industries, have responsibility. The scheme will formally commence from 1 May 1994. To date, the Rural Finance and Development Group in the Department of Primary Industries has received some 500 inquiries requesting details of the scheme. Details of the scheme will be posted out shortly to all people who have made inquiries.

NATIONAL PARKS

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I am delighted to be able to release today a comprehensive report on the management of parks and reserves in South Australia. The report provides the basis for revitalising the significant and challenging enterprise of managing native conservation reserves in our State. An expert committee drawn from the Government and non-government sectors and chaired by Mr David Moyle was established in early 1993 and given the charter to review the management of National Parks and Wildlife Act reserves. The committee completed its work in February this year, having taken 135 written submissions and achieved a consensus position on all issues considered, for which it is to be commended.

The review reports on an extensive range of matters, dealing with: the purpose of the reserves; their role in the State's economy; the uses and activities of reserves; planning, management and administration; community participation; and resource opportunities. It is a very comprehensive document, one which I believe will be of great value to not

only the Government but the many people in the community who have an interest in the long-term management of nature conservation and the role of the reserves system in that management.

As the community has become more concerned about nature conservation and demands on scarce resources have increased, the management of the reserve system has suffered. This has frustrated the dedicated and highly professional men and women within the agency and has been of great concern to many in the broader community. If the reserve system is going to contribute to the well-being of this State in the long term, then it is critical that Government recognises this and provides both the direction and resources to maintain and support this vital asset.

This Government came to power with the intention of giving greater focus to ongoing and high quality management of the State's biological diversity and natural heritage. Our environment and natural resources policy provides for establishing a parks and wildlife commission or a similar body to achieve that focus. I have deliberately delayed proceeding with the establishment of such a body pending this review. I am now considering the most appropriate body to achieve the desired focus, taking into account the recommendations of the review, and I will make an announcement about this in the next few months.

The committee having done this excellent work, we cannot allow the momentum to be lost, and I will be working with both the Government and non-government sectors in progressing the recommendations contained within the report. I have also asked that work begin immediately on a parks audit to take stock and identify priorities for works and opportunities for improved performance. Given the significant contribution that the park system can make to the ecologically sustainable development of the State, particularly in the tourism area, a five-year plan for development of key infrastructure will also be prepared.

I regard this Review into the Management of National Parks and Wildlife Act Reserves as a definitive statement of progress—and, in some areas, lack of progress—in managing and protecting an irreplaceable asset of the State. It was undertaken in an open and cooperative manner and involved both the Government and non-government sectors. The report that has come out of the review shows what can be achieved when we all work constructively together and focus on finding solutions to problems. It behoves us to study the principal recommendations from the review's report and to use them to guide us on decisions we make for nature conservation in this State for the benefit of this and future generations.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the hard work, commitment and enthusiasm of the committee and to thank them for their valuable contribution to ensuring the effective management of nature conservation reserves in our State.

QUESTION TIME

TIME ZONES

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD (Leader of the Opposition): How will the Premier explain his defeat in the Party room over eastern standard time to the South Australian business community? Will he say whether he maintains his commitment to negotiating and achieving uniformity in time zones, or will he now list the *status quo* on this matter as a major

reform of his Government? The Premier would be aware of the strong support that the business community has given to a move to eastern standard time. Mr Robert Gerard, a noted figure in the Liberal Party, in a letter from the South Australian Employers' Chamber to the Premier, states:

As you know, the chamber has always pushed for South Australia to move to eastern standard time. We have taken that stance over many years because we firmly believe that that is one of the foundation building blocks necessary to encourage head offices to set up here in South Australia.

As you know, some 55 to 60 per cent of the goods and services supplied in South Australia move to the eastern seaboard, and to think that we have a half-hour time difference is really quite ridiculous. With a Government such as yours—

that is the Government over there—

that is pro-business, we believe the time could never be better than now to move to eastern standard time so that we are in line with the main business community in Australia. We must be seen in South Australia as a State that means business.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Once again, the Leader of the Opposition does not have his facts. He does not realise that I moved the motion that South Australia should stay with the *status quo*—if only someone had told him that. The Leader of the Opposition stands here once again embarrassed this afternoon because he did not ascertain the facts. The media could have told him outside, because I outlined to the media before lunch today that I had moved a motion—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I think that has been more than adequately answered. In fact, I would be the first to acknowledge that there is a range of views within the Liberal Party reflecting the views of the community. Some, including people in the business community, would like to move to eastern standard time—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN:—and Robert Gerard, as Chairman of the Employers' Chamber, is one of those people who has argued strongly for that, together with Lindsay Thompson. Some would argue that we should move back half an hour; in particular, some people on Eyre Peninsula would argue that matter strongly. However, I think the vast majority of South Australians would argue that it is in the broad interests of all South Australians that we retain the *status quo*—and that is exactly what the Liberal Party decided this morning to do.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections coming from my left. The Premier.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: From the sorts of responses that have come into my office, it would appear that the vast majority of South Australians, particularly recently, despite arguments in favour of going to eastern standard time or going back half an hour, have argued strongly and would like to see South Australia stay exactly where it is in terms of the time zone. That is what I moved this morning, Mr Speaker, as you would realise—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN:—and the motion was clearly passed in the Party room.

STATE BANK EMPLOYEES

Mr BECKER (Peake): I direct my question to the Treasurer. What progress is being made by the Government in negotiations with State Bank employees over their superannuation arrangements? A number of my constituents who are State Bank employees and members of the old State Bank superannuation scheme have written to me expressing their concern about proposed changes to their entitlements when the new Bank of South Australia comes into operation in July. I understand that a mass meeting of staff rejected the original proposal put forward by the State Bank corporatisation task force; however, I believe further negotiations have been conducted.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Ross Smith is out of order. The Treasurer.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: Thank you, Sir; the member for Ross Smith is always out of order. I am pleased to report to the House that agreement has been reached between, importantly, the employees, the union and the bank in terms of future superannuation arrangements. At a meeting last Thursday night a revised program was placed before the membership and overwhelmingly accepted. Basically, this means that employees, if they are in the old superannuation scheme, will be able to opt to remain in that scheme until 1999, at which point they will have their benefits preserved at the rate they are earning at that time. That is an extension of some three years on the original offer.

Some changes have also been made to the redundancy payments in order to pick up on some anomalies that were noted when the original offer was made. I am pleased that we have reached agreement on this matter. We did not wish to have a situation where employees were anxious about their future. Every attempt has been made to provide a reasonable offer to give these employees some security and comfort about their future arrangements. We are talking about a select group of some 600 members who are part of the South Australian superannuation scheme and who, at any time during the period of the agreement until 1999, can opt for a lump sum or to preserve their benefits.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: Well, they have been given substantial benefits under that arrangement. I have given an undertaking that the amendments relating to the State Bank Bill will be progressed as fast as possible and placed before the Legislative Council, hopefully this week. Further negotiations are to take place with the union on those amendments, which are basically of a technical nature. With any luck, the amendments will be agreed to and the Bill will be debated in the Upper House next week.

AUDIT COMMISSION

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD (Leader of the Opposition): Will the Premier give an undertaking that he will release the Audit Commission report no later than next Tuesday? Will he also honour his commitment to produce an economic statement in April which outlines the Government's debt reduction strategy and the principles of the budget? The Audit Commission report has been finalised and is currently being printed by Gillingham Printers. The Government has previously stated that it will release its economic statement in April and that it will deal with issues such as debt reduction and lay out the principles and directions of the State

budget, which is to be delivered following the Audit Commission. Sources within the Government have indicated that the April economic statement may now be deferred because of the Torrens by-election or that the April economic statement, if it is released, will take only the soft options and will not deal with the hard issues such as debt reduction.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: It is interesting to see the change in attitude of the now Leader of the Opposition to the issue of the Audit Commission. When I announced on 15 December that the Government was establishing the Audit Commission the Leader said, 'We do not need one; there is no need to have one; we don't wish to see an Audit Commission.' I can understand why the Leader of the Opposition did not want to see—and still does not want to see, I would suggest—the full detail of the Audit Commission, because it will be a very interesting reflection on how well the Labor Party governed South Australia over its 11 years in office.

If the Leader of the Opposition would like the Audit Commission to be seen as an independent test of where he and his Party put South Australia, let it be so. I pointed out to the House about four or five weeks ago that I was expecting the Audit Commission report to be available in about the middle of April. The terms of reference for the Audit Commission are quite specific. The Audit Commission has until the end of April to present its report to Government—

An honourable member: It is at Gillingham Printers.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I do not know where the report is being printed and I have not yet been given a date by the Audit Commission as to when it expects to present its report to me. I can give an assurance to the House, as I have done on previous occasions, that I expect the report by the end of April. At the same time, I give an assurance to the House that, when the Government has the report, I will comply with the Audit Commission's request, and that is that the report be formally tabled in this Parliament as soon as it is available. I give that assurance to the Leader of the Opposition. I do not know why he is so concerned that he will not get the report, because nothing has changed to suggest that I will not get the report before the end of April or that I will not table it in this Parliament.

MINORS, GAMBLING

Mr CAUDELL (Mitchell): Can the Treasurer advise the House what action he is taking in respect of the sale of Lotteries Commission products to minors? A number of my constituents have brought to my attention incidents of school children under the age of 18 purchasing scratch tickets and some of those children using funds illegally obtained.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I thank the member for Mitchell for his question. This was the subject of considerable space in the *Sunday Mail*, in which article a number of comments from welfare agencies were made about the problems arising from young people who are not only blowing their pocket money on scratch tickets but also stealing money to maintain their habit.

The Government views those circumstances with a great deal of seriousness. Members of the former Government would well remember that in January 1991 the Lotteries Commission proposed introducing rules to prohibit the sale of any lottery tickets to a person under the age of 16. Those rules would have prohibited children under the age of 16 from purchasing tickets other than on behalf of a syndicate or a parent of the child. The then Government had that detail

available to it at that time and in fact rejected the proposal. Therefore nothing further was pursued in relation to the proposal of the Lotteries Commission at that time.

I have raised the question about minors previously. My stand in relation to minors just happens to coincide with the *Sunday Mail* report, and it is an issue that has been raised with me on several occasions. The Lotteries Commission has reported to me that it has not been provided with specific evidence of widespread abuse of lottery tickets by minors. The Lotteries Commission has heard, as I have heard, anecdotal evidence of children using their pocket money other than for buying the normal necessities of life, but that is as far as the Lotteries Commission could report to me on the situation.

A number of welfare agencies have provided anecdotal evidence as well as some more persuasive evidence, following talks with some of the minors concerned. They believe that a problem exists and it is not just a small problem. In view of those concerns I have asked the Lotteries Commission to provide me with a summary of all the rules and regulations that operate in other States to ascertain where they lie on this matter. The matter does not concern simply setting an age limit; there are other ramifications. If we are going to restrict children from using these devices, we have to decide not only whether the age limit should be 16 or 18 but whether the products should be limited to only those of the Lotteries Commission or to other wider forms of betting and gambling. Should we include bingo tickets that are sold in the footy clubs and so on?

A number of other issues are allied to this question, and they cannot simply be answered overnight. I have asked the Lotteries Commission to contact the agencies concerned so that they can provide the evidence to the Lotteries Commission and therefore we will know the extent of the problem. We will deal with this matter, but whether it requires legislative change or a code of conduct in relation to those people who hold licences with the Lotteries Commission is yet to be determined. Once we have that information we will certainly make changes to the existing arrangements.

I remind the *Sunday Mail* that, whilst it is important to bring these matters to the attention of the Government, the Government does want to get it right and make sure that the changes are in the best interests of everyone concerned. I have already been approached by people who use their kids to pick up their X-lotto tickets and who use other natural purchasing patterns which have nothing to do with children using their pocket money or other people's to purchase these tickets. Once we have all that information we will certainly take action.

TEACHERS

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Treasurer. Has the Department for Education and Children's Services, following discussions between the Treasurer, the Treasury and the Minister for Education and Children's Services, begun discussions to cut 1 800 permanent teachers, and do these plans pre-empt the Audit Commission's report? Since December the department has met with the South Australian Institute of Teachers on three occasions, the most recent on 29 March on a confidential without prejudice basis. It has presented proposals which include a reduction of 1 800 permanent teacher positions, the cessation of the four-year

right of return to the city for country teachers and the scrapping of agreements limiting the number of contract teachers. It has already been revealed in the House that supplementary bulletin No. 615 circulating through the Department for Employment, Training and Further Education invites principle lecturers and lecturers in TAFE to apply for separation packages. I am told that a further 400 TAFE personnel will be invited to leave the department, which will cause serious reductions in TAFE's ability to service its students and South Australian industry.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: The Deputy Leader is continuing the role that he played, first, as a ministerial adviser and then as a Minister in the former Government; that is, he has a very tenuous hold on the truth—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: Well, the Minister for Grands Prix, the Minister for Sludge and the fabricator—in fact, I could detail a long list of names that have managed to attach themselves to the Deputy Leader—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I suggest to the Deputy Leader that he keep his mouth shut and listen.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I suggest to the Deputy Premier that those comments are not appropriate. He should not respond to interjections and he should not respond in that manner.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am sure I will receive your protection in the future. I will take up the issue of TSPs because the Deputy Leader has seen fit to join two different pieces of information and say, 'One plus one equals two,' when it actually equals two, three, four or five. What we have in this situation—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Chair has been most tolerant this afternoon. The member for Ross Smith is again excelling himself with his interjections. He will get an early minute if he continues.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: Yes, I will talk about the mathematics that are applied by the Deputy Leader, because he does say one and one makes two, three, four and five, and he does it all the time. When we were talking about targeted separation packages, there was a clear understanding that the Government had a responsibility to meet the targets. The Liberal Party placed that before the people prior to the election. We said that about 3 950 TSPs had to be executed by 30 June. So, notification along those lines was consistent with the Government's policy.

Returning to the issue of education and children's services, an ongoing exercise is being undertaken by Treasury because of the massive deficit that was left by the former Government. Members opposite would be well aware of that, and they can ask the former Treasurer about the state in which he left the Treasury. We have a massive underlying deficit, and we are keeping to the undertaking of the former Government to bring that under control within two years, which requires negotiations with departments.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Deputy Leader.

TOURISM EXCHANGE

Mr LEGGETT (Hanson): Can the Minister for Tourism inform the House of the participation of South Australian

tourism operators in the international tourism market at the 1994 Australian Tourism Exchange? Tourism in South Australia is vital to the State as a whole as it generates \$1.8 billion in spending and translates into the creation of 35 000 jobs throughout the State. It is forecast that the number of international visitor arrivals in Australia will increase by an average of about 8 per cent a year to reach around 4.8 million in the year 2000. With such potential I seek information from the Minister on what South Australian tourism operators are doing to participate in opportunities like the 1994 Tourism Exchange.

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: I notice that the previous minister has left the House. The record that he left behind in terms of international tourism is absolutely unbelievable. In the seven years during which the previous Government handled this tourism issue we went from 8 per cent of international visitor nights down to 3 per cent, and we were still going down when this Government took over.

Fortunately, because this Government has decided to implement some very dramatic changes in the Tourism Commission, for the first time we have been able to involve a large number of South Australian operators in the Australian Tourism Exchange in Sydney. This convention, which is held annually, allows tourism operators to sit down and negotiate with wholesalers world wide. It is fantastic to see that South Australian operators are now taking up this opportunity. It has occurred principally because we now have three very good directors in the Tourism Commission: a new international director, who was previously with the Australian Tourism Commission; a new director for the State and national arena who was previously in Western Australia; and a local person has taken over State and regional tourism.

It is because of the hard work that they have done during the past three months that we are able to say that we now have the best number of State operators prepared to go along and be part of this very important Tourism Exchange. As was said earlier, nearly \$1.8 billion of State income is created by the tourism industry each year and, because of our progressive and go ahead nature, tourism can become the most important economic driver in this State.

IBM

Mr FOLEY (Hart): Will the Premier confirm to the House that his deal with IBM announced before the election and reported to be worth somewhere between \$50 million and \$150 million, depending on which report one reads, and which he also said would be signed within three months of the Liberal Party's gaining office, will now not go ahead? On radio this morning the Treasurer described the deal made between the then Liberal Opposition and IBM as a damn good thing at the time but said it is now being revisited.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I point out to the House that the Opposition again has its facts wrong today. It seems to live in its own small world up on the second floor, and because of its very poor showing in the Elizabeth by-election—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! There are too many injections from both sides of the House this afternoon. The Chair's tolerance is running out. I do not want to put someone out, but I will if it continues.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I point out that any Party that loses something like 4 per cent of its primary vote after the biggest thrashing in the political history of South Australia

has had a poor showing. In a by-election one would normally expect a swing of about 4 per cent against the Government of the day. There was actually a swing towards the Government, and that is a superb result for the political Party in Government.

An honourable member interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Ross Smith for the last time.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I can understand the embarrassment of members opposite in respect of the result of the Elizabeth by-election. They are trying to hide that embarrassment by yelling and screaming. I come back to the issue that the honourable member raises in his question, which is all about what the Government is doing in terms of ensuring that we establish in South Australia an effective information technology industry. There are two objectives in respect of the Government's initiative. The first is to ensure that we make some substantial savings in the cost of information technology to the Government. The former Government knows that. The former staff member knows only too well some of the files and documents that show the very considerable waste that was occurring in Government.

As a former staffer to the Premier, he would know some of the minutes that were passed around and some of the letters written by the former Government and heads of Government departments. I point out that the Government has had a Cabinet subcommittee looking at this, and that Cabinet subcommittee has narrowed the field down to two companies. Those two companies, which are going into a final assessment and then contract negotiations, are IBM and EDS, two very substantial companies. I am amused by the fact that the Labor Party is deliberately trying to run the story that, as part of this process, we will cut out the small South Australian companies.

The truth is just the opposite. Part of the contract negotiations will be to guarantee a share of the market for smaller South Australian companies. Therefore, the sort of program that the Labor Party has been running for the past couple of days absolutely lacks credibility.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I will break the member for Hart's continuity in the House if he continues to interject.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The member for Hart is embarrassed, because he knows that the former head of the Premier's Department, when he was a Labor Party staffer, happened to write to IBM and say:

The South Australian Government is clearly keen to enter into a partnership arrangement with IBM. Your company has an—

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Who is this from?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: This is from Dr Crawford.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: You sacked him.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: From Dr Crawford. The letter states:

The South Australian Government is clearly keen to enter into a partnership arrangement with IBM. Your company has an established worldwide reputation and has been a major force in the local industry for many years. A partnership will build upon a long and successful relationship between our organisations and upon a level of trust which can withstand minor setbacks.

I stress to the House that there are significant benefits, both in terms of economic development for South Australia in the information technology area and, in particular, in establishing a computer software industry of international significance here in South Australia. The Government is after that objective. The Government is also after the objective of

saving literally millions of dollars in the IT costs of Government. That is something the former Government failed to be able to come to grips with over a four or five year period. We had the Information Utility version 1; we had the Information Utility version 2; we had Southern Systems; we went in this direction and in that; and what happened at the end of the day, when we came into government, was that the place was an absolute mess.

It has taken more than three months because there was so much chaos in the information technology area of Government left by the former Government. I can assure the honourable member that the Government is now at the stage of going through the final due diligence with two major international companies. There will be a guaranteed share for the smaller South Australian owned companies and, at the end of the day, we will achieve both savings in information technology and a significant information technology software industry outside Government here in South Australia.

MOTOR CYCLE ESCORT

Mr FOLEY (Hart): My question is directed to the Minister for Emergency Services. Is the Minister's vehicle exempt from compliance with the Road Traffic Act when travelling with a police motor cycle escort and did his vehicle exceed the speed limit and, for that matter, travel through any red lights on Wednesday 6 April? Last week the Minister explained that he had accepted a police motor cycle escort to travel to the opening of the Elizabeth police station 'so that I arrived safely and on time'.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: The answers to the honourable member's questions are 'No' and 'No.'

TORRENS RIVER

Mr CUMMINS (Norwood): Has the Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources met with River Torrens catchment councils with a view to developing plans to clean up the River Torrens? Members will be aware that the electorate of Norwood runs along the Torrens, and many residents are concerned about the pollution of that river. I am aware that on 20 January the Minister met with 11 Patawalonga catchment councils in relation to finding a permanent solution to cleaning out the Patawalonga. I want to know what priority has been given to cleaning up the River Torrens.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: At the outset, I recognise the keen interest the member for Norwood has in this important issue regarding the clean up of the River Torrens. I am pleased to be able to report to the member for Norwood that on 30 March I met with the 17 councils that make up the Torrens catchment. The meeting was organised and chaired by Councillor Rosemary Craddock, Chairman of the River Torrens Standing Committee. On that occasion I took the opportunity to outline to the councils the Government's approach to stormwater management. In particular, I was keen to outline the need to take a whole of catchment approach to stormwater management and the cleaning up of the Torrens catchment.

Ultimately, it is only by cleaning up the catchments of the River Torrens that we will be in a position to clean up the quality of the water in the River Torrens itself. The clean up of the River Torrens is important for many reasons, one of which is tourism. The Torrens Lake is an extremely important tourist asset to this city and to this State. I strongly encour-

aged the catchment councils to form a controlling authority to deal with stormwater management in the same way as is occurring in the Patawalonga catchment, and to facilitate that practice I have agreed to meet half the cost of a project officer for a controlling authority for the first 12 months.

I am looking forward to the councils getting together and determining that an authority should be established, so that the State Government can work closely with local government and with the community to clean up the River Torrens. I can assure the member for Norwood and the members of this House that the clean up of the Torrens is a high priority of the Liberal Government.

FIREBOAT

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): Will the Minister for Emergency Services welcome the State's new fireboat when it arrives in Adelaide on Thursday afternoon, is the boat being diverted to Port Lincoln on its voyage from Perth to pick up the Minister and, if so, will the vessel be escorted into Port Adelaide?

The SPEAKER: Order! I suggest that the honourable member has already been commenting, so I ask him to explain his question now.

Mr ATKINSON: The Opposition has been informed that the new fireboat, which was ordered by the previous Government, will call at Port Lincoln on its delivery voyage from Perth to pick up the Minister for Emergency Services so he can make a triumphal entry into Port Adelaide.

Mr Clarke: Hail to the Chief!

The SPEAKER: Order! I name the honourable member for Ross Smith.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume his seat. According to Standing Orders, the honourable member has the right to be heard in explanation or apology.

Mr CLARKE: I beg your indulgence, Sir, and would withdraw any offensive comments that I have made.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member is entitled to make a contribution explaining his conduct and withdrawing as well as apologising.

Mr CLARKE: I apologise if the member for Bright provoked me to make an outburst which was offensive to members opposite, and I unreservedly apologise to the member and to the House.

The SPEAKER: Order! On this occasion the Chair is prepared to accept the apology as the honourable member is a new member. The action the Chair has taken today should not be taken as meaning that the same latitude will be given to other members. The honourable Minister for Emergency Services.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I sincerely thank the honourable member for his question. This boat may well become known as the boat that Labor built. Since 1986 the Labor Government had examined whether or not it would or would not build a fireboat in South Australia. The reason for the procrastination by the Labor Government, which finally agreed to build the boat, was that no other major city in Australia had a fireboat—not even Sydney Harbor with one of the largest if not the largest waterfront harbors in the world. Further, the Port Stanvac oil refinery had a dedicated vessel for fire fighting purposes.

Despite all that, the Labor Cabinet approved the purchase of a replacement for the fireboat in South Australia, which

had been out of commission for some time, at a total cost, including mooring facilities, of \$1 385 000. It was not that we did not have enough boats in South Australia; it was not that there was not a boat that could have been converted for fire fighting use if that Government had decided it was necessary to build a boat; what is worse is that not only did the Labor Government decide to build the boat but it did not decide to build that boat in South Australia.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: No, it went past South Australian boat builders and awarded the building contract to a Western Australian company. It seems that the Western Australian company had considerable notice that it was to get a favourable Cabinet decision, because when Cabinet decided that the boat was to be built the hull had already been completed. That meant that when, on coming to office, we moved to halt the contract we found that, as at the third day after the election, not only had the hull been built but the engines had already been installed, they had been coupled to the drive shaft, the super structure had been bolted to the hull, and the contract was beyond the point of cancellation. That meant we had to take delivery of yet another Labor Party boat. The Opposition would be well aware that the Treasurer has instigated a review of boats owned by Government.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: As part of that review, I can announce that, as far as departments under my responsibility are concerned, the Police Department has already indicated that it will be disposing of a police launch, the *PL Challenger*, which is an eight metre Shark Cat. Further, there is the possibility of the sale of a further boat to offset this purchase and delivery that we now have to accept.

Regarding the welcoming of the fireboat and any ceremony planned for Port Lincoln, the Metropolitan Fire Service has been told loudly and clearly by me on a number of occasions that I do not approve of this vessel being built, I did not want to take delivery of it, we could not get out of the contract, and I as Minister will play absolutely no part in any ceremony for its arrival.

POLICE AIR WING

Mr QUIRKE (Playford): Is the Minister for Emergency Services disbanding the Police Air Wing? In 1992 charter aircraft operators proposed that the then Government disband the Police Air Wing as a Government cost saving measure, but this was rejected. The proposal was strongly opposed at that time by the Police Department on operational grounds and an investigation determined that no significant long-term savings would flow on from such an arrangement. In fact, there was evidence that police services throughout country South Australia could be seriously disadvantaged.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: Since the election, the Police Department, as with other departments under my responsibility and those of other Ministers, has been undergoing an intensive review of the way in which resources are allocated. As far as the Police Department is concerned, that review has also been undertaken to identify areas where police officers are used in non-policing duties. It is fair to say that the Police Air Wing has been subjected to scrutiny as part of two of those exercises.

Further, as part of that exercise the Police Department has examined reports prepared by the previous Labor Government under the Government Agency Review Committee

process, which incidentally, for the benefit of the honourable member (if he was not already aware), recommended the sale of the Police Air Wing. No decision has been made at this time as to whether or not the Police Air Wing will be sold. Its sale to private enterprise and other contractual arrangements have been considered during the review. When the options have been fully considered and a decision made, if necessary the appropriate submission will be put to Cabinet. Whatever decision is made about the future of the Police Air Wing, it will be made in the interests of cost savings to the taxpayer, delivery of service and ensuring that we have as many police on the beat as possible with the funding that is available to the department.

PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYMENT

Mr QUIRKE (Playford): Why did the Minister for Mines and Energy and for Primary Industries flout the Government's strategy to downsize the public sector by advertising externally for a receptionist for his office? Why was this position not filled from within the Public Service, and did the Public Service Commissioner approve this course of action?

Receptionists in ministerial offices hold Public Service positions and in the past have been filled by internal recruitment. On Saturday last a consultant placed a large display advertisement on page 3 of the *Advertiser* inviting applications for the position of receptionist in the Minister's office to undertake switchboard and front desk duties.

The Hon. D.S. BAKER: I thank the honourable member for his interest in the running of my office. As I understand it, the number of GME employees in my office has gone from approximately nine down to four. However, regarding the filling of the very important position of PA and receptionist, the requirements necessary were not available in those who were available to fill the position. So, it was decided that the positions would be thrown open and they have been advertised for everyone who wishes to apply. Then the decisions will be made.

GOVERNMENT VEHICLES

Mr BASS (Florey): Can the Treasurer provide an update on the Government's cars and the extent to which they have been accounted for by various departments and authorities?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I am still finding them. About two months ago I reported to the House that there was a discrepancy between the two sets of records that were being kept for light motor vehicles in the State Government. One of the figures that we had available to us was 8 949 and the other was 9 300, a difference of some 351. I must report to the Parliament that the figures have continued to expand since then and we have stopped the clock at 10 282. The amount of energy and the officer hours required to follow up information and get decent answers out of departments and authorities has meant that we have decided that action needs to be taken on the whole issue rather than trying to catch and count the last 10, 50 or 100 cars.

What has become quite clear from this whole exercise—and I think it is important—is that it is not just the issue of who owns the cars and whether they are there or not: it is about accountability. It is apparent that there is no complete list anywhere within Government, and we are working on that at the moment. The asset registers in departments, agencies

and authorities are either non-existent or in a very poor form, and we are attempting to overcome that problem.

Of course, the third point of the exercise is that the Government owns and operates far more vehicles than we ever suspected and far more than the Government needs. Despite the fact that the Public Accounts Committee looked at this problem in 1992 and came up with a car count then of 9 400 and suggested ways to increase efficiency in the use of Government motor vehicles, the previous Government went in exactly the opposite direction. The lack of care, consideration and management is an absolute indictment on the previous Government in the way it allowed the assets to be bought, not accounted for and wasted, and allowed rorts to prevail in significant areas. We are talking about assets worth more than \$160 million and annual recurrent bills of \$50 million to \$60 million.

So, while some of these vehicles are owned by school councils and should not be classed as Government motor vehicles—and a few are in that category—what we are finding is that, with all these various agencies (and we have not tracked down all the agencies, which is something that the previous Government could not do, either) every day another car is turning up somewhere that has not been properly accounted for. We are insisting that the system improve. We have given lists of instructions to departments. State Fleet is now operating under a strict set of instructions not only to get those accounting procedures in place but also to reduce the fleet. The system of the past simply cannot be tolerated. I do not intend to have my or anyone else's officers waste more time trying to track down those last few cars. What we will do is ensure that every motor vehicle that is ordered by the Government is properly accounted for at the point of turnover. I thank the honourable member for his question, which is an important one, as it highlights the inefficiencies that were allowed to prevail under the previous Government.

PREMIER'S OFFICE

Ms HURLEY (Napier): Does the Premier categorically deny that he was consulted on the fit-out and, particularly, the purchase of furniture for his new office, which he says lacks any style at all?

An honourable member: Would you buy it?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms HURLEY: I think it's very pretty. I'll take it. Four months after the election, the Premier made the interesting announcement that his Government had built him a new office that he hated. This cheap political shot deflected when it was interpreted as a criticism of the designers, and the Minister for Industrial Affairs subsequently had to issue an apology to the Adelaide-based company which designed the office. The Opposition has been reliably informed that the Premier was personally involved in the selection of the desk.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I am delighted that the honourable member should ask this question, because I have some very interesting facts I would like to pass on to her. The first important thing about the office is its absolutely hopeless layout. Very shortly after becoming Premier I asked to see the layout of all the new floor which had been commissioned under then Premier Bannon and then stopped (I am sure the House will recall, but the honourable member was not here then) by the then Labor Government and later started again, rather discreetly, but at a substantial \$1 million extra cost because of the delay that had occurred.

The Hon. Lynn Arnold interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Yes, a \$1 million extra cost. The first fundamental problem with the office is the layout. I will give an example for those who have not been in the office. When an ambassador or important delegation is here to see the Premier, they go into what we call the anteroom. Under the existing layout, to get to the anteroom you have to go a short distance through a staff area and then finally into the anteroom. I find this astounding, especially as there are special security keys that only the staff have. So, it is incredibly difficult to get any visitors into this anteroom area. I immediately asked, 'Who in the world would design an office layout such as this, when the layout that already exists has been in operation for 20 years and was very functional?'

I ascertained that Premier Bannon had put down a very good design. But along came new Premier Arnold and said, 'No; I'm going to change this design'—at some extra cost—'and I want it done my way,' which was the layout that unfortunately I had to inherit. In fact, Mr Speaker, you would be interested to know that the first thing I said was, 'This really isn't workable; surely we can change this layout.' They went away and did their sums and came back and, through the Minister for Industrial Affairs, pointed out to me that, because the contract is for the entire building and any delays on the Premier's floor would involve a penalty payment for the completion of the entire building, the cost was going to be \$720 000 or up to \$860 000. So, as one can imagine, there was an incredible cost involved in trying to correct yet another bungle by former Premier Arnold.

I asked for the terms of reference given to the architect for the interior design of the building. The first terms of reference given by Premier Bannon covered the following sorts of descriptions for the interior design—and the honourable member should listen to this, because this is what was put down by former Premier Bannon in the instructions to the interior designer or the architects: it had to be 'visionary, spatial, technological, have a sense of presence, variety and approachability'; it had to be 'restrained, utilitarian, stately and progressive'. Can you imagine the confusion that the poor interior designer was faced with at that stage? Then new Premier Arnold comes sailing along. He looked at the terms of reference, having changed the layout very significantly, and imposed three more conditions on this poor interior designer: it was to have no granite and no exotic timber veneers, which I find astounding, because timber is the one warm feature in an office like that, and it should be used.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: In fact the instruction was taken as meaning no timber finishes at all. Finally, superimposed on all these other conditions, the office had to look 'basic and economical'. I have had a very frank discussion with the principal of the architects, and I do not hold them responsible. I believe that they tried to comply with the standards put down by the two former Premiers but they were in a state of confusion. They acknowledged to me that, first, they objected to the change in layout—and the Minister for Industrial Affairs acknowledges that—and they expressed their concern at the style they were to follow. So, quite clearly, they were not responsible for the design—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Well, I'll tell you about the desk. In fact they presented a design of a desk to me. I said it was to be of similar dimensions to my existing desk, and they failed to do that. The architectural firm has accepted liability for that and offered to replace the desk at their cost. This poor architect first received the instructions on 8 May

1992, in which a whole range of comments were put down. They received further instructions on 23 April 1992, again on 8 May 1992, and the major variation to instructions on 13 January 1993, all by the former Labor Government. No wonder the office ended up the way it did when the Government of the day, as hopeless as it was in making so many of its decisions, came down with a set of descriptions for the office that complied with that. As I have said, the worst offence of all was the layout of the office and the manner in which it was presented to the architects, who had to comply with that.

TRANSPORT TIMETABLES

Mr De LAINE (Price): My question is directed to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport in another place. What is the policy and method used by the State Transport Authority to provide consumers with STA train and bus timetables? A constituent recently telephoned the STA to obtain a current timetable and was told to write and enclose a stamped addressed envelope and a timetable would be sent out.

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: This is a very sound and solid question, and I will obtain a report from the Minister for Transport immediately.

NARACOORTE CAVES

The Hon. H. ALLISON (Gordon): Did the Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources attend the centenary anniversary celebrations of the Naracoorte fossil caves last Sunday, and how does he envisage the future of these caves?

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I was pleased to be able to join my ministerial colleague and member for MacKillop last Sunday at the Naracoorte caves in his electorate for the centenary celebrations of the Victoria cave, which was named after Queen Victoria during her jubilee year. It was an excellent day, and I also had the opportunity during the afternoon to open a self-guided tour of one of the three major caves at Naracoorte. I was delighted to be able to do that because the Naracoorte caves are an excellent example of ecotourism, which I mentioned earlier when I released the review on the management of national parks. This tourism venture attracts people from not only this State and interstate but also internationally.

Members would be aware that the Naracoorte caves have been nominated for world heritage listing, and I am delighted about that. As far as I am concerned, the work that is going on to discover fossils and preserve these caves deserves a lot of credit, particularly on the part of the national parks staff who are so dedicated. Regarding the honourable member's question about the future of the caves, I suggest that they will continue to attract international visitors—

The Hon. H. Allison: And scientists.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:—and scientists, as is the case now, and I am sure that they will continue to be a major tourism asset for this State, particularly for ecotourism. I was delighted to be able to participate in this especial occasion last Sunday.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

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

Mr BECKER (Peake): On Tuesday 29 March, the hapless member for Spence mentioned in the grievance debate the comparison of personal votes in the last State election. He compared votes in the House of Assembly with the Legislative Council, and then decided to call them 'the personal vote'. He made some disparaging remarks about some of my colleagues, including the member for Coles. He said:

Interestingly, though, there were some poor results on the personal vote, which would indicate that certain candidates are rather unpopular in their own electorates or failed to make much headway locally. These include the member for Coles, with minus .8 per cent, up against a very under-funded and under-resourced Labor campaign; the former member for Unley, Mr Mayes, who polled minus .9 per cent (which he will find disappointing given that he was the member for so many years, but of course when the tide is running against you it is indeed running against you); the member for Giles, minus 1.0 per cent; . . . the member for Peake, minus 2.4 per cent (a poor result after more than 20 years in Parliament). . .

I have news for the hapless member for Spence: the person who prepared this statistical data for the Parliamentary Library made particular comment in the notes. She says:

As part of its submission to the Electoral Districts Boundaries Commission 1990, the ALP presented a table which showed the two-Party preferred vote in each House of Assembly seat and compared to this an estimate of the two-Party preferred vote within that seat but to elect members of the Legislative Council. The table effectively compared the way people in each electorate voted for their local member and for the Upper House.

That submission by the ALP to the Electoral Boundaries Commission in 1990 was never completed. The map was never completed, so how the Electoral Boundaries Commission ever took much notice of the ALP submission is beyond me. I received this information only last Friday, 8 April, yet the member for Spence made his speech on Tuesday, 29 April. Ms Newton states:

. . . I do think that the figures should be treated with caution, for several reasons.

She goes on to qualify that statement, as follows:

First, I should point out that the figures will include a recognition component—the 'sitting member advantage'—as well as a popularity component or 'personal vote'.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

Mr BECKER: You would have to be the most eccentric person in this House.

Mr Atkinson: And proud of it.

Mr BECKER: I would not be proud of it, because the people in your electorate are so disappointed. The point is that the honourable member should know that when there is a change of electoral boundaries one cannot compare apples with apples. It is extremely difficult. What the member for Spence did not take into consideration because he is so stupid is that on the Legislative Council ticket the Liberal Party was No. 1 and in many of the electorates the candidates were located well within the ballot paper. It is an old Labor Party trick: when you are in trouble you load the bases with as many Independents as you can, with as many of the minor political Parties as possible. We saw that last Saturday in the electorate of Elizabeth. We saw what happened there.

Let us give credit to the Leader of the Opposition because he has corrected this statement—therefore, I take it as correct.

In the *Sunday Mail* of 10 April, under the heading 'Elizabeth stays loyal to Labor', he states:

There were a large number of Independents in this by-election but the voters came back to us on preferences and at the end it's the second preferences that count.

Yet, who was it who grizzled when we said, 'If you vote for an Independent you could be voting for the Labor Party'? Who were the ones who quibbled about that and said that it was dishonest? Like hell it was—it was spot on, because the Leader of the Opposition has confirmed it.

The stupid, hapless member for Spence has also fallen for the three card trick, because when there is a change of electoral boundaries, with electorates changing by 75 per cent, and when an electorate such as mine is split in three ways with a little bit here and a little bit there, with sitting members against sitting members, all sorts of distortions can come through to the personal vote. It does not worry me—I do not give a continental—but the point is that I would hate to think that the member for Spence can go on in his paranoid way trying to convince the people that he knows everything when he really does not know anything.

Mr FOLEY (Hart): I want to briefly talk about the extraordinary comments made in this House today by the Minister for Emergency Services in answer to a question from the member for Spence about the MFS fire boat. I want to put a few facts on the record before I debate the substance of his comments, because the Government is continually misleading the House about the activities of the former Government. A number of South Australian manufacturers tendered for the MFS boat. The fact is that the Western Australia ship builder was the cheapest, and under State preferential—

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I rise on a point of order, Sir. The honourable member, by implication, has accused me of misleading the House. Proper processes exist for the honourable member to go through if he feels that is the case. I ask him to withdraw.

Mr FOLEY: If the Minister felt that I was saying that he misled the House, I withdraw. He is obviously somewhat sensitive about this issue. The fact of the matter is that other ship builders in this State tendered for the project, but the Western Australian ship building company was the cheapest—

Mr Becker interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: You ask the Minister for Industry, Manufacturing, Small Business and Regional Development, and he will tell you about preferential State borders—

Mr Becker interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Bass): Order! I may be new as an Acting Speaker but I am not stupid. Members will not debate across the House. I warn both the member for Hart and the member for Peake. The member for Hart has the call.

Mr FOLEY: Thank you Mr Acting Speaker. I am sorry to put you in that position. I am making the point that, under the preferential system that now applies in this country, we cannot hold on to State Government business within our own boundaries—we must compete across borders. That is my first point: South Australian ship builders tendered for that project and they were not cheap enough, so the boat was built and bought in Western Australia.

The other point I wish to raise is that Port Adelaide needs a fire boat, and I find it extraordinary that the Minister for Emergency Services should preach to this House about what the Port of Adelaide needs. He is not the member for the port,

and nor does he have any understanding of what is required in a busy industrial area like Port Adelaide—an area in which I live and an area in which many thousands of my constituents live very close to the Port of Adelaide. To say that the fire boat at Port Stanvac is adequate is another ridiculous and silly claim. It would take at least one and a half hours to travel from Port Stanvac to the inner harbor, and to say that a boat that is on fire in Port Adelaide should wait an hour and a half for a tender boat to come down from Port Stanvac is an insult.

If the Minister wants to put my constituents at risk, and if he wants to say that Port Adelaide does not need a fire boat, I challenge him to come down to my electorate and tell my constituents that they do not deserve to be protected by a fire boat. This Government is continuing the former Government's work with the Transport Hub and it is doing good work; it is expanding the Port of Adelaide and the number of vessels berthing there. We now have a container terminal that operates on a 24-hour basis, and we have a number of ships at any one time at Outer Harbor.

The Adelaide Brighton Cement works is located within a kilometre of where I live, and it has a constant stream of ships coming in with very flammable products on board. Many ships coming into the State contain flammable products. You cannot fight a fire from one side of the ship—you have to get at it from both sides. So, if the Minister wants to come into this House and say that he does not support a fire boat or that the Port of Adelaide does not need a fire boat, I challenge him to come down to Port Adelaide with me and tell that to the many thousands of my constituents whose homes—including mine—are within a kilometre of a number of berths in Port Adelaide.

The Port of Adelaide is being developed under this Government following on from the work of the previous Government. I commend and applaud that work. I would be very interested to hear the views of the Minister for Transport on this issue. I find the comment from the Minister today—that the Port of Adelaide does not deserve a fire boat—quite extraordinary and insulting. He is simply saying to those many thousands of Port Adelaide residents, 'Sorry, we are not supporting your fire boat. We do not think the safety of that community is paramount. We think that there are adequate fire safety measures from the MFS's normal vehicles, and you don't need to have a fire boat.'

Mr Lewis interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: The member for Ridley would not know what it is like to live in an active port. In an active port—

Mr Lewis interjecting:

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

Mr ANDREW (Chaffey): I refer to the untimely death of my former colleague, Joe Tiernan. I will use a brief part of this grievance debate to formally offer my personal condolences and sympathy to Myra and her three sons, Thomas, Sean and Mark, and to other family members and friends of the Tiernan family. Joe's passing was sudden, and it has come as a real loss to all of us who knew him on this side of the House.

I came to know him, as did many of my colleagues on the Government side of the House, for many of the adjectives that have been so aptly used today—for his vigour, his energy and his enthusiasm—and I will certainly remember him for his determination to make a point on any issue that he felt sensitive or concerned about. Without doubt I will miss the

Irish cheek that no longer comes from the vacant seat in front of me.

I particularly offer the sympathy and support to Joe's family from many of my constituents in the Riverland where Joe spent three years as a Deputy TAFE Director from 1984 to 1987. Over the past week a number of those Riverland residents have come to me and asked that I pass on those condolences and sympathy to his family, and in doing so they reminded me of the vigour and enthusiasm which he displayed when in the Riverland area. I also note that there was a wide cross-section of Joe's former staff colleagues from all of the four campuses with which he was involved at the Riverland TAFE who attended both his funeral and his wake last week. They told me how Joe had had a real impact on them in so many ways and how he had made a contribution to TAFE in the Riverland. Their stories related not only to Joe's activities but also to his speed in a vehicle, whether it be from the Riverland to Adelaide or across the Victorian border to TAFE colleges.

Personally, I also acknowledge and respect Joe as a former colleague who over and above his general enthusiasm was always prepared to offer support to me for the future of the Riverland. Just as it is important for me to use every opportunity to promote the Riverland it was also important to Joe, as he was proud of that area. Therefore, I believe it is totally appropriate to use my remaining time to note the continuing success in the Riverland.

I point to the success of the Kingston Estate Winery. I congratulate its Managing Director and winemaker, Bill Moularadellis, on the announcement last week of its recent gold medal wins in California. The company won gold medals for two chardonnays at the 1994 wine show organised by the International *Wine Trader Magazine*. That competition attracted more than 1 000 entries, including others from Australia as well as from around the world. In addition to winning two gold medals, the company received two silver medals and one bronze medal, and I believe that is more than commendable for the first showing at such an international event.

Obviously, as stated by Mr Moularadellis, the result is great not only for the Kingston Estate but for the Riverland region and for the whole of South Australia. That company has grown from around only 2 000 tonnes of crush five years ago to 10 000 tonnes this vintage, with more than half of that being exported to markets in Sweden, Britain, Canada and the United States. It is another fine example of the Riverland's succeeding via a combination of the region's natural environmental advantages, a businessman and winemaker's expertise and determination as well as the local growers' cooperation and ability to produce quality grapes. Indeed, the Riverland as part of South Australia is ideal for the production of pure flavoursome varietal wines so much associated with the Australian international market.

This success is entirely consistent with the Premier's comments last week indicating that South Australia could be exporting more than \$700 million worth of wine by the year 2000 and that over the next three to four years perhaps \$400 million worth of investment would take place in the South Australian wine-growing industry. That would require up to 15 000 hectares of additional plantings. I am pleased to be working with the appropriate Ministers to ensure that the major resources, particularly irrigation water, will be available in the Riverland to achieve this growth for the future of the wine industry, the Riverland and South Australia.

Mr ASHENDEN (Wright): This afternoon I want to address an issue that unfortunately appears to be getting worse once again, that is, graffiti. I can remember when I was a councillor for the City of Tea Tree Gully that graffiti within the city was a major problem. The council took some steps that I thought were excellent in terms of combating that graffiti. One of the key decisions that the council took was to have two of its employees permanently engaged as a graffiti removal team. As soon as graffiti appeared, the team would remove it. Evidently it is an accepted fact that the graffiti artists get the greatest pleasure out of the work that they do by having it remain *in situ* so that they can brag to their mates and others and say, 'I did that; there it is.' Of course, if it is removed quickly it takes away that factor.

For some time it seemed that the incidence of graffiti died down, particularly in the City of Tea Tree Gully and surrounding areas. I can remember that for month after month, when travelling along the O-Bahn, one would see no graffiti at all on bridges or fences backing on to the busway. Unfortunately, over the past few months the level of graffiti spraying has undoubtedly grown. As I have been moving around I have found that it is again on the O-Bahn, the bridges and the fences backing on to the O-Bahn. As I drive around my electorate I find that graffiti is a very common feature on council property and in other areas.

A constituent of mine has contacted me because he, like me and so many others, is extremely concerned at the growth in this activity. He has put to me what I believe is an excellent suggestion in terms of overcoming this problem. He has suggested that the City of Tea Tree Gully should copy the actions of this Government in terms of protecting its property, particularly in relation to schools. As members would be well aware, the Government is trialing the installation of closed circuit video cameras in schools that are subject to vandalism and graffiti attacks. The information that I have received is that this program has been very effective in the schools in which it has been undertaken.

Obviously this surveillance is done at a cost. However, as my constituent has pointed out to me, although the surveillance is at a cost it is very likely that the savings that will result will be greater than the costs of the control of the problem in terms of the removal of graffiti. The City of Tea Tree Gully should very seriously consider taking similar action, given the problem that exists in that city and particularly in relation to the abuse of property owned by the city. It could well engage persons to keep an eye on the areas that are subject to attack from graffiti artists, particularly at night, either by hiring security personnel or by the installation of closed circuit television. It appears that the only way we will control this problem is to remove its cause.

When I was a councillor for the City of Tea Tree Gully there appeared to be two divisions in the council: those who thought that it was best to take action against the graffiti artists and those who thought that it was best to work with them to see whether their activities could be channelled in more positive directions. I believe that that experiment has had long enough; and, in fact, it has not worked. I strongly encourage the City of Tea Tree Gully to move away from the velvet glove approach. It should make it quite clear to those undertaking that activity that it is totally unacceptable, that it is a great cost to the community and that it is now going to start providing protection in the form of surveillance and by taking these graffiti artists to court and ensuring not only that they are punished but also that they are required to clean up

the mess they make. I stress that I hope the council will undertake the program that my constituent advocates.

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

Ms HURLEY (Napier): I wish to talk about the effect of deinstitutionalisation on our mental health services. This matter has been raised previously in the House by the Minister, who spoke in terms of what money might be available for buildings to be put up as a result of the closure of Hillcrest Hospital. I believe that in this case a more comprehensive approach is required than to put up community health centres. These centres provide good community services as they are, but this bricks-and-mortar approach is not enough in terms of people with mental health problems in the community. In fact, personnel from the Mental Health Service should be made available to go out into the field to provide support for people with mental health problems. Obviously it is most likely that these people would come from the community health centres, but I believe that it should be made clear from the beginning that this is what is required.

I am sure that like me other members have been made aware of problems in their community as a result of deinstitutionalisation. When people with mental health problems are released, if they do not have family support, they often go to private boarding homes or they are able to obtain priority housing with the South Australian Housing Trust. Very often they are unable to get a job and provide for themselves.

I know that there are problems in relation to the provision of care for people who go into boarding homes. However, I wish to discuss those people who go into Housing Trust accommodation, because that is where problems have arisen in my electorate. Some of these people—and I stress that it is only some—continue to exhibit disruptive and anti-social behaviour in the community—not all the time but at certain times—and this causes problems for those living in the streets around them and particularly for their neighbours. The only options available to the neighbours and those in surrounding streets in dealing with these problems is to speak to those involved directly, to speak to the council or to call the police. The police really are not the appropriate people to deal with this sort of problem; it is not really their job and they do not have the expertise to deal with people who perhaps have mental health problems and are therefore difficult to cope with.

The only other fall back for these people is to call the Hillcrest Hospital emergency services section. These people are extremely busy, and they are often reluctant to come out because of that; and they are generally unable to make the time available and unable to report back to the community. There are two problems here: first, the person with the illness obviously is not getting appropriate treatment if the anti-social behaviour is continuing; and, secondly, people in the community who are not properly equipped to deal with this problem are being forced to deal with it.

The answer to this sort of problem is to provide a service similar to the District Nursing Service that is able to visit homes on a regular basis. It would mean, for example, that someone could regularly visit people who have been deinstitutionalised to ensure that they receive proper medication and that they are able to take it. Often with the combined problems that these people have they are not able to take the medication they require on a regular basis. They forget it;

they misplace it; they break it; they drop it; and they are not on the proper medication that ensures that their condition is controlled. There also needs to be a way to make sure that people are coping well with living on their own, after being in an institution. It is a well recognised fact that people who have been in institutions often cope poorly with the situation outside that institution, particularly if they have been there for a long time.

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

Mr BRINDAL (Unley): In this House today the Minister who is at the table introduced the Review into the Management of the National Parks and Wildlife Act, the final report for 1994. I wish to commend the Minister, his department and all those who were involved in the preparation of the report. Like most members in this House, I have not had time to read it thoroughly, but what impresses me most is the damning indictment that the report represents in respect of the lack of management of our national parks system by the previous Government. There are, I think, 27 key recommendations to the report, which takes an enlightened step forward in the proper management of our natural heritage and, indeed, in the conservation of our native fauna and flora.

For too long this State has suffered under a regime that basically believed that all you had to do was add more and more land, declare it national park, conservation area or a wildlife zone and have Ministers then stand up in this place boasting about the percentage of land area in this State that was protected as either national park, heritage area or under some other nomenclature. The problem with that type of approach is that the last Government was very quick to acquire land areas and put tags on them but not very quick at all at managing those resources properly. Of particular note to me, because I taught out there, was the Unnamed Conservation Park on the Nullarbor Plain.

It was an area of land that from just about the advent of white settlement has been listed on the map as unattached Crown land. Through the decades since settlement there have been numerous attempts to graze the land, to settle it or to find some useful purpose for it, but there is no surface water and, indeed, that land was not really used even by the Aboriginal people who were here for more than 20 000 years before our settlement. It was land for which no useful purpose could be found and which was quite safe and protected in its own way. Few people visited it and it had little need of anything being done to it.

But the last Government, in a frenzy of declaring national parks, had to take away from it the title of unattached Crown land and turn it into a conservation park. However, it has never provided any management, expertise or enough personnel even to look after it, let alone to make any active contribution to its preservation. I note that on page 201 of the review it states:

The review was aware that the South Australian reserve system covered approximately 20.3 million hectares, including some areas that have little or no conservation value. The review recommended through the park audit that under strict criteria such lands be identified systematically, removed and sold from the reserve system.

To that I and, I hope, all members on both sides of the House who have a real passion for the conservation of this State will say a hearty 'Hear! Hear!' This idea of just adding land of little or no value willy-nilly and then not managing it has been a disgrace perpetrated on this State by the last Govern-

ment. I applaud this report, which will bring decent and efficient management to our national parks; which will attempt to bring the feral pests, both in animal and plant form, under control; and which will see, whilst perhaps there is a lesser number of parks, those parks being properly managed as the heritage of future generations.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

Mr BRINDAL: The member for Spence asks whether you can bring feral plants. I suggest that he read the report.

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

SITTINGS AND BUSINESS

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Deputy Premier): I move:

That the time allotted for completion of the following Bills:
 Real Property (Miscellaneous) Amendment,
 Wills (Miscellaneous) Amendment,
 Parliamentary Committees (Miscellaneous) Amendment,
 Acts Interpretation (Monetary Amounts) Amendment,
 Debits Tax,
 Stamp Duties (Securities Clearing House) Amendment,
 Stamp Duties (Concessions) Amendment and
 Industrial and Employee Relations
 be until 6 p.m. on Thursday 14 April.

The House divided on the motion:

AYES (30)

Allison, H.	Andrew, K. A.
Armitage, M. H.	Ashenden, E. S.
Baker, D. S.	Baker, S. J. (teller)
Bass, R. P.	Becker, H.
Brokenshire, R. L.	Buckby, M. R.
Caudell, C. J.	Condous, S. G.
Evans, I. F.	Greig, J. M.
Hall, J. L.	Ingerson, G. A.
Kerin, R. G.	Kotz, D. C.
Leggett, S. R.	Lewis, I. P.
Matthew, W. A.	Meier, E. J.
Oswald, J. K. G.	Penfold, E. M.
Rosenberg, L. F.	Rossi, J. P.
Scalzi, G.	Such, R. B.
Wade, D. E.	Wotton, D. C.

NOES (7)

Atkinson, M. J.	Blevins, F. T.
De Laine, M. R.	Foley, K. O.
Hurley, A. K.	Quirke, J. A.
Rann, M. D. (teller)	

Majority of 23 for the Ayes.

Motion thus carried.

REAL PROPERTY (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
 (Continued from 23 March. Page 486.)

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): The Opposition has studied the Bill carefully. It is a technical Bill that has been the subject of full consultation with people whose livelihoods are dependent on the sale and transfer of real property. The Bill allows easements and rights of way to be extinguished more easily. This is consistent with the new Attorney-General's

policy of diminished respect for property rights, particularly ancient rights.

I notice that the former Attorney-General succeeded in amending the Bill to omit 'politically incorrect language' and substitute 'politically correct language'. I do hope I serve long enough in the House to see the former Attorney-General's politically correct language become incorrect and be replaced by some other euphemisms. I note that the Minister in his second reading explanation said:

The original intention of granting rights of way over streets in a plan or division was to restrict access to owners of land in that plan. These rights are extinguished on declaration of a public street under section 303 of the Local Government Act.

The Minister went on to say:

The Bill simply provides that a private right of way cannot exist over a public street or road.

That is commonsense, and I was pleased to read the Minister's remarks. These remarks are, of course, at variance with the stated view of the Premier and the Minister for Health that the right to walk, ride or drive on Hill Street, North Adelaide and Barton Terrace West, North Adelaide is a property right and not a public right, that is, a right confined to people who own property in North Adelaide and denied to people who live in Ovingham, Bowden and Brompton. I believe that people of any class, creed or residence ought to be permitted to use public roads, and I support the Bill.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Deputy Premier): I thank the honourable member for his contribution. The length and the extent that the honourable member takes the debate never ceases to amaze me. He winds down funny streets such as Barton Terrace, which the honourable member has had some paranoia about over the last two years.

Mr Atkinson: More than that.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: The honourable member accurately represented the Bill and what it attempts to achieve. There is improved language. A problem has existed for many years about easements and rights of way, which are historical, as the honourable member suggested, although he is drawing a long bow when he says that property rights will be affected by this Bill. It is important to understand that every caveat on a title affects the right of a person to operate that property in the way that he or she would wish, and therefore it may well be that this provision improves the capacity of property owners to operate their property in a way that they feel fit, because they are not encumbered by easements or rights of way which were placed 50 or 100 years previously and which have no relevance today in terms of the actual needs of the various instrumentalities or indeed the property owner. I thank the honourable member for his comments.

Bill read a second time and taken through its remaining stages.

WILLS (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 24 March. Page 559.)

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): The Opposition has studied this Bill in detail. Apart from considering my own will and that of a distant relative, I have not had an opportunity to study the law of succession since 1980 when that subject was part of my law degree. It seems that the trend in the law applying to wills is still in the direction of ever greater

informality. This Bill continues the trend, for better or for worse.

The Bill allows minors (that is, persons under the age of 18) to overcome the rule that they are not capable of making a will. They may now make a will under the supervision of the Supreme Court. This may be useful when a minor suffers a serious injury and is awarded a big damages pay out intended to provide for the minor for the rest of his or her life. However, I do not think the operation of the laws of intestacy and the testator's family maintenance provisions are as anomalous as some members of the Government argue. I support the change that allows a minor to make a will in contemplation of marriage and in the case of divorce.

Requirements as to signing and witnessing a will are further relaxed, and the burden of proving that an informal will should be admitted to probate is lightened. The Bill also allows the full application in South Australia of the equitable doctrine of rectification. Rectification of a will shall now be available when the court is satisfied that the will fails to carry out the testator's intentions.

Both the Attorney-General and the former Attorney-General seem to agree that divorce is now so commonplace that it ought not to affect the wills made by each spouse. That is certainly the law in South Australia. I do not agree. I believe divorce is such a rupture in one's life that it ought to invalidate a will. The Bill does not change this law, but it should. I am also sceptical of the suggestion of statutory wills, namely, wills made by Government officers on behalf of people mentally incapable of making a will. The Bill does not authorise statutory wills, but it is clear from the debate that the Government is considering them.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Deputy Premier): I thank the honourable member for his contribution. There are changes to the arrangements for wills, as accurately described by the member for Spence. They are in keeping with the changes in family status, particularly in the case of minors. The support of the Opposition is appreciated.

Bill read a second time and taken through its remaining stages.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 30 March. Page 621.)

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): The Opposition has studied the Bill most carefully. The Bill has been improved by debate in another place. The Opposition prefers that the Economic and Finance Committee continue to be known by that name and not revert to being known as the Public Accounts Committee. The work of the committee is intended to cover some non-government economic and financial matters. The Opposition prefers that the definition of 'State instrumentality', for the purposes of Parliamentary committees, embrace tertiary education authorities. We would regard it as a scandal if the Government reserved to itself in the Bill the power to exclude statutory authorities from the purview of the committees by regulation.

The Bill restores the Public Works Committee. The Opposition does not share the enthusiasm of the Premier for the work of the old Public Works Committee. We think that the Public Works Committee, in its last incarnation, was a rubber stamp for Government proposals. One improvement in the new Public Works Committee is that it is not limited

to studying a proposed public work but can monitor the public work through construction to completion.

When I was elected to the House, I was rather surprised to learn that members of the House received extra salary for serving on parliamentary committees. Indeed, on the Sunday after the general election of 1989, I sat by my telephone in my kitchen waiting for other members to telephone me to lobby me for election to the ministry. I was most disappointed when I received no calls, so I went out to my trade union office to clear away my papers, and when I arrived there I was greeted by one of my parliamentary colleagues with the question, 'Mick, will you support me for such and such a committee?' I said 'No worries, old mate.' It was only later that I discovered that these committees had salaries attached to them, and I was one of the members who missed out.

So, I had some sympathy for the member for Coles when I heard her on radio telling the public of South Australia that members of Parliament ought not be paid for serving on parliamentary committees. However, now is the hour. This committees Bill is before us and, if the member for Coles is serious about her public utterances on radio, she will now enter the House and move an amendment to ensure that members are not paid any extra for serving on parliamentary committees. I must say that, if the member for Coles does not move such an amendment, her remarks on radio are humbug.

Mr BECKER (Peake): Given the time he has been here, the member for Spence never ceases to amaze me with his attempts to denigrate various members. He has let the cat out of the bag, namely, his trade union experience. Therefore, we can accept that the poor bloke has not had much training in life, and that is probably more the pity as far as the Parliament is concerned. In challenging the member for Coles, he did not state exactly the member for Coles' situation, as I understand it, namely, her belief that not all members of parliamentary committees should be paid but only the member holding the position of presiding member, chairperson, or whatever one wants to call it. I prefer to be called 'chairman'; I do not like the title 'presiding member'. Had he more accurately described the attitude of the member for Coles, there might have been a more serious response to his remarks.

There has been much argument over many years as to the merit of parliamentary committees. The Liberal Party has worked since well before 1979 to improve the question concerning accountability to the Parliament. The only way that we can improve such accountability is to have a number of committees whereby members from both sides of the House, in a bipartisan manner, work to assist operations of the Government of the day and of the Parliament. The member for Spence might be interested to note consistent moves back in the early 1970s—I think it was about 1971 or 1972—of Bill Nankivell, the then member for Mallee, to establish a Public Accounts Committee.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr BECKER: It was before then, because Nankivell tried three times to move for the committee before the Dunstan Government accepted the proposal. To the best of my knowledge, the Public Accounts Committee is one of the oldest (if not the oldest) parliamentary committees in the Westminster system. That committee's sole job, as you, Mr Deputy Speaker, would know, is to investigate the accounts of the Government of the day. It comes into the picture after the money has been expended and ascertains where the money was spent and whether the Government and

the taxpayers have received value for it. That is a very important function of Government, but it took a long time to achieve, and when the final debate occurred in Parliament two people voted against it: David Brookman and I. I said that I felt that the Government would rue the day it established a Public Accounts Committee.

It is a strange thing, because I was asked to go on that committee when it was set up in 1973, and I said that I felt I could not. I went onto the Industries Development Committee, which I found a fascinating committee inasmuch as it encompassed the role of my previous—and only—employment within the banking industry. So, the Public Accounts Committee was established and, although it took quite some time to get going, it soon proved its worth. As a matter of fact, the Committee of Public Accounts was first appointed in 1861. So, it is one of the oldest committees. Of course, in Westminster the Chairman is chosen from the Opposition.

That was something that we also looked at many years ago but, following my term as chairman, it was resolved that the Government would still prefer to have its own chairman. After five years on the Industries Development Committee, in 1979 I was appointed Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee and given a very open and wide brief as far as the accounts were concerned. The then Premier said, 'There's no need to put an independent chairman in; we've got one.' I always assumed that, working on any of those parliamentary committees, one was working in the interests of the Parliament and in a bipartisan manner, and I think that system has broken down at times in some Parliaments.

The Industries Development Committee is now a subsidiary committee of the Economic and Finance Committee. So, the member for Spence might well suggest that members should not be paid. The work of the Industries Development Committee in the early 1970s under the Dunstan Government was quite solid, and it was a very responsible job where we as the Government, through that committee, were lenders of the last resort. In other words, anybody—and this was established by the Playford Government—who had a good idea, had a business, needed some capital or help to get export markets, who could make a contribution to, say, tourism in South Australia or who could create employment and was unable to obtain funding because of the lack of security required for the normal lending institutions, could come to the Government of the day, through the Industries Development Committee, and be given shares, a grant, a Government guarantee, or a combination of all those things. So, in other words, the Government provided the ways and means for a worthwhile organisation to be given a kick start.

It was the role of the committee to look at all applications, be they controversial or not, and to make an assessment. When I joined the committee I was quite surprised at the lack of in-depth study and investigation into the creditworthiness of some of the companies or organisations concerned. I have always believed in and insisted on follow-up work being carried out by that committee. Not all applications were approved or supported by the committee, but the final decisions rested with the Cabinet and/or the Treasurer of the day.

Probably one of the most controversial decisions concerned the financing of the Coal Yard restaurant, and we all well remember that issue and, following on from that, the book written by Des Ryan and Mike McEwan. It was a tragedy that the story got out in the way it did, because that Government wanted to help. It created employment and

something for the tourist industry and met all the criteria. There were many other applications as well, which I cannot talk about because each application that comes before the committee is strictly confidential.

When you join a bank, you sign a deed of secrecy. I am amazed that as members of that committee we are not required to sign a deed of secrecy. However, the same principles prevail: the documentation and evidence which we receive and which is recorded by *Hansard* is strictly confidential. The research and everything about it is confidential, because at any stage of an investigation if the creditors of a company knew that inquiries were being made, albeit for the benefit of that company, that could affect the operations of the company. So, it is a valuable committee which undertakes an important task in a bipartisan way on behalf of the Government, with two members of the Government, two members of the Opposition and one member from the Treasury.

The title of the Economic and Finance Committee came about when Martyn Evans, the former member for Elizabeth, in his very ambitious way decided to change the whole of the parliamentary committee system. This was the whole tragedy of the set-up, as I saw it at that time, and I was critical of it, as I felt that change for the sake of change was wrong. I have always believed that. If you have a good point to make and want to do something for the benefit of the State or the community, that is all right, but in this case that was not so. Everyone knew how ambitious Evans was. He was not satisfied with wanting to be the Deputy Speaker. He made sure that the salary was doubled, but he was not satisfied with that. He wanted to be the chairman of each one of the parliamentary committees, because the title of Deputy Speaker includes Chairman of Committees. He wanted to carry it right out. That was not on as far as the Labor Party was concerned, but he did get himself nominated as a member of the Economic and Finance Committee.

To substantiate the whole set-up, Evans was able to convince the powers that be that the Industries Development Committee should come under the umbrella of the Economic and Finance Committee.

Mr Atkinson: Was he the Chairman?

Mr BECKER: No, he was never the Chairman. He wanted the Economic and Finance Committee to take over the role of the Industries Development Committee and abolish the extra salaries, and this he did. Saving the salaries of four members of that committee contributed to his salary and to the benefits he received. I was staggered recently, when visiting Elizabeth Downs in connection with the by-election, by the comments I heard from members of the rank and file Labor Party concerning what they thought of Martyn. Even the members of the Party knew that Martyn looked after himself and not the people. I was amazed because I had a high regard for Martyn Evans. The public knew more than we did about that particular person.

So, we now have a committee that is called the Economic and Finance Committee. I object to that title. When this legislation was introduced in the Legislative Council it was suggested that we change the name to the Public Accounts Committee. Regrettably, that was rejected by the Opposition Labor Party with the support of the Democrats. What annoys me—

Mr ATKINSON: I rise on a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I ask whether the honourable member should canvass debate in another place and reflect on the merits of amendments made there.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable member has a point. I reflected upon exactly the same consideration when the honourable member himself introduced this subject matter into his own speech. From the point of view of some rebuttal from the member for Peake, I was allowing the debate to proceed, although the member for Peake has spent most of his speech discussing a committee that is not even mentioned in the Bill. I ask the honourable member to revert to consideration of the Bill as it was received.

Mr BECKER: What I am leading up to is that I propose to place before the Parliament an amendment to the legislation to carry out that instruction as far as the name 'Economic and Finance Committee' is concerned. The Economic and Finance Committee is mentioned in the Bill, because its role is being changed by this legislation. It is necessary for me to prepare an amendment and present it to the Committee. Unfortunately, that amendment is not ready as I overlooked giving the Parliament notice that I propose to put forward this amendment concerning the Public Accounts Committee. What we have now is a whole change of role of the parliamentary committee structure in the Parliament. For some years, Liberal Party policy has been to revert to the Public Works Committee. There used to be such a committee, but when Evans introduced the Parliamentary Committees Act in 1991 he virtually abolished the Public Works Committee and incorporated it in the Environment, Resources and Development Committee. The Government, in accordance with its policy, wishes to have a Public Works Committee.

We can claim that we now have a mandate—against my personal wishes, but I was the only one—for having a Statutory Authorities Review Committee. We must bear in mind that there are between 240 and 420 statutory authorities cum committees; in other words, Government trading enterprises and Government bodies. It would be impossible for one parliamentary committee to investigate that number of bodies as well as Government departments and the role of Government as defined in the Economic and Finance Committee part of this legislation. I see merit in the idea of creating two further committees. I question the cost, which is a cost to the Government and to the taxpayer, but if the committees do the job they set out to do they will save far more than they will cost.

My salary has always been covered from the moment I entered Parliament, because when I examined the first two editions of the Auditor-General's Report I found that huge sums of money were being left in bank accounts all over the State. I knew from my own banking experience that Government departments never worried about how much money they had in the bank, whereas companies would make sure that they never had any more than \$50 000. They would put that money overnight on the short-term money market. I telephoned the then Under Treasurer and said, 'Why aren't you doing this? You can, by a system, quickly consolidate State finances and find out which departments have what, transfer it all into a central fund and place that money overnight on the short-term money market.'

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

Mr BECKER: If they were borrowing, they could use that money. But what used to happen? After three o'clock when the banks closed—I am telling stories out of school—companies such as John Martin's or Elders, which may have had a surplus of funds or needed to pay import bills or letters of credit in connection with shipping documents that may have arrived, made company borrowings via the banks. Bank cheques would change hands after three o'clock, and this

meant that the Government could do it as well. About a week later I asked Don Dunstan, as Premier and Treasurer, whether the Government would implement this system. Dunstan abused me and accused me of having a spy in the Treasury, because on only that day documentation putting forward that idea had crossed his desk.

The person who put up the idea to the Premier did not tell him that it was my idea but claimed the credit for himself. However, that does not matter because, in effect, it saved the State tens of thousands of dollars. In other words, the State was able to earn considerable sums of money overnight. You could say that they virtually covered the parliamentary salaries for all of us for forever and a day by putting the money—

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr BECKER: It is true, because up until the early 1970s the Government was not doing that. We could not get a more efficient organisation than SAFA, which is exactly spot on in investing the State's money and looking after it. However, in those days that was not done so, no matter what I do, I believe I have paid for my salary, my superannuation and anything I ever get out the State. I have never cost the State a penny.

By keeping that role going through the Economic and Finance Committee or the parliamentary Public Accounts Committee many of us can say that we have been able to recommend to the Government of the day, via our reports and methodology, systems which have been overlooked by the public servants, the Government and Ministers because they are too busy and are therefore not aware of the savings that can be made in respect of the operations and the dealings of the accounts of the State. So, a good parliamentary committee can more than pay for itself and can bring about efficiency as well as accountability, and that is what it is really all about: the accountability of the State and the accountability of the Government of the day.

Those benefits have been reaped by the taxpayers, because if we had not had these committees, be it the Public Accounts Committee or Public Works Committee, Government taxes would be considerably higher. I did not agree with Government policy initially because I saw it as splitting the role of the Economic and Finance Committee by taking away the work of the statutory authorities. So much work exists in relation to statutory authorities alone that I believe it is far better to share that work and to bring about a quicker response in respect of effective and efficient management.

This legislation has come before the House more quickly than I had expected, so I have not had an opportunity to prepare an amendment to change the name to the Public Accounts Committee. I believe that the loss of the Public Accounts Committee is a disappointment as it is one of the oldest committees and one of the oldest traditions, and I am a traditionalist as far as the Parliament is concerned.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Deputy Premier): I thank members for their support of the Bill. Basically the matters relating to the Bill have been extensively covered, particularly by the member for Peake. The Public Works Committee is somewhat of an old chestnut but it is probably as relevant today as it was many years ago. It is a fact of life that our committees have not focused on some of the really important issues in the way in which it was envisaged when they were first set up, simply because so many matters have been drawn to their attention.

I can well remember some of the actions of the Economic and Finance Committee, which simply could not cope with what I call the big picture: that is, where the State is going, how money is being spent and how we can improve efficiencies in Government. It did not have the capacity to look at those issues properly and in the process, I believe, it did not fulfil the potential that was outlined by the former member for Elizabeth. There was some discussion and disagreement at the time the committees were changed. I am not wedded to the idea of either the Public Accounts Committee or the Economic and Finance Committee, but certainly I can appreciate the argument in relation to the retention of the name and, in fact, there has been a majority of support from within our ranks on that matter. I note that returning this Bill to another place could be fraught with some difficulty given the vehement resistance to changing the name back to the Public Accounts Committee.

I reflect on the roles that we set down when we decided to change the committees. As the member for Peake has pointed out in relation to the Statutory Authorities Review Committee, 240 to 400 statutory authorities exist within Government. We are still trying to get a handle on the final number and the names of all the authorities. We are slowly tracking them all down. Some of them are particularly nebulous and exist in name only and others, of course, are such high fliers as the State Bank, SGIC and so on. I believe that there is a role to look at the public works and to make sure that the public works do perform up to the standard and specifications set. It was always a bit of a joke as to how Ministers and departments avoided referral of a project to the Public Works Standing Committee, as it was known at the time. They would divide up the contracts and reduce them to a level below the statutory requirement which necessitated scrutiny by the Public Works Standing Committee.

Of course, in contracting terms we would get only part of the story and not the full story. I am sure there is a role to look at that public works area and for a specialist group within this Parliament to concentrate on the process of capital accumulation, maintenance and improvement. It is important to understand that the dollars are very limited now and that whatever savings we can make within the system will be not only to the benefit of taxpayers but will also provide the opportunity to do something substantial with our existing assets. Various estimates have been made of the maintenance problem within the Department for Education and Children's Services, the Engineering and Water Supply Department and in relation to the roads and the hospitals, and those bills are very substantial. So, to that degree there is a need for a specialist committee to oversee the public works and indeed to look at the public works budgets of various departments and agencies.

A dividing line exists between where public accounts finish and statutory authorities start. I have already mentioned that, in some cases, there may well be some dilemma, but it is quite apparent that the Parliament simply has not been able to come to grips with the changing role of Government in its committee system. It is still stuck in a 1970s and 1980s way of thinking. We have had committees set up in the past, and we have had changes in committees as a result of the efforts of the former member for Elizabeth but, quite frankly, those committees have quite often concentrated on issues other than the substance and have picked up and ran with issues of the day. That is all very well if you are interested in getting publicity, but it does not assist—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I can think of one member who exploited those committees. That approach really does not assist with respect to the long-term benefit of the Parliament. We, as Ministers, should not be worried or scared about the fact that the Parliament wants to play an active watchdog role on Government. We should use it as a very positive force. However, the extent to which some of the committees in the past have concentrated on matters politic rather than matters of State is of some concern. My colleagues are dedicated to the terms of reference and will indeed enhance the capacity of Ministers, in particular, but the Government in general must meet its charter to ensure that resources are applied effectively and efficiently. I commend the Bill to the House. I believe that the amendment is now before us, so we can proceed to the Committee stage. I thank members for their contribution.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3—'Interpretation.'

Mr BECKER: I move:

Leave out paragraph (a) and insert—

- (a) by striking out from paragraph (a) of the definition of 'appointing House or Houses' 'the Economic and Finance Committee' and substituting 'the Public Accounts Committee or the Public Works Committee';

This amendment relates to the change of the committee's name from the 'Economic and Finance Committee' to the 'Public Accounts Committee'. As I said in my second reading speech, I believe that the name of the Economic and Finance Committee should be changed back to the Public Accounts Committee. I move this amendment because this is one of the oldest committees in the Westminster parliamentary system, having been established in 1861. Its brief states:

The committee does not seek to concern itself with policy. Its interest is in whether the policy is carried out efficiently, effectively and economically. Its main functions are to see that public moneys are applied for the purpose prescribed by Parliament.

The committee does work very closely, as it did in those days, with the Auditor-General. We have discussions with the Auditor-General following the tabling of his report in Parliament, and we have a role to assist probably the most important and most valued officer of the Parliament.

I apologise to the Committee for not having the amendment on file earlier. I feel very strongly that since 1973, when the committee was established in South Australia, the name 'Public Accounts Committee' has been well established in terms of the accountability of Government. It did not matter whether it was a Labor Government, a Liberal Government or whatever, the public of South Australia accepted the fact that here was a committee of members of Parliament—be they members of the Liberal Party or the Labor Party—who were concerned with the accountability of Government. On all occasions, except probably one or two, the committee's reports were approved unanimously in a bipartisan way. Certainly, all the reports that the Public Accounts Committee tabled were unanimous.

Some wonderful people have served on that committee, not only as Chairman or Presiding Member but also as members. Many were subsequently appointed to the ministry. It was well known that the committee's work and the value of that work contributed to the training of potential Ministers. The Public Accounts Committee in South Australia has one other higher reputation. Each State has a Public Accounts Committee or a form of that committee, and they get together

for a biennial conference. It is most important that all the parliamentary committees get together to discuss matters of mutual interest.

During my term as Chairman, from 1979 to 1982, the then Chairman of the committee in New South Wales, Laurie Brereton, brought his members to South Australia to meet with the staff and the committee to discuss the various aspects of the work of the Public Accounts Committee. Mr Brereton picked my brains for ideas and whatever and asked me to suggest areas that he should investigate. I told him that he had the choice of education or hospitals. He decided to investigate the hospitals and tabled a stinging report on the Wran Government's administration of the public hospitals system. Not long after that report was tabled, Mr Wran made Laurie Brereton the Minister of Health in New South Wales. To his credit, he undertook quite considerable work in improving the efficiency of the hospitals system in New South Wales. Of course, Mr Brereton has now gone on to be a Minister in the Federal Government. I think that if one asked Laurie Brereton on the quiet what he thought of his visit to South Australia, when he had discussions with his own Labor Party colleagues, my own colleagues and the staff, he would say that he certainly benefited from it and that it helped his career.

We were able to assist Queensland members of Parliament—members of both the Liberal Party and the Labor Party—in their campaign and their efforts to have debate on and provide support for the establishment of a Public Accounts Committee in Queensland. That was a long, hard battle. It was extremely difficult to get the then Premier of Queensland, Joh Bjelke-Petersen, to agree to even think about having a Public Accounts Committee. Victoria revamped its committee, and the Tasmanians visited us when they revamped their committee, as did Western Australia. Every Parliament in Australia, including that of the Northern Territory, visited us to look at our *modus operandi*. We were also visited by representatives from the Parliaments of Papua New Guinea and New Zealand.

During my membership of the committee I visited Westminster to meet with the Chairman and members of the Public Accounts Committee there. I also visited the Canadian Public Accounts Committee, which was renowned as one of the most progressive. I completed that visit by going to Washington, where I was able to provide advice about our committee's *modus operandi* for advisers to the then President, Mr Reagan. The name 'Public Accounts Committee' means a lot to the people of South Australia. It is a simple description and a simple title. To facilitate the recognition of this committee of the Parliament I urge support for this amendment.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: The honourable member has left us in a very difficult situation. I believe that the first amendment is incompetent, anyway. It is not the honourable member's fault, except that he put it on file very late. I believe that we will have the name 'Public Works Committee' repeated twice if we agree to this amendment. Even if we accepted the principle, the fact is that in practice the amendment will result in repetition in the legislation. I understand that these amendments were moved in another place, but the whole wording has changed since that time. Because this has come upon us in this way, I give an undertaking to the Parliament that I will adjourn the debate on motion until later this evening, after we have had a look at the amendments. It is not fair to the honourable member or to the Parliament that we continue to pursue this matter.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

ACTS INTERPRETATION (MONETARY AMOUNTS) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 30 March. Page 618.)

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): The Opposition has studied this measure in detail. Now that the Commonwealth no longer mints 1¢ and 2¢ coins, the Bill seems an eminently sensible measure.

Bill read a second time and taken through its remaining stages.

DEBITS TAX BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 30 March. Page 620.)

Mr QUIRKE (Playford): The Opposition will not need to take too much time on this measure. From careful scrutiny of the Bill, we see that in essence it is a result of changes at Federal level to taxation arrangements and agency arrangements which the Commonwealth entered into during 1992 and which it has indicated it wishes to terminate on 30 June this year. The tax will then be the responsibility of the States. So far it has been collected by the Commonwealth and disbursed to the States in accordance with the Federal Act and, with the successful passage of this legislation through both Houses and its proclamation, it will be the responsibility of the South Australian jurisdiction to collect. As a consequence, the Opposition notes the legislation, supports it and does not feel that it is necessary to take up any more of the time of the House.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Treasurer): I thank the honourable member for his support of the Bill. Tax is unfortunate: it is a way of life. Governments need money. As the honourable member pointed out, the debits tax was previously under the control of the Federal Government. It has provided the taxing measure to the State Government but, of course, has taken away the revenue that would flow from the Commonwealth as a result of this measure. We were required to put our taxation instrument in place by 1 July: this Bill achieves that. There has been some consternation about debits tax, FID tax and various other taxes. I have received representations, as have all members, that people would like to see particular taxes scrapped.

Whilst there is no such thing as a good tax, the debits tax affects basically only one area of financial institutions, that is, cheque accounts and related accounts. Therefore, it is site specific. It releases a strong amount of revenue to the State Government, which it cannot do without. In fact, if I had to scrap a tax, this would not be one of the first taxes that I would scrap. I thank the honourable member for his support.

Bill read a second time and taken through its remaining stages.

STAMP DUTIES (SECURITIES CLEARING HOUSE) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 23 March. Page 484.)

Mr QUIRKE (Playford): Again, we will not take up too much of the time of the House on this measure. In essence, this Bill (and the amendment that I understand will be moved in Committee by the Treasurer) provides that stock changes are simply to be recorded electronically, and this measure will bring later twentieth century technology into the ambit of the law in this area. The Opposition has no problem in supporting the measures in this Bill or the amendment.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Treasurer): Again, I thank the Opposition for the speedy passage of the legislation. As the honourable member has noted, we will make one technical amendment in Committee. As everyone is aware, the age of electronics and computer processing is with us, and this will increase the volume of information that will be transmitted in electronic form. We are talking about the CHES system, which will operate through a clearing house controlled by the Australian Stock Exchange. Under the previous rules, there was some difficulty, unless paper was being stamped and transferred, in collecting the duty. This measure allows us to use the instruments that are being used to transfer the property, in this case the shares, to collect the taxation that would normally pertain to share transfers. I thank the Opposition for its support of the measure.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 5 passed.

Clause 6—'Interpretation.'

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I move:

Page 3, lines 16 and 17—Leave out all words in these lines and insert 'does not include a company registered under division 4 of part 2.2 of the Corporations Law of another jurisdiction or a foreign company.'

As the clause stands, it is not clear that it excludes those companies that have changed their registration from South Australia to another State. This amendment makes that quite clear and is a technical amendment.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Remaining clauses (7 to 15) and title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

STAMP DUTIES (CONCESSIONS) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 23 March. Page 482.)

Mr QUIRKE (Playford): Unfortunately, this Bill will take a little longer than the last two measures. I will be moving amendments in Committee and I understand that a number of other members wish to contribute to this debate. As the Opposition recognises, the Bill stems from a clear cut policy position that was announced by the Liberal Party in the run-up to the 1993 State election. There is no doubt that the Liberals made a great deal of noise about addressing debt levels in the rural sector, there is no doubt that they made a number of promises, and this is part of the promise to redress the problems out there in the bush. The Opposition accepts that and does not oppose it. Indeed, our position is that the bulk of the legislation is not only acceptable, with a few minor amendments, but does not go far enough.

Our argument is that there is a level of indebtedness, particularly in the bush: a number of farms are in the hands of people who are ageing, and there are various assessments as to the average age. The Opposition has no quarrel with the

fact that there are a number of people out there in the bush who, were they able to re-finance their properties, would be much more able to withstand the other pressures on them. We accept that position.

We accept the other position, too, about the average age of farmers. I have heard various assessments, but the most recent one was from the Minister for Primary Industries, who said that the average age of farmers in South Australia was about 47 years.

The Hon. S.J. Baker interjecting:

Mr QUIRKE: I understand he made a statement about 47 years. You can look it up if you want to, but that is the way it is. But, in essence, it does not matter. The argument is a simple one: people in the farming community, in many instances, wish to transfer property to the next generation, to continue the farm through the family, and they have not been able to do so because of stamp duty problems. Indeed, the cost of stamp duty has been an absolute deterrent in many instances.

We are told that this measure will not cost a lot of money—I do not accept that, and I will come back to that point later—and in fact it is almost revenue neutral, because these people are not re-financing their properties under the existing arrangements, so no stamp duty is being paid. But in many if not most instances, the older farmers are not handing the farms down to their sons or daughters, to brothers or sisters, or to direct family members because stamp duty is a deterrent.

I do not have the figures at my disposal, but the stamp duty on a \$250 000 or \$300 000 property is a very large item, being about \$13 000 or \$14 000. I stand to be corrected on that figure, but it is a great deal of money. We do not accept that the provision is revenue neutral because, obviously, there has been some re-financing; some farmers have sold their properties to members of their family and have moved off the land into country towns or into Adelaide, pursuing other careers or retiring.

We believe that this legislation will result in a reduction. The Treasurer can inform the House of the value of that reduction. I accept that it will not be an enormous amount—I do not know exactly how much—but my guess is that this measure has considerable merit. It will free up the situation that has existed for a number of years. There were other measures before the House during the term of the previous Government which, on Treasury advice, the Government did not accept. The Opposition believes that there is some merit in this proposal and that the costs, whatever they are, in many respects will be outweighed by the social good.

The Opposition also believes that the whole area of rural indebtedness needs to be looked at. We accept that there is a level of indebtedness in primary production which is worrying. It is not as worrying as the position that has been put by what we call the 'rural rump' of members within the Liberal Party. During the 4½ years I have been in this House, I have found them to be a rather articulate group who have looked after their constituents very well. As I understand from a statement that was made in this House a few weeks ago, the level of rural indebtedness, at least in primary production, is much less than the image that has been generated in this Chamber. We were told that 77 per cent of farmers have no debt problems; they certainly do not have the sorts of debt problems that many members speak of in this Chamber.

I addressed this issue on a number of occasions during the previous Government, saying that I would like members of

the Liberal Party who argued coherently on behalf of farmers in South Australia to discover other levels of poverty and indebtedness. I went on to say that I would like them to find out about single mums, Housing Trust waiting lists and a number of things like that. Today we are going to do this a bit differently. We are going to raise a couple of issues. The first one is this: what about other rural indebtedness? What about storekeepers in some of the rural towns who have copped a belting over the years from a number of quarters? They have copped it from a recession, from declining international prices and from the weather, and they have also copped it because many farmers have walked off the land in marginal situations determining that they will not continue with the present arrangements. We have all been to country towns that either have not grown or have positively shrunk.

We believe that, if you want to address rural indebtedness, you ought to address that problem as well. In many country towns, a large number of storekeepers are carrying huge overdrafts in the same way as are many of those on the land. Our view is that, instead of just singling out what is an important constituency to the Liberal Party and giving them a special deal, that deal ought to be expanded and offered to those other people in the rural sector (I will get to the metropolitan area in a moment) who, for one reason or another, also would like the ability to refinance at what is historically the lowest interest rate for about 30 years. This Bill addresses the problem only for a handful of people and not for the whole of the rural community. That is disappointing.

As an Opposition we have participated in a number of debates on this issue, and we have noted a resolution that has gone to one of the standing committees to examine rural poverty. However, we believe that the whole area of rural indebtedness needs to be looked at much more seriously by the Government. We believe that these measures should certainly be extended to a large number of other people who live in the rural community and who are suffering from the same sorts of problems.

A couple of other measures need tidying up, so we will be moving amendments during Committee to achieve that. In terms of general indebtedness, we believe that a large number of people out there, for one reason or another, have managed to get themselves into financial arrangements whereby they are deeply in debt, and they, too, would benefit from these sorts of exemptions. I will give the House one or two examples: if a person has a fairly modest housing loan of about \$80 000 to \$85 000 which was negotiated post-1986 when in effect housing loans were deregulated, that person would have paid a lot more in interest than those who had a loan before 1986. However, many people, during the years of very high interest rates, particularly when interest rates started to soften some three years ago, went into fixed interest rate deals for some years into the future. What they are finding now is that their housing loan interest rates are much greater than the rates enjoyed by somebody, for instance, who comes in off the street today and buys a property.

We have all seen the signs in the various banks and building societies about both capped and variable loan rates. At the end of the day all those rates are much less than those currently applicable to people who have mortgages. If it were not for the stamp duty component, in many instances refinancing would help a large number of families. At \$80 000 or \$85 000, refinancing to current rates of interest at the variable rate can often save someone up to 4 or 5 per cent, although it is usually only 1 to 1½ per cent.

If the person accepts a 6.95 per cent or other capped rate for 12 months, the saving will be even greater. It is possible for someone to refinance and renegotiate a loan today that has a variable rate approaching 9 per cent down to a figure approaching or below 7 per cent; indeed, some deals come in at 6½ per cent. If we take 2 per cent as being the threshold in this discussion, over that 12 month period on an \$80 000 loan there is a saving of about \$1 400. The Opposition is saying that this concession proposed by the Government to help the farmers ought to be extended to those other people who are caught in that situation as well. The same logic prevails. The logic is that right now no-one will become involved because the stamp duty is a deterrent; therefore, the Government is not raising the money out of the current situation. However, if it were to be stamp duty neutral, the Government would not lose any money out of it.

We believe that this option of refinancing needs to be extended to the broader community. We should not just involve the farmers, because we have had the figures on it and the level of indebtedness is not that much greater; in fact, in many instances it is less than the debt levels applying in some of the rural towns. We believe that this measure should go to refinancing the family home as well. In many instances if we were to give assistance in terms of stamp duty exemption, the refinancing of many properties would greatly help a number of struggling families.

We also take the view that a number of people went in and bought properties where the mortgage interest rate has gone up over the years (I am sure many members in this House have had constituents come in about this) and where the bank has said, 'We will capitalise some of the interest', so that the mortgage grows and just so that the family can keep the home. In this House there are a number of opportunities where we can help many of these people by bringing in a measure which will allow them to refinance their current arrangements, either with the same bank or with a different bank, with the exemption status, which is about to be extended to farmers, being extended to them as well.

I would have thought that the Government would look seriously at allowing an exemption from stamp duty in the case of many businesses which are transferred to the next generation in much the same way as farms are handed down to the next generation or to brothers and sisters. The present Government when it was in Opposition made many statements about helping small business. Here is a concrete measure from which small business could receive great benefit. There are many delicatessens scattered throughout the metropolitan area of Adelaide and in some country towns—fish and chip shops and a number of small businesses, for instance—which, if they could be sold to the next generation with stamp duty exempted, would afford great assistance.

We believe that this legislation looks after a specific group of people and that, at the very least, it should be extended to address the whole question of rural indebtedness. We also take the view that those people who desperately need to refinance their situation—the family home is one example—ought to be looked after as well. I will move an amendment to make absolutely crystal clear that if this Bill goes through it is for the purpose of primary production. There are many Rundle Street farmers whose primary business is cutting people up in operating theatres all over metropolitan Adelaide and in some community hospitals. They make an income of between \$300 000 and \$500 000 a year—in some instances,

over \$500 000. They have a hobby farm and the means to rearrange their financial affairs so they are tax effective.

From my reading of this Bill, it will be possible for those people to access these stamp duty exemptions in the same way as the poor, struggling cocky, which this measure was aimed to assist. I do not think there is any doubt about the fact that we must be careful when we are dealing with this measure that it is aimed solely at primary producers. Under this measure a number of Rundle Street farmers—for want of a better word—will be greatly assisted. I will ask the Treasurer in Committee whether that is the intention. My understanding from the second reading explanation and from discussions I had with him three weeks ago is that this Bill is designed, first, to sort out the problems of indebtedness of farmers and, secondly, to enable farmers to hand their property down to the next generation, because we need to get a younger group of farmers on the land and to be able to ease out existing farmers into retirement or other occupations.

We need to tidy up this legislation to determine who will be the beneficiary of these exemptions. I do not believe that it is the intention of the Government—at least I hope it is not—that this measure should benefit any primary producer who is not solely in the business of primary production. In essence, the Opposition will support most if not all of the provisions in this measure. However, we wish to place on the record the comment that debt or handing the business down to the next generation is not peculiar to farmers. This measure is well overdue. In some respects, the last Government was probably remiss in not addressing this issue and standing up to Treasury. However, at the end of the day we now have a situation where the same logic that applies to farmers should apply to the whole of the rural sector, the entire metropolitan area and a large number of businesses.

One of the tragedies of this measure is that, if it is not carefully worded, the people who do not need this level of assistance, the likes of whom I elaborated on a moment ago, will be principal beneficiaries. I take the Government's word that that was not its intention. The Opposition will ask questions on that aspect of the Bill and move a series of amendments, one of which is designed to tidy up the arrangements as to who is the primary producer and who should be the beneficiary of this measure.

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

Mr BUCKBY (Light): I rise in support of the Bill. The issues with which we are dealing are extremely important to the rural community of South Australia. One point that was missed by the member for Playford when he spoke earlier was the fact that the farming industry is particularly different from any other industry. He spoke about small business, but the farming industry is quite different because it relies on overseas markets and it is a price taker—it is not a price setter. As a result of that, many family farms are limited in the income that they can earn because they are at the whim of world markets, and we only need look at the recent results in a survey of rural towns in Australia to see that of the 10 poorest towns in Australia six are in the Mallee in South Australia.

Near city areas of farming land have increased in value. With that increase in value comes the fact that, if someone wishes to transfer their land to their sons, daughters, brothers or sisters, the value of the stamp duty is calculated on a percentage basis of the value of the land. It can involve extremely large amounts—and I talk of thousands of

dollars—to transfer small amounts of land comprising, for example, 100 or 200 hectares. As a result, it is very difficult for farming families, where the farm is run as a family business, to transfer land to the younger generation. A few years ago the imposition of death duties was a major factor in the transfer of land to the younger generation and, because of increased land values, that has been replaced by stamp duty. The enforcement of death duties was abolished some time ago, and that was a very good fillip to the farming community.

This Bill allows the transfer from parents to sons and daughters, or to brothers and sisters, and in doing that it allows a dignified transition from the farming community into retirement and allows for the transfer of that land to enable the younger section of the farming community to gather assets behind them, thereby giving them the ability to seek finance from either banks or finance companies. As a result of that it does not place the older generation in the situation of having to finance the younger—the younger generation can finance themselves. In the 1980s, during the recession and a time of high interest rates many farming families took out loans. They were encouraged to increase their holdings; they were encouraged by the boom times of the 1980s; and they were encouraged by banks, which in many cases, especially in the case of the State Bank, had open-ended lending policies. In fact, many farmers went in looking for \$20 000 or \$30 000 and came out of the bank with \$50 000 or \$100 000 at a very high interest rate.

This will allow those farming families to renegotiate their loans at a lower interest rate, thereby saving them many dollars. As a result of that, I estimate that a number of families will be able to remain in the farming industry, and the older farmers—at an average of somewhere between 57 and 60 years of age—will be able to retire and hand over their business to other members of the family.

Of course, other areas of the Bill will also be of benefit to farmers. The refinancing of farm machinery loans is another issue. During the late 1980s and within the past few years farmers have been faced with large farm machinery loans at high interest rates. Under this legislation they can renegotiate those loans and, with the current prices, they will stand to benefit. When I refer to 'current prices', I mean the prices that the farmers have received for their grain and for some of their stock this year. It is particularly pertinent that we support this Bill because of the current situation in the farming community. It is beyond their control in the majority of cases, and this Bill goes some way towards alleviating the hardship that is felt by the farming community.

The last part of the Bill deals with the transfer of registered tractors or farm machinery. It enables family members to transfer farm machinery that is registered in their name either intergenerationally or between family members and for that to incur no stamp duty. Again, this is a fillip for the farming community in that it will be able to do that for a period at no cost. Once again, the younger generation will benefit from this in that members of the older generation can divest themselves of their assets and hand over the running of the business to the younger members of the farming community.

As I said, the farming community is different from many other areas. The member for Playford talked about extending this to housing loans and looking at concessions for housing loans. However, as I said, he overlooks the fact that the farming community is quite different in that it has no control over the price it gets for its produce. At the beginning of the

year there is no way that a farming business can estimate, within five to 10 per cent, the income it is likely to receive during the year, and even from year to year. For instance, this year barley prices are at an all time low. When one is trying to budget for next year and maybe looking at transferring land to the younger generation, it is very difficult to do so. This Bill will allow farming families to do that within a certain time. It will also enable younger family members to take on the responsibility of running the farm, while older family members can retire with dignity.

Mr LEWIS (Ridley): I take delight in speaking to this measure. Members of the Chamber who were here in the last Parliament would understand the reason for that. Many of those who were elected at the last election would also be aware of the reason for my pleasure in supporting the proposition. For too long it has been a burden on families that have intimate knowledge and expertise relevant to a substantial area of land and how to derive the best income from it. They are lost to that land simply because, when the older generation of mother and father is no longer able to work it and the next generation, ready willing and able to work it, seeks to take over, it cannot afford the cost of the transfer and is compelled to sell it.

We are all the poorer in consequence, because whoever buys it is unlikely to be able to do better than the incumbent owner. They will perhaps do as well; more likely, though, it will take them a matter of four or five years, if not longer, to pick up the nuances of the differences between the soil types across the property and the way that they affect the yield that can be obtained in the crops that can be grown, and the way they affect yield of pasture for feed for livestock and how best, therefore, to manage the arrangements for grazing through the year from season to season.

Different soil types are a very important variable. When you take that as part of a complex matrix with the seasonal variations, those with experience know what to do; those who do not have the experience will use more input costs than would otherwise be necessary, hence efficiency is lower. So, resources from within the economy are expended marginally in greater quantity than would otherwise be necessary to generate the same or poorer levels of income from the same farm, just because the family that owned it was compelled to sell it. These days it is not uncommon for it to be from parents to daughter; it is not just father to son.

Regardless of gender, people's willingness to do the job and competence to do the job need be the only determinants of who gets the opportunity to do for themselves and for the State what that land can produce. So, there is not only a public interest involved. In addition to that, there is a compassionate argument, that is, where in the current circumstances of depressed wool prices for the past four to five years (depending on when you shorn after the floor price was removed and offered your wool for sale; you could be in your fifth season) and depressed grain prices in recent times (with the impact of mouse plagues and the like) there is, as I have said in debate on other topics, poverty in much of rural South Australia—poverty arising from the effects of those things, mouse plagues included, which have depleted the incomes available.

It is not the fault of the people who live there or the families they happen to belong to: it is as a consequence of seasonal factors as well as macroeconomic policy settings way beyond their control that we find them trapped in circumstances where, because of the assets owned by the

older generation, they cannot obtain a pension, and because the older generation is no longer physically fit and capable of managing and working the farm, the younger generation does it but cannot make a living for themselves, leave alone support their aged parents.

So, the poverty is doubly compounded in its impact on the human beings that are there. They cannot make the transfer from the older generation to the next generation, or even to a company owned by the family, which would be a more sensible proposition, simply because they cannot find the money to pay the stamp duty. They could not afford to go to the bank to borrow the money to pay the State when they transferred it from parents to children or grandchildren. So they have to sell. And what are the consequences of attempting to do that? They are the same as I have already described: you lose the family from the district (and that is something that I will refer to) and you lose also the competence they had to get the best from that land, paddock by paddock, depending on the variations that occur in the seasons as they come and go. They have gone.

Now, let us look at the sociological implications of that on the basis of the family. Mr Speaker, you know as well as I do that at present there is a problem in our area schools in particular, and in other schools in general, where children are going to school without having had a sufficient breakfast and certainly without sufficient lunch. That is not because their parents are spendthrifts, ne'er-do-wells, alcoholics and gambling addicts: it is because they do not have the money, and the kids go to school and they are stealing from their fellow students to get enough food to eat at lunchtime, and they are doing it surreptitiously—for no other reason.

That is one part of the social problem. The other part of the social problem which is being reported right across New South Wales, Victoria and here in South Australia on regional radio and in regional newspapers is the escalating suicide rate which is a result of this sort of poverty. This is all relevant in the context of this Bill, because it is blood money that the Government is otherwise getting. I tried to explain that to members opposite during the last Parliament. I was even prepared to put constraints on the upper limits that would be involved in the values that might be transferred generation to generation, but the Government would not listen. So, we now have the measure before us—and I am pleased to be able to support it, for those reasons.

Let me say, in addition, that it is not just dry land farming that is involved: it is primary production anywhere, such as in the irrigated horticultural areas. I am sure the member for Chaffey will have something to say about the benefits that this legislation will bring to the people he represents, and I will endorse his remarks because I know he is an eminently sensible fellow who does his homework thoroughly and will be able to provide the House with the same kind of insight as has been provided by the member for Light and, I am sure, will be provided by the member for Mawson and the member for Kurna about the impact on the urban fringe, where land values in the marketplace have gone up way beyond their real value for farming, but because we were in recent years at the hiatus of planning across the State, the land is still to be used for rural purposes, yet the valuers are ascribing to it values which reflect its proximity to subdivision areas. Those families are caught in a double trap, in a double bind, and if they have to make an inter-generational transfer at the present time they either sell or it will break them in trying to do so. So they might as well sell. If they borrow the money to try to pay the stamp duty that would be required on the valuations

that would be ascribed to those properties now, they would not be able to repay it. They would have to sell eventually from a poorer state, in the final analysis, than if they were to do it now.

So, this legislation is sorely needed for those people, more particularly because, when the land is sold, it is split up into sections and you end up with a whole lot of 'horsyculturalists', the place becomes ridden with weeds and feral cats and the like, and it is lost to its former use—and best use at that—of providing an income for a family and export income for the community of South Australia in particular and Australia at large.

There are other reasons why we should embrace this legislation. In part, it will retain a certain stability in the population of our rural communities during the next five to 10 years, which is essential to see it through the cyclical downturn and emerge at the other end with people who know how to manage land, regardless of what it is used for, and who know how to live in those communities on that lower income level and be happy doing so. They will surely not be in abject poverty, but in poorer circumstances than their city cousins who would work so many hours. However, they are happy to be there so long as they are able to stay there. This legislation, in part, facilitates their capacity to do so.

These are people who are not just friends of mine, but for whom I have established a great deal of personal affection as I have a profound respect for the way in which they do their duty as Australians. They look after themselves, their children and members of their family who may be infirm or otherwise incapable of looking after themselves alone and save all taxpayers what would otherwise be an unnecessary additional burden of cost. Whatever we forgo in revenue by passing this measure, in return we shall get much greater savings in reduced welfare costs in both infrastructure and housing. If we dislocate those families and throw them off the land, they will come to the urban areas and need to be housed. That means that we shall have to provide additional Housing Trust estates to accommodate them and provide them with an income to support them and their families, and that will come from tax revenue collected from the rest of us anyway.

In my judgment, it is better to leave the people where they live and forgo the revenue on stamp duty, however small that may be, rather than to disturb and shift them into the metropolitan area and end up paying out even more to look after them once they get into the metropolitan area and become dependent upon the welfare agencies of government, State or Federal, and in some measure the private sector. It is a much more sensible way to go. I commend the measure to the House because it is economically sound, compassionate and reasonable, and it will produce the kind of society that I know you, Sir, and I believe in, and I believe that all members in this Chamber ought to be keen to see it preserved.

Mr FOLEY (Hart): I would like to make a few comments about this Bill tonight, which I think are important, putting a few things into perspective and, in essence, supporting the Bill. The situation of rural debt in this State and country has been one of great debate in recent years and, Mr Speaker, I think you yourself were involved in a committee of this House in the last Parliament that looked at the issue of rural debt. The issue has been surrounded by quite a bit of emotion and, in some instances, headline grabbing.

If we look back two or three years ago, we had positions on rural debt put by various bodies, including the South Australian Farmers Federation, and if one read the headlines

as they appeared one would have thought that 60, 70 or 80 per cent of the State's farmers were indeed facing oblivion, with the level of rural debt that they held. The reality, from recent reports, is somewhat different. I am not suggesting that the number was exaggerated but I think it would be fair to say that the interpretation that many people, myself included, may have had was that it was far greater than what it ended up actually being. So the level of rural debt in this State is not of the magnitude that I think some players could have been led to believe in recent years.

I say that to make no other point than the fact that I think it is important that we understand the nature of the issue that we are facing. The Federal Government has been particularly supportive of the rural community in this State and in Australia. About \$350 million a year in rural finance is provided to our rural community, which I support and which is worthwhile assistance. That program also provides for sums of about \$36 000 to be paid to individual farmers, for those farmers to adjust out of their farms. When it is quite clear that they do not have the capacity to service the farm debt or the ability to maintain the farm as a viable entity, they are adjusted off that property to the tune of \$36 000. I support those schemes, which I think are very worthwhile. However, it is an indication of the underlying level of support that is provided by the Federal Government. In its Bill, the Government is extending that even further, and I do not have a problem with that. The problem I have is: when are we going to provide similar assistance to other areas of our community? If we are of the view that the rural community needs this level of support, I think we could argue that there are other sectors of the community that are also eligible for this level of support.

Tonight we have heard that over the past five or six years banks have been particularly strong in encouraging rural people to borrow large sums of money, indeed, amounts of money that were well beyond their capacity to service. I have to say that it is not just the rural community that has faced that phenomenon. Many small business people and private home owners have also faced that dilemma in the past seven or eight years when we had—unfortunately, for this country's sake—a lending binge. We need to put this issue into perspective and acknowledge that it is not just the rural community that has been the recipient of this money from banks, which have wanted to push money out and encourage people into expansion. Many business enterprises throughout Adelaide and South Australia have been encouraged by their lending institutions to undertake expansion that may not necessarily have been in line with the most economical or sensible business decision.

It is probably fair to say that we may even be seeing a bit of that now, when interest rates are at a record low. The banks are very eager to push that money out and I suspect that in four or five years we will face a similar problem—although not to the extent that we faced in the late '80s and early '90s—where money has been pushed into the community by the banks. All I want to do is to come in to bat for those other people in our community who have been the victims of banks that have wanted to push their money out in the community. Those business enterprises are quite often family businesses and enterprises which are not dissimilar to those enterprises that we find in the rural community. If we are going to do one thing for the rural community we should perhaps also look at what we can do to assist smaller businesses in this State.

I just wanted to highlight the point that a substantial amount of money in recurrent terms is already provided to the

rural community in this country through the rural assistance scheme. That money enables the provision of low interest loans to farmers and, as I said earlier, it enables the provision of a package of money in the order of some \$30 000 to \$40 000, to allow a farmer who is no longer viable to leave their property and to establish themselves back in the community. That is a very good and worthwhile scheme, but it also has to be acknowledged that that level of support is not currently available to the small business person who may find their business in some difficulty. They do not have the ability to acquire from the Government a package anywhere near the order of that; in fact, they can acquire no packages at all. For those in business that is perhaps a sensitive point.

However, having said that, I am not knocking the fact that the rural community should have access to that. I just think it needs to be pointed out that the rural community does receive a substantial amount of taxpayer support from the Federal Government through the various State Governments, both Labor and Liberal. I want to put on record that the rural community is currently receiving substantial amounts of assistance from Federal and State Governments, both Labor and Liberal. This type of assistance is not available to the general business community. I think that is an important point.

I support the general thrust of the Bill. This was clearly a policy of the Government prior to the election and so it has a mandate to implement it. It needs to be acknowledged that the business community in this State and this country could equally mount an argument not dissimilar to that mounted by the rural community. If we are going to be fair to all players in our economy we should look at not necessarily complementary assistance but, when the small or the medium business sector come to us wanting some form of assistance through times of difficulty, I think it might be worthwhile for the Government and this Parliament to acknowledge and assist that wherever possible.

Mr BROKENSHERE (Mawson): I must declare the fact that I am a farmer myself and I therefore have a particular interest in Bills relating to agriculture. I commend the Liberal Government for the initiative it has shown in strengthening the rural base of South Australia. The importance of agriculture can never be emphasised too strongly, because we all know that if agriculture is going well in South Australia so is the rest of this economy. Conversely, if agriculture is suffering, if the farmers are getting older, if the technology is being run down, then the whole State suffers. The neglect of the rural sector has an immediate impact on small businesses as well as country and residential communities. In other words, the rural sector of this State is the foundation and we should always remember this. Unfortunately, I believe in the past that this has not been recognised, particularly over the past five to 10 years. Had we possibly looked at policies like this in the past where we were able to get younger people onto their family farms, this economy may well have been in a better financial state than it is today.

The age of farmers, as many people have already said in the debate, is continuing to increase. The average age is about 57, 58 or 59 years. At that time of one's life it is pretty difficult to keep up the workload, let alone keep up with modern technology. The difficulty has been keeping young people on their farms, because we all know how low the commodity prices for our agricultural products have been over the past few years, and I refer particularly to wool, mutton, wheat and barley. A lot of those young people have

already been encouraged to go to the city. That exodus from the country to the city has had the impact about which members opposite have expressed concern tonight, with a total drain on the whole rural community, whether it involves sporting teams, community activities or job creation. We all know that the *status quo* must at least be maintained and preferably there should be growth before one sees any positive direction and sustainability for a rural town.

The effect on the total rural community over the past 10 years has been very negative, and we cannot allow that to continue. In my own case, not being fortunate enough to have a farm handed to me, I know how difficult it was about 10 years ago to try to buy that farm. It meant working about 18 hours a day with two jobs. At least I was lucky enough 10 years ago to have a reasonable economy with reasonable commodity prices and therefore an opportunity to succeed. In this State today we see the reverse of that situation. Unless we are prepared to facilitate the merger of the younger farmer into the older farming communities we will continue to see a decline.

They talk on the other side about supporting small businesses. As I said earlier, the fact of the matter is that the foundation of this State is agriculture. We have to start somewhere. I must agree that it would be great if we could also implement a package like this for the small business community. Unfortunately, we all know why we cannot. We have a massive debt that was incurred through lack of management and a fair bit of neglect.

As a responsible Government we must start somewhere, and that is with the foundation of this State—agriculture. That is the reason we are debating this Bill tonight. It is only a start, but I hope, as members on the other side have said and as I am sure members on this side will agree, that it will not be long under a good Government before we are able to reduce the debt and get the economy going well enough so that we can look at other incentive Bills for the small business sector and other areas of the community. Tonight we should all celebrate because at least we now have an initiative that will begin to address the great problems we have.

One other thing that needs to be pointed out is that for some time now there has been in operation a scheme for first home buyers. I commend that scheme, because it has been good for first home buyers, who have been exempt from paying stamp duty on the first \$80 000, and for the community at large with the generation of housing development, etc. So, in many respects this Bill is not a new initiative: it is merely a way of allowing the rural community to catch up and pick up on what the metropolitan community has enjoyed for some time. We should consider that point.

Another factor involves tractors and farm machinery. Grape growers in my electorate have contacted me during this season. Fortunately, it has been a great season for viticulture. In my electorate of Mawson and the adjoining electorate of Finnis we look like injecting \$24 million into the economy over the next few months from agriculture and viticulture. But when people start to make a dollar and think about buying a new tractor to cart the grapes to the wineries in the town, they say, 'I can't afford to buy a new tractor because I will have to register it and pay stamp duty.' It is difficult enough now, whether it be in my electorate with a \$40 000 tractor or in the electorate of the member for Eyre where one needs \$120 000 or \$150 000 to buy a tractor of equivalent size to do the job, without having to pay heaps of stamp duty so that the tractor can be registered for use on the road. It is absolutely ludicrous and disappointing that the Opposition

when it was in Government did not realise the big picture and address these problems a long time ago. Craker Holdings and all those sorts of businesses in McLaren Vale which sell tractors will be delighted with this initiative because it means jobs for rural people in towns such as McLaren Vale and on the Eyre Peninsula, as well as for our city cousins, because everyone is a winner if we kick along our rural community.

Another matter that has frustrated me for a long time concerns debt refinancing. A while ago, because of the recession we were all meant to have, many farmers got locked into high interest rates that ripped them off left, right and centre. However, at the end of the day when they did their homework, if they were lucky enough to have a bank that was prepared to realise the value of their farm and support them, when they did the mathematics and worked out the stamp duty they would have to pay on the transfer of the mortgage they were virtually no better off. In some cases, they were worse off, so they sat there and tried to sustain something which they already had problems in sustaining. We all know the result of that. We only need to look at what is happening in the electorates of the member for Ridley or the member for Flinders, at the disastrous results in the Murray-Mallee and on Kangaroo Island. We should be able to support people by ensuring that they do not have to double dip and prop up Government revenue when they have the opportunity to capitalise on the reduction of interest rates which, at the end of the day, in many respects come about only through a mistake, in my opinion, rather than good government federally.

The challenge to my Government is to manage the economy, something that we have not seen in this State for a long time, not to double dip and say that the easy option is to leave in place this sort of draconian policy that will kick the foundation of this State and stop the rural communities from advancing. By imposing stamp duty when someone transfers property to a son or daughter, we are hitting at the potential profits that they may have put into more productive areas such as providing investment opportunities for South Australia. It is up to us as a Government to make sure that we manage the business of Government properly and not just keep hitting people with these direct and indirect taxes.

Of course, another problem exists in the country, particularly on the West Coast and the Mallee, where in some of the outlying towns such as Lameroo and Kimba one can buy a reasonable home for \$40 000, \$50 000 or \$60 000. Many farmers would love to get off their farms by the time they are 50 or 55 because they have worked seven days a week for a long time and would love to enjoy the fishing and all the other activities that everyone else enjoys. They have not been able to afford to leave their farms because half the price of a house in a country town is gobbled up in the cost of stamp duty transfer of their property to their sons or daughters, and that is why we have had to implement this policy.

Another aspect that we probably have not thought about involves the bigger picture, where it presents an opportunity to bring more modern farming practices into South Australia at an earlier stage. With the opportunity for inter-generational transfer of farms, younger farmers will be able to take over properties at an earlier age and apply the technology that they have learned at Roseworthy, Urrbrae and regional agricultural schools, thus increasing production for the benefit of all South Australians and also letting their parents achieve a reasonable retiring age.

In conclusion, our Government is about supporting farmers, businesses and, most importantly, the workers and

families of this State. Even today I have seen the Opposition smirking and trying to cause problems in our parliamentary Party about EST and private member's Bills. The Opposition knows that the Liberal Party is the Party for all people—city and country people. Philosophically, the Opposition can never be the Party for all the people so, while we are here implementing policy like this in the best interests of all South Australians, what can the Opposition do but try to be divisive?

The Opposition failed and it failed miserably because we had total unity and support in regard to what has happened today. This was shown clearly on the media tonight. Certainly, I congratulate members on this side for their unity, team work and the fact that they know that they are members of this House to do a job for both the country and city people of our State. City and country people will all be the winners as we look after the foundation stone of this State, namely, agriculture. Let us value add it, which is where the metropolitan sector can do so much better. Let us keep family farms alive in South Australia for the best interests of all of us by making sure that we allow every possible opportunity for inter-generational farm transfer. Therefore, I am delighted to support the Bill and I congratulate the Cabinet on its initiative in bringing it forward.

Mr ANDREW (Chaffey): I, too, as a member of the Government am delighted to be supporting the Bill on the basis that it delivers a significant election promise to the rural community, which will give major and deserving benefit both directly and indirectly to our rural producers. This evening I want to give priority to this first aspect of the Bill, which relates to the stamp duty concessions on inter-generational transfer of property. Fundamentally, the background to the justification of this exemption is based on a number of aspects. First, our State's primary producers still provide the majority of our export income for our economy and disproportionately have borne the brunt of the recession period that we have all been working through.

Secondly, our State's primary producers on average are some of the most productive and efficient primary producers in the world, particularly with respect to livestock and grain production. In my electorate of Chaffey many horticultural industries are based and, although they are labour intensive, their productivity and production on a per area or unit labour basis is still near the top of many world ranking standards.

Mr Brindal: Is that right? That is very interesting.

Mr ANDREW: That is right and it is correct. I appreciate the member for Unley's interest. Over and above these facts, as most members of the House would be aware, South Australia's primary producers are willing to work long and hard hours, often in times of low world commodity prices and at times when lesser people would have walked away from their businesses. So, our primary producers do not deserve to be disproportionately taxed as they are in many cases today, whether it be indirectly through bearing additional production input costs such as fuel or through other indirect costs, as in the sales tax arena, where primary producers also bear a disproportionate burden.

Mr Brindal: Do you note that the member for Spence is agreeing with you?

Mr ANDREW: I am delighted that the member for Spence is agreeing with me. The major asset value of our rural producers is inherent in the value of their land, and the goodwill that they generate in the operation of their business is particularly reflected in their management of that land as

their asset, and their future productivity is looked after, enhanced, conserved, nurtured and improved through their goodwill in the operation of that land as their major asset. Sure, it is necessary to maintain and improve productivity, but a primary producer should not then be penalised with a State tax, particularly when they are involved in or support the operation of that property. I am particularly talking about the next generation who, often of their own volition, are working to be prepared to take over that property, because otherwise that next generation would be disadvantaged in taking over that property.

The purpose of this legislation is to encourage the maintenance of the family farm, and specifically this will be a direct incentive to allow the younger generation formally to take over the land assets and keep them on the property. As has been reiterated to the House in contributions in relation to this Bill, the increasing average age of farmers in South Australia is now approaching 60 years of age. This is unacceptable and, if we expect the value of the contribution of farming in South Australia to continue, this age has to be lowered. Without doubt the high cost of passing on the family farm to younger members has been a major impediment to that progression. By exempting the cost of property transfers within families, many rural producers will then be encouraged to pass on their property to the younger generation, and more younger farmers will be directly encouraged to stay on the land. It is a fact of life that many rural producers in their late 60s, early 70s or even further on in life are holding onto properties that physically they can no longer work and that younger members of the family are reluctant to take over the property, because of this high cost of transferring the property to them.

Mr Brindal: We should send the member for Briggs out there: he'd make a good farm labourer.

Mr ANDREW: Well, he might learn a lesson in what getting one's hands dirty is all about. When this situation of an aged farmer is coupled with the reluctance of the next generation to stay on the farm without having the security of the title in the future, farm productivity suffers and is threatened. Or, consider the current scenario in cases where the farm will simply not sustain two generations on the property: the junior generation cannot afford to stay on and the senior generation is ineligible for Commonwealth social security benefits. Although in some cases it may be a progressive transfer to the next generation, when the property is transferred at least planning can take place with some certainty so that, after a qualifying period, the senior generation will eventually be eligible for pension benefits—and deservedly so.

This election promise has created a great deal of interest, and I would say that the mood of welcome anticipation that has come across my desk over the past two or three months from my rural producers has certainly been significant. Although property values in Chaffey and the horticulture property values of some of my Mallee constituents may not be as large as those in some of the larger farming areas (in other words, the absolute value of the stamp duty savings per property may not be as large as the benefits under other areas in the State), the large number of holdings in the Riverland leads me to expect many potential beneficiaries of this scheme on a *pro rata* basis.

As an example of this, I refer to some general figures: approximately 14 000 rural producers are located in South Australia, about 1 800 of whom work in the Riverland, and this puts into perspective the number of transfers that are

potentially possible, recognising that there is a large family farm presence in the Riverland and that there is a significant advantage to be gained in relation to the number of families involved.

With respect to the Riverland and my electorate of Chaffey, I also anticipate that the incentive will provide a further basis to allow the current emphasis on restructuring to occur and to continue. It may well make the difference for the next generation not just by giving them the security and incentive to take on the family property but also by providing the cash saving, which will allow the purchase of additional or adjoining property and so increase the viability that is required in the industries in my area. This will occur either by direct cash savings or by satisfying the banks in relation to increasing security as required by banks.

I mentioned at the beginning of my speech that I believed that some indirect benefits could be achieved from this incentive, and I will briefly explain why I believe some major benefits will be gained from the incentives that we are providing over and above the cash savings that I have already mentioned. In my past work as a rural management consultant I found two related areas to be difficult and challenging with respect to my rural clients, and they are the areas of retirement planning and inheritance planning.

In general there is often a major lack of preparation on behalf of both the senior and the junior generations in preparing for a retirement plan in the farming arena. Farming men and women are often unsure as to the sources of their retirement income and the relative amounts that would be available to them as retirement options. Some of those options would include income from the farm, income from the sale of farm assets, income from pension sources and income from investments of non-farm assets.

Some figures indicate that only 50 per cent of rural producers have any form of formal superannuation. As a farm can be both a family and a business asset, which people may desire to transfer, the final handing on of the business and the family asset is often achieved through a will and, as such, has pretty significant inheritance considerations. Because of the current farming scene in South Australia and the dilemma of the recession we have had to endure, often this has happened and has happened too late.

Current information also indicates that, allied with this, possibly up to 10 per cent of farming families still do not even have wills. This is significant and relevant to this Bill because a crucial aspect of the continuity of the family farm to the next generation is the level of cooperation and commitment to that continuation, and conflict over inheritance can have a major implication for the viability of a farm and for the harmonious relationship between the family members and continuing generations.

My experience in this field has revealed that the senior generation has often only hinted at or very vaguely implied what might happen in relation to any future transfer. Surprisingly, a very large percentage of the next generation do not know the content of the will and, by implication, the intent of the parents in relation to the family farm. I gather that those people often remain silent for a number of reasons, such as that there is a fear of family—

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr ANDREW: It might have happened for generations but it is more significant in farming families where they have been under considerably more pressure in terms of bearing the brunt of this rural recession. It is also because of the cyclical nature of the recessions they have had to bear over

generations. I indicate the reasons why this type of communication silence remains between family generations. Often it can be for fear of a family conflict in making the inheritance known early, or sometimes it may be just wanting to see how things turn out in the family as they progress on the farm.

Sometimes there is a hesitation until the respective generations are able actually to work out what they are doing or what the options are for them. Obviously what I am indicating from these comments is that, particularly from the senior generation's point of view, managing this transfer of the family farm is a very complex, difficult and sensitive task.

Turning briefly to the context of how it is perceived from what I call the junior generation, I must state that often there is a considerable level of frustration and uncertainty as to where they stand in relation to this inheritance. They have concerns not in their own ability but in their parents' management of the transfer process, and the resulting impact on farm productivity, which in many cases in reality is their future livelihood. It is not uncommon to hear the following comments: 'I have been waiting for years'; or 'We should have sat down and talked about this years ago'; 'We are getting older and therefore there is less time to pay off the family farm or even consider the next [or what I would call the third] generation'. They might say that they have a great deal of concern in spending money on something they do not actually own and perhaps would spend more on those assets and that property if they had the title. Alternatively, they might say that there still was uncertainty and therefore they would not be inclined to plough money back into the farm, as I implied previously.

So, it has been highlighted that, without doubt, although the level of openness in communications and the decision styles may vary between families, there is considerably less concern when it is talked about with the next generation. The more that this communication takes place in the open, the less stress is caused during this process of transferring the family farm.

I have very purposely given an overview of this aspect as, through my historical and professional experience, I can see how the effect of the stamp duty concession will surely assist such situations. While it is clear that the management of such transfers is complex and needs to be tailored to the unique features of the respective family farm, both the timing and affordability of such transfers directly impact on the ongoing productivity and viability of the farm business and the security and quality of retirement of the senior generation and the harmony of the relationship that must continue between the family members.

So, over and above this, I have found over the past three months as family members have spoken to me about these options and this situation that, because families are now more conscious of the financial concessions for such a transfer, in general, for the first time, they have actually sat down and talked about this situation or at least progressed to finally resolve, and get distinctly serious about considering, such options and following through the transfer options that were available to them. I believe that it has directly aided that required communication and cohesion that I mentioned earlier. I have also found that in some cases such assessment has opened the door to further farm business analysis, with particular respect to operating structures, options and alternatives. This simply would not have happened and did not happen without this incentive being placed before them.

In the brief time available, I will make a few comments with respect to the concessions of stamp duty in terms of

refinancing farm debt. I do not have sufficient time available, but the justification is based on the initial explanation that I gave with respect to the stamp duty concessions for property transfer. I would say that, with this concession, the market will be the ultimate determinant. The concession will put more competitive pressure on the commercial lending institutions and it will place rural producers in a stronger position to negotiate a fair and more commercial market driven option for their loan arrangements and loan options.

Rural producers need not feel locked into their current lending situation, so they will be in a more favourable position to shop around, look at the alternatives and directly benefit from the saving of 35 cents for every \$100 that they would have otherwise been charged for the transfer of such a mortgage.

With respect to the registration and transfer of farm machinery, I am aware that, although the Motor Vehicles Act does permit the operation of farm vehicles without formally being registered under certain circumstances, there is no doubt in my mind, as was indicated by earlier speakers, whether the significant expenditure of \$100 000 or \$200 000 is required on a large piece of machinery, on a larger farm operation, or whether it is, say, \$30 000 to \$40 000 on a tractor for a horticultural holding, there is a direct and specific saving in that price range of \$1 200 to \$1 500 on that stamp duty.

Given the viability that they enjoy in some of the horticultural industries at the moment, I believe that that is a direct benefit to and will be a real incentive for local producers to go out and spend on new plant and machinery, which will directly impact on the industry's viability and on the future of the State's economy as well.

I commend the Bill to this House and to the Parliament. It is an example of our support for rural producers and, in particular, family businesses which, as most members should be aware, are the cornerstone of small businesses in terms of the economy of this State. I commend the Bill to the House, along with the incentives and concessions it provides.

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): No other single issue has occupied my staff's or my time more since the election than the stamp duties concessions announced in the lead up to the election. This will mean that many of the older people in my electorate will be able to retire with dignity. Under the hardship provisions of the Social Security Act many will be able to qualify for a pension. Others will see the end in sight with perhaps only a five-year wait before they are eligible for a pension—a pension that I believe they have well and truly earned.

With the rural debt review details about to be made public, the anguish will be acute amongst the elderly in those areas hardest hit by the circumstances that have led to major debt problems. This legislation will allow them to bow out in favour of the younger generation. These young farmers, as title holders of the land, will have the youth, vitality and enthusiasm to go about recovering from this setback as the older generation recovered from the Great Depression.

In addition, farmers will be able to restructure their debts without massive stamp duty. This will allow them to shop around for better deals from banks. Considering what good customers many of these farmers have been in the past, it has been very discouraging to have penalty interest charged when things got tough, putting them even deeper in debt. Combined with the young farmers' incentive scheme, the stamp duties concession will help to put some confidence back into the

rural sector in what in my electorate of Flinders is one of their darkest hours.

The former Government's interest rate subsidy, as with many of its schemes, was badly targeted and has caused considerable dissension within the rural community. It was paid, unbelievably, in advance on budget forecasts. This meant that a conservative budget that assumed a greater need than was realised meant a payment of subsidy greater than was actually expended. This was fortunate for a farmer who had his application in early, but it was a disaster for those farmers who came later with a similar or even greater need for the subsidy but who found that the funds had been spent. Fortunately, the new Liberal Government has a much greater understanding of business. This new initiative will be much fairer and equitable and will have significant long-term benefits. It is with great pleasure that I support the Bill.

Mr KERIN (Frome): I, too, am very pleased to rise in support of the Bill and, like the member for Flinders, have found that the major use of our telephone has been to answer inquiries about this. Of all the Liberal Party promises during the campaign—

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr KERIN: Yes, there were lots of them and we are fulfilling them. This one caused much expectation out in the rural areas and will be welcomed there as a very positive measure for rural families. Indeed, it is more of a major social justice measure in our rural areas. Several important things will be achieved by this Bill, which will fulfil some of the promises. The land transfer provision is the single measure that will achieve most for rural South Australia. The current situation of who owns the land in South Australia has been of great concern for many years and, progressively, the answer to that question has been 'older and older people'.

As a result, the situation has become so bad that, as farmers have got older, they have been unable to afford to pass on the land to the next generation, because of the stamp duty component being non-affordable. The result of this has been that, whilst the land is in the name of the oldest living member of the family, up to three generations have had to live off the decreasing revenue of the family farm. This Bill will allow the transfer of that land to the younger generation and, in time, this will impact in several ways. Importantly, from a social justice viewpoint it will allow the older generation to receive the pension, to which they are entitled. In the past this has been denied on the ground of the assets test, where a high value has been put on what is basically an asset that has been returning a very low rate.

However, it will achieve more. We hear often of the average age of farmers being high, and 58 is the age often mentioned. I probably disagree with some of my colleagues on this. I do not accept 58 as a realistic view of the age of those who are farming. Even our colourful colleague the member for Playford almost got it right earlier in the evening when he talked about the mid-forties or thereabouts as being more realistic. If we think of our farmers as being younger, it gives South Australian agriculture a more vibrant look and reflects more accurately the promise of a productive future. It is important for that future that the ownership of land be in the hands of those working the farms, allowing them the independence to make the decisions and to plan better for the future.

This future will be more affordable for them if there are fewer people living solely off the farm and if the pension is supporting the older people. This measure to exempt rural

land from stamp duty on intergenerational transfers will certainly be greatly welcomed in rural South Australia, and will be a great source of encouragement to our younger people. That in turn will help productivity. It is certainly not before time, and it is great to see the State giving some recognition to our highly productive but often unrewarded rural sector. The rural sector is of enormous economic importance to the South Australian economy.

Much of metropolitan South Australia continues to ignore that contribution and does not fully recognise the impact that good and bad years out there have on the city. So, the Bill can help restore some of that much needed confidence. I also welcome the other components of the Bill. The rural debt refinancing provision to exempt the payout part of any new mortgages will be of benefit to many of our viable farmers. A few years ago we used to hear a lot about the advantage of competition between banks, but that has largely disappeared in the rural areas. Certainly, this move will restore some of that competitiveness between banks in the rural sector, which is a very important move.

The proposal to exempt from stamp duty the registration of farm machinery is certainly a commonsense measure and will provide an important protection both to the farmer and to anyone unfortunate enough to have an accident with a farm machine. The fact that a large tractor, of which there are many out there, can attract stamp duty of around \$10 000 upon registration highlights the problem that many farmers have if they want to register their machines. The measure is a major incentive to farmers to register that machinery, and subsequently will cover them for third party insurance. This will be of benefit not only to farmers but to the community as a whole.

It is great to see that the stamp duty measures carry across the board. A major problem with rural assistance over the years has been the fact that one person has made a judgment as to who received concessions and who did not, as the member for Flinders said. Those judgments have been very important. The future of many families has depended on one person's judgment and it is good to see that these measures are across the board. Those past decisions have often caused much dissent in rural communities where one person has received concessions and another person, in exactly the same situation, has been unable to receive anything.

I heard what members of the Opposition said about the extension of benefits to the wider business community. We would all like to see that but, unfortunately, the Labor Party has not left the State in a very wealthy position and all measures need to be carefully costed and must be affordable. Many other taxes need to be discarded but the State cannot afford the changes. Many of us, before we leave this place, would like to see the State remove some of those taxes, many of which the previous Government imposed.

The Bill as presented is not only affordable but also potentially a fantastic measure for the rural sector. As the owner of a couple of country businesses, I know full well the benefits I would receive from any injection of help into the rural community. Many businesses, initially in the country areas but with a flow-on to the city, will benefit from this Bill. I commend the Bill to members and hope that the rural communities' delight at seeing the Bill passed will be matched by their actions in using the benefits that it will provide.

Mr VENNING (Custance): It gives me a great deal of pleasure, in fact the most pleasure I have ever had since

becoming a member of Parliament, to speak to this Bill because, Sir, as you would be aware, the House first debated the thrust of this Bill in mid 1992 when the member for Ridley and I put much of this proposal together. Much of it was knocked back in the first instance by the previous Government. I want to say to all new members that issues may seem futile in the early days but, if you keep the powder dry, you can live to fight another day, and these Bills are proof of that.

The Bill deals with three basic areas of stamp duty relief: the intergeneration of farm transfers; rural debt re-financing; and the provision that gives me the most pleasure, tractors and farm machinery registration. The issues mean so much to the rural community and, more importantly, to our beleaguered farmers. A great number of people have contacted my office—and I have heard other members say the same thing—over the past two years since the member for Ridley and I first raised this issue. There have been more than 200 contacts or phone calls to my office on these issues.

People have been waiting patiently for this moment before they transfer their farms, changed their rural financing institution or registered their tractors. In the last week people have been getting impatient and asking, 'When will we see this Bill?' It gives me much pleasure tonight to speak to the Bill after so many months and years. Over the years Governments, Oppositions and all political Parties have made promises to our rural communities. Nothing tangible has been delivered apart from the Tonkin Government removing death duties. I would say that nothing has been done since those days that would please farmers more than this Bill, because they will see tangible benefits and savings, and they will appreciate them.

This is a direct move that will assist a high percentage of our rural community. It is a direct action Bill and it is great to see something like this. I want to compliment the South Australian Farmers Federation and the assistance it has given us on this issue. I make a plea to farmers associations to tell us how we can help them and to prioritise the issues. We do not want to see a scatter gun approach with a plethora of issues. They should be put up one at a time; if they are prioritised, we can achieve. We must focus on the important issues one at a time.

The first important measure is intergenerational farm transfers. I do not want to mirror what has been said before, but this move has been talked about for years and years. It is almost unbelievable that it has finally happened: farmers, whether they be the mother or the father, can hand down the family farm to their son or daughter without paying a huge impost. Over the years that impost has been about \$16 000 for an average farm. You can understand why in recent days there has been some hesitancy about that transfer. As many members have said before, it has kept the farm in the mother's or father's name, and we have heard the debate about the average age of farmers. I would not go the full way with the member for Frome, but I would have to take him to task. I do not think it is anywhere near as low as 40 or 45 years: it would probably be well over 50 and I would say it is conservatively 55 years. I mingle with farmers almost as much as does the member for Frome: it depends on the definition of 'farmer'. I know that many of our fathers are still on the farms and are still making their incomes from the farms, but the argument is whether that person is still a farmer. We will not go into that.

Irrespective of that, there has always been a hesitancy by the older generation to pass the farm down because of this

obvious and tangible hurdle of stamp duty. It has been a problem. It has killed the incentive of young farmers when dad controlled the asset. The son or the daughter did not hang around, because they were not confident that the farm would be theirs; when dad or mum died, there was no guarantee that the farm would be theirs, because there were other members of the family and there were estates to be argued about. It was not worth the hassle. This should have been done years ago. When dad eventually dies, the younger generation is not there, so the farm is sold and it is lost.

This will be a very well accepted part of this Bill. A lot of people are out there waiting, and we must do whatever we can to promote our rural industries, particularly our food growing industries, so that they can be put into the hands of younger people. We will all be better off, because we want our farmers to be better educated and more efficient, and this is a direct way of doing that.

Rural debt re-financing also been referred to this evening. This part of the Bill is the forte of the member for Ridley, who did the early work on it and introduced it into Parliament in September 1992, but it was defeated by the now Opposition. I will be very interested to hear what members opposite have to say about this, because what has been going on lately is ridiculous. Farmers out there are heavily in debt, and in a few weeks when the rural audit has been done we will know exactly what that debt is. But they are heavily in debt and interest rates have been savagely high.

When a farmer takes out a loan for a farm or finances a piece of plant, he pays stamp duty on the transaction. That is fair enough, but then when he wishes to change that loan to another institution, whether it be another bank or a credit union, stamp duty is payable again. That made the whole banking industry less flexible and less competitive, and this was a device that banks used to keep clients locked in to their situations. So, the direct result of this measure will be that many institutions will have to be a lot more competitive, because the farmers will be able to move their money around in a much more fluid way, keeping all institutions more accountable.

This is a positive move and I congratulate the Treasurer on it. I am fairly confident that the Treasury will not be out of pocket to a great extent, but it will assist farmers. It could mean as much as 1½ to 2 per cent lower interest rates on some issues. The banks will now know that the farmers will be looking around, as they would be if they were shopping for a car, and that they will be able to go to the cheaper rates without this hurdle.

The third issue puts a big smile on my face. I brought this issue before Parliament in November 1992 when I introduced my own private member's Bill. It passed all stages in the House, to the great shock of the then Government, but at the last minute of the debate the Speaker turned the Bill down, saying it was a great idea but I needed to tidy it up a little and placate the then Treasurer, the Hon. Frank Blevins, which we all know was totally impossible. That was probably my finest hour in my first year.

Mr ATKINSON: On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker: is it permissible for the honourable member to reflect on the votes of members in other debates and, in particular, on the casting vote of the Speaker?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am afraid that I did not hear the specific point. I thought the honourable member was rising on behalf of the member for Giles, in which case I was going to rule him out of order, because a member has to rise

on his own behalf. I do not believe there is a point of order in that case.

Mr VENNING: That was quite ridiculous, because I am reflecting, quite affectionately, on that time. As a new member I took it in my stride. I thought, 'I may have lost the day, but surely this will not be wasted.' The Bill before us is a direct lift-off to the word. I asked the parliamentary draftsman to check it and there is no difference. Therefore, I will take the credit for that. Whether it will do me any good or not, I do not know. The main thing is that it is here.

The main reason for bringing this Bill up in the first place in 1992 is still the same today. We all know that farmers generally are exempt from registration of their farm machines. However, we know that some farmers are contravening the Act. Some have been using farm machines further than 40 kilometres from their farm or they were contracting; that is, doing work for anybody else, which deems them to be contractors, and they were not covered under the old Act for exemption from registration. Farmers came to me and said, 'This concerns us. Quite a few young farmers are contracting to supplement the farm income. Using dad's plant, they whiz down the road and cut and roll up some hay and do some harvesting.' There were many farmers contracting, so they came to me and said, 'We are concerned. Legally we are in defiance of the law. Should there be an accident, it would be very difficult.'

I brought the Bill before Parliament in the hope of obtaining exemption from stamp duty, because farmers wishing to register a harvester or tractor would have to pay stamp duty. That is fair enough, but we should appreciate that the stamp duty on a harvester costing between \$180 000 and \$200 000 is over \$10 000.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Spence has another point of order, so I ask the member for Culance to resume his seat.

Mr ATKINSON: The Standing Order to which I wish to refer is No 119, as follows:

A member may not reflect upon a vote of the House except for the purpose of moving that the vote be rescinded.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I explained to the honourable member that I had not heard the expression used and I thought he was rising on behalf of the member for Giles. I thought that the member for Culance was reflecting on the member for Giles, in which case the member has to rise on his own behalf. I apologise for not having heard the phraseology to which the honourable member referred. I cannot do anything about it, because I did not hear it. I will study *Hansard* to see whether any offence was committed, in which case I will chastise the member for Culance tomorrow.

Mr VENNING: Thank you for your indulgence, Mr Deputy Speaker. I regret referring to that issue, but I thought it would be interesting history for younger members of Parliament to know what went on. I will be guided by the Chair, as always.

Mr Kerin: They were very grateful.

Mr VENNING: I know they were very grateful. It seems that the time for teaching the new members is drawing to a close; they have caught on very well and very quickly and I commend them all for that. The figure of \$10 000 stamp duty to be paid before a farmer could register a harvester, or \$6 000 or \$7 000 to be paid before they could register a newish 130 or 140 horse power tractor was prohibitive and, you guessed it, very few farmers registered their farm machines. The only machines we saw registered were the little

Fergusons that race around the Barossa Valley which were valued at about \$3 000 or \$4 000. They were registered because there was very little stamp duty, but the bigger machines in the larger fields were not registered.

I commend the Treasurer again. He will not be missing out on anything here; in fact, he will win because he will be picking up the registration. I am happy to see this measure because farmers can now, if they wish—and they are not forced to—register their vehicles. It is a decision they make. If they feel that they are in contravention of the law, they can register their farm vehicles, and there will be no doubt, wherever they be, that they are not contravening the law. The big advantage to registering is that you have third party insurance, which is the big saver. If you hit anybody, you should have that up your sleeve.

I would ask all farmers, whether or not they are contravening the Act, to consider registering their farm vehicles, particularly the ones that are at most risk, even if they are within the farm, doing their own work, because it has been flagged to us that there is some concern that insurance companies in some ways have a problem with covering all insurances claims. There is a grey area in relation to that. It concerns me greatly that some insurance companies feel that all farmers are not covered *carte blanche* for all vehicles on the road, because these unregistered farm vehicles do not have compulsory third party cover, which every other vehicle on the road has. I am saying not that farmers should have to register all their vehicles but that if they are in an area which is of constant risk, for example, they live on a main road or they are on a road where there are blind corners, they would be well advised to register those vehicles, irrespective of whether they are contravening the existing Act or not. I will conclude by saying that I am very thrilled that these Bills are going through the House. I hope that the Opposition will see the merit in this Bill and see it as a very tangible benefit to a section of the community that certainly will appreciate the assistance that this Bill gives.

Mr MEIER (Goyder): I am delighted that this Bill is before us and that it has come before us for debate in such a relatively short time. This Government has been in power now for just over 120 days and what a lot it has achieved in that short period of time. I can tell the House that I have had many calls on this issue since the day we got into Government, namely, 11 December. The farming sector has welcomed this relief measure. It has welcomed this as one of our key rural policy commitments and I believe it will do a lot to assist our farmers in the coming years. It has been pointed out by other speakers, and this has been known for many years now, that our farming population is gradually getting older, and it is generally agreed that 57 is the average age. Certainly, the younger people have found it difficult to take over farms, for a variety of reasons. Those reasons go back in the short-term to 1990, when we had an absolute crash in the market for wool, when we had a crash in the market for live wethers, and many members would remember when the AMLC and others managed, through a lack of negotiation and a lack of appropriate consultation, to see Al Mukairish and other sheep traders disappear from this State's shores.

The harm that did to South Australia was difficult to measure, but it was in the tens of millions of dollars. I recall that in 1990 many sheep were being melted down for their fat. In the South-East, particularly, some companies set themselves up for this purpose. All that the sheep were useful

for was fat and the skin that was removed. Farmers were lucky to get 10¢ a sheep. Often they got nothing for their sheep because they had to pay the transport costs. We remember the thousands of sheep being shot in the South-East and throughout other areas of the State, with pits being dug, for which councils had to provide the finance. We pushed the then State Government to assist, but what did it do? Nothing. It said, 'It isn't our concern; we won't make moneys available.'

It was incredible to hear the shadow Minister say that the legislation does not go far enough. Throughout the rural crisis the Labor Government did virtually nothing. I remember that in 1990 and 1991 interest rates were ridiculously high. We had then Premier John Bannon saying, 'Those people who think interest rates are the problem in the rural sector don't know what they're talking about. They're wrong.' He changed his view in the next six to 12 months and acknowledged that interest rates were hurting the rural sector. It showed that he had no concept of what was going on. High interest rates were one of the critical factors, together with the complete drop in commodity prices.

I identified wool and sheep prices, but grain prices also dropped dramatically; 1991 was no better, and in 1992 it looked as though we were going to come out of the problem but the harvest was rained out. It was one of the most unusual seasons on record where the fields in January and February were green. Most of the green was weeds although in some cases it was a second crop from which farmers managed to get something. It was a disaster year. Last year it looked at long last as though we would get a record harvest. In the barley and wheat areas we did get a good harvest. But what happened to barley? The price dropped by half, so that the poor farmer was back to or below average because it was not spread across the board and some farmers did not get the record harvest.

In the past few weeks I have asked some, what I would regard as well to do and very efficient, farmers in my electorate, 'What does the future look like for you this year?' They have said, 'John, we will have to tighten our belts. We have no spare cash. Whilst it was an excellent return on the harvest, the actual economic return was less than average and we are still in tough times.' Let no-one be deceived that this State will not get out of its economic mess to any great extent, despite the massive changes this State Government is undertaking, until the rural sector starts to fire and generate the wealth that it is capable of generating. The rural sector wants Government to stay out of the road. That is exactly what the Government is seeking to do here. With intergenerational farm transfers it is saying, 'You go ahead with it and we will not take our stamp duty.' In the case of farmers seeking to restructure or refinance their loans we are saying, 'We will get out of your road. You go ahead and do it with any finance company and we won't take our stamp duty cut.' That attitude is to be applauded in every sense of the word.

I hope that the banks have learnt a lesson from the disastrous years. I was very concerned last week or the week before when I noticed that several banks had decided to put up the interest rates on their long-term loans. I thought it was ironic that banks had acted within a matter of three or four days. I almost felt as though there were such a thing as a conspiracy among the banks. I would like to applaud publicly the National Australia Bank for deciding to go the other way. If that is what deregulation is going to produce, that is great. I hope the banks do not seek to maximise profits at the

expense of individuals when they can make satisfactory profits without causing undue hardship. I realise that banks exist to make money, that they are an exceptionally vital component of our economy, but I am worried that, if interest rates increase again rapidly, this State's recovery will be seriously affected.

It is heartening to see this legislation before us. Many people in my electorate welcome and will use it—there is no question. For years farmers have said to me, 'Surely the State Government doesn't have to grab tens of thousands of dollars of stamp duty.' I have not done the figures to work it out, but I think the average farmer in my area would pay stamp duty on a transfer of between \$15 000 and \$30 000. That is the sort of money we are saving farmers through this legislation. When the rural sector, which continues to produce the better part of 50 per cent of the wealth of this State, again starts to get its feet on the ground and become a viable industry, we can rest assured that we will be well and truly out of the depression. The good news is that the rest of the State will benefit. The many thousands of unemployed in city areas will start to get jobs again, because rural people will start to buy, will start the cash flowing, and that will spin through into the city. That will help us to get business back operating again. I trust it will work hand in glove with this new Liberal Government.

We hope that the coming season will prove to be a satisfactory one and that commodity prices will edge up, hopefully increasing significantly so that together we can make sure that this State prospers. This Government, by way of this Bill, is fulfilling an important part of its election policy. It is an absolute outrage for the Opposition to say that the legislation does not go far enough. For years the former Government did nothing. Now, when we are doing something, all members opposite want to do is criticise. I support the Bill.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mrs ROSENBERG (Kaurana): Comment was made across the floor before I even had the chance to start that I am another rural member. I am not, and I bow to the greater hands-on experience that rural members have. However, I would be letting down a significant group of rural people if I were not to rise to support this Bill. I speak of those people particularly in the electorate of Ridley. During the election campaign I spent a lot of time meeting with rural people, particularly those in the electorate of Ridley. I consider them to be a particularly proud group of people, who exist under a great deal of difficulty. That difficulty was seen by the former Labor Government and ignored. This is a group of proud people who do not come forward and ask for anything. They are not bred of the hand-out mentality, that group of people who constantly say, 'What will the Government do for us?'

They are a group of people who have stayed on the land even though they were not making a dollar. Fair enough, that was their choice, but they proposed to put forward something for this State without asking what this State would do for them in return. That is the main reason why, although my electorate is not in a rural area, I feel I would be letting those people down considerably if I did not speak in support of this Bill tonight. I want to mention three specific areas which I think are supported by this Bill, and I refer, first, to the family structure.

The electorate of Kaurana borders the Willunga Basin, a traditional and strong rural area in South Australia producing

barley and wheat. Over the years and particularly recently urban development has encroached onto the Willunga Basin so that property rates increased and it made earning a living on those properties harder and harder. The former Labor Government's solution to that problem was not to introduce measures such as this that would have helped farmers transfer to the younger generation of their family. No, the former Labor Government's solution was to impose a freeze on that land and stop farmers from doing anything with it. That was the legacy that the Labor Government gave to farmers in that area.

Thank heavens this Government has seen the problems with that approach and has now introduced this measure. In the past the former Labor Government Minister responsible said, 'Only 11 families are affected in the Willunga Basin.' What were 11 families to that Minister? The Labor Government could not have cared less about 11 families, but the issue goes much deeper than just those 11 families. It goes to the whole of the community, because the community pays when the family breaks down. The whole community suffers and pays for that.

It is unforgivable if Governments of any persuasion—I do not care whether they be Liberal, Labor or anything else—adopt the attitude that people do not matter. People do matter and that is the basis of government. This Bill allows for the dignity of older members of the family to co-exist with younger members of a family on a property that has the potential to support only one family financially. Therefore, this measure is extremely important because rural families in particular choose to stay together. I refer to the old family structure, the extended family—often the parents want to stay with the younger children on the property but the property can provide only one income, and so this measure is an important means for the older members of the family to transfer the farm and its income to the younger members of the family with dignity and be able to co-exist on that property. That is important.

This measure is a great incentive for families and it is a great way to see younger generations come through in South Australia. Also, this measure preserves the skill base, as I think the member for Ridley mentioned. This is important, because it is not easy to farm land. It is easy for people who have no experience in farming to look at land and say, 'All they do is plough it, sow the seed, the seed grows, then they take it off and take it to the silo. What can be hard about that?'

In South Australia we have different types of soil, unusual weather conditions and an extremely wide variation of farming styles. I believe that successful farmers in South Australia today are successful because it has taken them generations to learn how to farm their land. We preserve our skill base by passing on the land to the younger generation, and this will certainly do much for soil conservation throughout the State.

Further, if land has to be sold and is sold cheaply, it forces down the price of surrounding land. This can result in the escalating problem of land becoming cheaper. Surrounding land owners do not have the money to buy out adjacent land parcels and continue to use the land for agricultural production. The land then is bought by hobby farmers and people whom the member for Hart called Rundle Street farmers. This puts the land under serious pressure of subdivision or sale for alternative developments other than agriculture, and I see much of that happening in Kaurana because we are so close to the city. There is extreme pressure for good

agricultural land to be subdivided. That is obvious because it is close to the urban spread, but this problem could be just as important in distant areas as well.

The member for Playford referred to Rundle Street farmers with some disdain. If land has to go to anything, my preference would be that it go to a Rundle Street farmer and thus retain its agricultural base rather than going to housing or some tourist ventures as suggested for some of our agricultural land in the past. I do not want to use any more of the House's time, but I put on record that I strongly support this Bill and all it will do to preserve agriculture and the farming communities in South Australia.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Deputy Premier): I thank all members for their contributions to the debate this afternoon and tonight. It has been an excellent debate and I commend all members on their contributions. I believe the matter really gets down to three issues, but before I name them I must say that this is probably the best investment this Parliament and this Government will ever make. I say that sincerely and with the real conviction that we are not just giving a special benefit to a particular sector of the community; we are meaningfully assisting the future of this State. The importance of the rural sector has been much understated in recent years, basically because it has gone through very difficult times. It is not the flavour of the month to talk about the contributions of the agricultural sector in the way in which we may have talked about them 20 years ago. However, the future of South Australia is tied inextricably to the issue of food production, not only for our own population but also for the world's population. Any student of history would have to draw the conclusion that food in its various value-added forms is the future of this State, even more than manufacturing, and manufacturing itself can play a major role by enhancing the quality of our primary production.

We have a great future in this State. The agricultural sector will pick up, because the world will demand its products more and more, because we have the cleanest products in the world here in South Australia and Australia, because we can produce abundantly and cheaply and because of the quality of our products. However, there are three issues that I believe are absolutely vital to the people in the rural sector. One is that we have a dramatically ageing farming population. The figures have been bandied around; the figure I have been provided with is that the average age of the farming community is 57 years. Even with the best will in the world we cannot expect the sort of innovation and change that we need for our rural production under those circumstances. Nobody should forget that agriculture is still the major export of this State and that on average it produces over 50 per cent of export revenue.

The third issue that is vital in this whole debate is the extent of rural poverty and the way in which it is impacting on the capacity of our future farmers to provide what I believe will be the highest quality goods in the world and much in demand by the rest of the world.

Mr Brindal: The Opposition doesn't care about—

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I do not know any member of the Opposition who would work 14 hours a day for a return of less than the dole. I do not know any member on that side who would spend their 14 to 16 hours maintaining their farm for what I call a negative return. Many of the farmers could get more if they went on the dole, quite frankly; and for the Opposition, which was the Government for 11 years and prior

to that for a further nine years—20 years—to have done nothing about this situation is an absolute crime.

Mr Atkinson: What did the Tonkin Government do?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: We made a lot of changes in the Tonkin Government over those three years, and some did help the rural community, including the issue of death duties. All members on my side of the House have, between them, encapsulated the whole issue in relation to what is needed in the rural sector. In the rural sector we have returns on capital which I regard as negative in many cases, and that situation cannot continue. We are facing some real crises. Whilst our future may well look bright, the immediate future is other than that. We know that, with the ageing population and the very poor incomes, the prospect of land degradation is increasing daily. Farmers do not have the capacity to provide the fertiliser and nutrients for their soils, and there are some real underlying problems because there is not sufficient capacity within the rural sector today to generate enough income to sustain itself in the future. The farm machinery is running down and the soils are being run down because of the rural situation. This is a very small investment and, if it provides some help, we will have done South Australia proud in the process.

I do not wish to take any more time of the Parliament because each member, at least on this side of the House, has shown their absolute appreciation of the difficulties faced by the rural community, of the capacity to improve in the future and of what this Bill is trying to achieve for the rural sector. As they have said: this Bill is absolutely vital for our future. I was pleased and honoured to serve on the Rural Finance Select Committee, and I believe that all members who served on that committee got a real eye-opener in relation to the extent to which people are still battling away in the rural sector with little hope for the future, but praying—

An honourable member: Are you talking about the farmers or us?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I am talking about the farmers. The member for Spence needs a lot more prayer somehow to sustain him through the next four years. Rural poverty and the extent to which the rural community has been decimated by bad seasons, interest rate hikes and by rotten product prices on the international market has placed our rural community in a very difficult situation. If everyone wants to go back 100 years and work their way forward through returns to farming, they will find that those returns have continued to decline over that period and that they have dramatically declined over the past 10 years.

Urgent action is therefore needed, and this is just one small contribution to assist in that process. We can no longer sustain farming if we have people dying on the land because they simply cannot afford to retire or pass on their farms. We can no longer sustain agriculture in this State despite the probabilities of a very exciting future if new soil preservation techniques are not introduced, better machinery is not provided and if better management cannot be infused into the rural sector. That is what this Bill is about.

I agree with the comments made by all members on my side of the House. They were incisive, and those members actually demonstrated a deep understanding not only of the problems involved but also of the challenges that face the rural community. I know that the member for Custance has been a very strong proponent of the sorts of changes that we have in this Bill, and placed these sorts of issues before the shadow Treasurer when we were in Opposition and, of course, he is now placing them before the Government. His

contribution should not be understated, and nor should the contributions of many of his rural colleagues, including the member for Mallee and our newer members who have also made a very strong contribution towards the formulation of this policy.

Returning to the comments of the Opposition, I must say that it is important to keep them in perspective. The Opposition has suddenly decided it is not a bad idea, but it does not stop there. It has decided it should extend the benefits further. As Treasurer of this State, I should tell members that the costs of the propositions being placed before us by the Opposition are quite astronomical. They run into tens of millions of dollars, and we must question the ultimate benefit of the proposals.

It is interesting to know that, over the past 20 years when members opposite could not give the rural communities a zack or any relief whatsoever, they suddenly feel that this is not a bad proposition and that it is heading in the right direction. I would be a little cynical to suggest that they were trying us on. Of course, they are trying us on, because they do not have any belief in the rural sector and the contribution of the rural population of this State. They have no understanding of that whatsoever. They are a metropolitan Party.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: The member for Playford made a number of comments, and I will take those up so we will not waste time when debating the Bill in Committee. He suggested that these—

Mr QUIRKE: On a point of order, Sir, would it be possible for you to quieten down the member for Unley, in particular? I would like to hear what I was supposed to have said before.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable member is really questioning the action or inactivity of the Chair. I would prefer, if he really wishes to dissent, that he move a substantive motion. However, I will keep an eye on the honourable member.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: It was interesting to note that, on the one hand, the member was saying, 'Let's extend these benefits further to encompass a much wider group of people,' but on the other hand he was being very critical that these measures were not revenue neutral. He cannot have it both ways. We have never said this is revenue neutral. What we have said is that it involves a very small cost. The small cost is in fact only available; we do not have actual figures on it because the data is not fine tuned to the extent necessary to enable us to define what were rural transfers and what were metropolitan transfers, what involved commercial transfers and what were residential transfers.

We do know, however, in the total scheme of things that stamp duty on real property is a major contributor to the budget. We also know that farmers have not been passing on their properties to their relatives because of the stamp duty problem. We know that they have not been changing their banking arrangements because of the stamp duty problem. We know, too, that they have been breaking the law and taking their farm machinery on the roads because of the stamp duty problem. So, we do not have a great revenue impact—it is very small. It may be of the order of \$1 million or \$2 million a year that we will forgo in revenue; it certainly would not be any more than that.

The member for Playford made the comment that we look like helping out the Rundle Street farmer. I assure the honourable member that we are not doing that, and I refer him to clause 7(2), which clearly defines the sort of relation-

ships that must exist before anyone becomes eligible for this scheme.

The member for Playford asked about the rest of the rural sector. Of course, the rest of the rural sector could benefit from the extension of these provisions. However, if these provisions do what I believe they will do for the rural sector, the total uplift will benefit those businesses far more than our trying to find individual businesses within prescribed boundaries. We then get into mickey mouse taxation trade-offs for the sort of benefits about which the honourable member is uncertain but which he believes, because of equity, should be passed on. Certainly, I agree with the honourable member: if we had the capacity in the budget to be able to afford it, I would extend similar benefits into far more areas than are covered in this Bill. The Bill has been kept tight; it has been targeted to a particular sector of the community and there is no apology for that, as I said at the beginning of the debate.

The member for Playford also mentioned the modest housing loan taken out by a person who is buying a house. I point out that there is nothing modest about the loans taken out in the rural sector. Whilst the honourable member might like to say that we are going to give a benefit to home buyers if we extend it, the revenue implications are quite dramatic because of the hundreds of thousands of people involved. However, the same does not pertain to the rural sector, first, because of the numbers and, secondly, because those in the rural sector are not changing their houses, their farms or their banking simply because of the retarding impact of stamp duty at the moment. There were also further comments about the effectiveness of the measure. I congratulate all members who participated in the debate and I commend the Bill to the House.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 6 passed.

Clause 7—'Exemption from duty in respect of a conveyance of a family farm.'

Mr QUIRKE: I move:

Page 3, lines 29 to 36 Leave out paragraph (b) and substitute: (b) in the case of land used wholly or mainly for the business of primary production-

- (i) that immediately before the instrument there was a business relationship between-
 - the natural person (A) who, or whose trustee, is the transferor; and
 - the natural person (B) who, or whose trustee, is the transferee, or a lineal ancestor or spouse of B,
 (otherwise than in relation to the transfer) with respect to the use of the land for the business of primary production; and
- (ii) that immediately before the instrument the sole or principal business of the natural person who, or whose trustee, is the transferor has been the business of primary production.

The amendment constitutes a series of provisions that the Opposition believes will tidy up the arrangements. I was pleased to hear the Treasurer tell the House that he believes the existing definitions and the Bill as it now stands will precisely address the basic problem. The Opposition believes that the Bill needs greater refinement and that specifically it needs to be quite clear that this is solely the business of primary production. As a consequence, the amendment will strengthen and tighten that provision and aim it at the target group to which the Treasurer referred. The amendment does

not seek to change the basic thrust of the Government's legislation.

All the amendment seeks to do is make it crystal clear who will be the beneficiaries of this. I have had a look at the Bill (as the Treasurer suggested in respect of clause 7) and I believe that this is a complementary amendment that will tighten the Government's intention.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I am not sure that we are dealing with the same thing. We will use this first amendment as a test. My understanding of the amendments is that they widen the exemption from intergenerational farm transfers to include transfers in respect of the principal place of residence. There is no way in the world that the Government can agree with that proposition, for the very reasons I have already explained. We are talking about tens of millions of dollars of revenue that would be forgone by Treasury in the process. As I said earlier, if we were not in budgetary difficulty—created not by us but by the former Government—we would be willing to look at a number of these areas. I am not saying necessarily that we would agree to changes even if the Treasury was in better shape, but certainly we would give them due consideration. I cannot accept the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: The conversation is quite audible. There are several members who are speaking out of their places, and I ask the Committee to come to order, and to show respect for the Deputy Premier.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I cannot accept the amendment. If we accepted the amendment, this would be the only State jurisdiction in Australia of which I am aware where the principal place of residence would be exempt from stamp duty on a transfer. It is a major contributor to the budget. It is well accepted that when people change their houses they have to pay the taxation that is appropriate. So, I must refuse the amendment.

Amendment negatived.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the honourable member wish to move the successive amendments to clause 7? We have just taken clause 7, page 3, line 24 as the test amendment. If the honourable member wishes to move the remaining three amendments to clause 7 he is entitled to do that, although he may construe the refusal as a test and an indication of how the remaining three will go.

Mr QUIRKE: I will move them without any further debate. I move:

Page 3—

Lines 27 and 28—Leave out all words in these lines after 'relates' in line 27 and substitute:

- (i) is used wholly or mainly for the business of primary production and is not less than 0.8 hectares in area; or
- (iii) is, or within 12 months immediately before the date of the instrument has been, the principal place of residence of the natural person who, or whose trustee, is the transferor;.

Lines 29 to 36—Leave out paragraph (b) and substitute:

- (b) in the case of land used wholly or mainly for the business of primary production—

- (i) that immediately before the instrument there was a business relationship between—
 - the natural person (A) who, or whose trustee, is the transferor;

and

- the natural person (B) who, or whose trustee, is the transferee, or a lineal ancestor or spouse of B, (otherwise than in relation to the transfer) with respect to the use of the land for the business of primary production;
- and

- (ii) that immediately before the instrument the sole or principal business of the natural person who, or whose trustee, is the transferor has been the business of primary production;.

Page 4, line 9—After '(b)' insert '(i)'.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: The Government opposes the amendments.

Amendments negatived; clause passed.

Clause 8—'Refinancing of rural loans.'

Mr QUIRKE: I move:

Page 5—

Lines 15 to 17—Leave out all words in these lines after 'property' in line 15 and substitute:

- (i) is used wholly or mainly for the business of primary production and is not less than 0.8 hectares in area;
- (ii) is used wholly or mainly for a small business or
- (iii) is the principal place of residence of the mortgagor;.

After line 17—Insert new paragraph as follows:

(ca)—

- (i) in the case of land used wholly or mainly for the business of primary production—that the sole or principal business of the mortgagor is the business of primary production;
- (ii) in the case of land used wholly or mainly for a small business—that the mortgagor is a proprietor of the business;.

After line 29—Insert—

'small business' means a business with a value not exceeding \$200 000 or, if some other greater amount is prescribed, that amount (disregarding, for the purposes of this definition, the value of the relevant land);.

I will not take up too much time on this issue, because it is quite clear from debate on the preceding clause that the Government will not accept in any way, shape or form that indebtedness is a problem that is broader than the farming community. In fact, it is interesting to be told that where rural finance is concerned we have a major problem. What the Government has done in respect of this legislation—and these amendments seek to remedy the problem—is to take one aspect of rural finance only, instead of expanding it into other areas legitimately. The arguments are consistent, but the Government has decided to look after one fragment of rural poverty.

That is the Government's intention. It is not interested in looking at the broader question of rural poverty. Indeed, it is not interested in broadening the issue into other areas. We tested the waters under clause 7, and I accept that my amendments failed, but I move amendments to this clause.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: There is one aspect of the amendments with which I have a great deal of sympathy, and it is something that we would like to take on board; perhaps, if we can bring the State's finances under control within the next two years, it will be possible to think about extending it, and that is the issue of the banking relationships with all businesses. It brings in a reasonable amount of revenue, but the advantages of freeing up our business community, of its not being tied to any particular institution and operating in a much freer market, are compelling.

I have a great deal of sympathy for one aspect of the amendments and in a better budgetary situation I would be willing to look at the issue seriously. The small business community is an important component of this State. We had a problem of definition as to where we started and stopped with this measure. It was looked at in the context of the work we should cover in this Bill and whether we should extend

it to other areas. The one area that did receive considerable support was the relief of stamp duty when loan arrangements were changed between the various financial institutions. There is an important amendment in this Bill and I give my undertaking that, given the financial capacity, it is certainly one of the areas we will be looking at as a matter of priority. I thank the member for Playford.

Amendments negatived; clause passed.

Remaining clauses (9 and 10) and title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

**GUARDIANSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION
(APPROVED TREATMENT CENTRES)
AMENDMENT BILL**

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

**MENTAL HEALTH (TRANSITIONAL PROVISION)
AMENDMENT BILL**

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

**PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES
(MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL**

Adjourned debate in Committee (resumed on motion).
(Continued from page 661.)

Clause 3—'Interpretation.'

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: The amendment restores the Public Accounts Committee to the Bill itself. In another place the original Bill was amended and the Economic and Finance Committee was reinserted as the primary committee looking after this area of scrutiny of the public sector. The Opposition in another place opposed the change of name of the Economic and Finance Committee. We were of the view that the new name—which is really a return to the previous name—really did encapsulate what that committee should be on about and what its role and influence should be, and separated it distinctly from other areas of committees. So the amendment moved by the member for Peake is acceptable to the Government, and I commend it to the House.

Mr QUIRKE: I thought, from the logic of what was coming from the Minister, that the amendment to bring about the change of name was not going to be acceptable, whereas towards the end of his address the logic was flowing one way but the conclusion was coming from a different direction. Basically, he gave us some reasons as to why the name 'Economic and Finance Committee' should remain but at the end he seemed to accept a return to the name 'Public Accounts Committee'. Will the Minister clear up the Government's position on this amendment?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I was explaining to the member for Playford that the name preferred by the parliamentary Liberal Party was the 'Public Accounts Committee'. Because of amendments that were carried in another place, that name did not succeed as the Bill came before this House. That is what I was trying to explain. The debate upstairs on this subject was a little bit messy and the Bill was amended in transition; certain amendments succeeded and others failed. It was the intention of the Liberal Government to insist that 'Public Accounts Committee' be the preferred name of what was formerly called the Economic and Finance Committee.

Mr QUIRKE: It is a pity that that is the case, because when the Parliamentary Committees Act was passed in 1991 there were some clear breaks with the past. I am not going to say that there is much in a name, but when the name 'Economic and Finance Committee' came into being, the role and scope and the work of that committee was dramatically increased not only under the Act but also in reality during the two years of that committee's operation.

I suspect that the intent of the amendment is to bring back *deja vu* of the old days. In fact, this Bill seems to have one or two other episodes of that in it. I do not mind if at the end of the day we are going back to the Public Works Standing Committee. I was on that body for a couple of years and had a great time with the Hon. Ted Chapman and other members. We enjoyed ourselves; it was a good committee. I do not know that we ever knocked anything back. In fact, I can confirm that we never did. I also found out that neither did anybody else all the way back to 1928 when that committee was set up. I stand to be corrected. If somebody can find something that was knocked back, that is fine. On one occasion we had a proposal that was not popular until Opposition members discovered that it started during the Tonkin era and that one of their key Ministers moved it. So one of the Opposition members came to me and said, 'I think we have a bit of trouble with this.' In fact, one of our own Labor members did not like it too much, so the bloke went down and put a few bets on the horses while we got the thing through and then he came back and everything was tickety-boo. That was how the Public Works Standing Committee worked.

I suspect that this is trying to return the Economic and Finance Committee and the role it has played to something more junior, and I think that is a retrograde step. I have looked at parts of the Act and it seems to me that the way in which statutory authorities are to be sent upstairs should be examined. I must remind the Committee that we are waiting for the select committees up there to come down on who has been gaoled for the last five years. I think that has been going for five years. The *Blue Hills* saga of Marineland and a few others is another example of that review body and how long it takes to organise things. I suspect this is a retrograde step and a very bad move.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Treasurer): I move:

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

Motion carried.

Mr BECKER: I am disappointed with the comments made by the member for Playford. Obviously he has overlooked or missed the fact that the Public Accounts Committee is the oldest committee under the Westminster system and that it dates back to 1861. In each State of Australia there is a Public Accounts Committee. Victoria changed the name and then changed it back and it is known as the Public Accounts Committee in each State of Australia. Whether we amend the functions or operations of the Public Accounts Committee is immaterial; the success of the committee is only as good as the input of the members.

The member knows jolly well that, during his term as the Presiding Officer, all members on that committee worked extremely hard and supported him in ensuring that we did the job we were required to do for and on behalf of the Parliament. So, the name Public Accounts Committee is something that is understood by the people of South Australia

and by the taxpayers. 'Economic and Finance' does not really mean—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

Mr BECKER: The member for Spence has not been here very long, and he is very lucky that he is here. If he had to work in a real marginal seat he probably wouldn't make it. The point is that the Public Accounts Committee is well known and it was established in the true tradition of accountability of the Parliament, and I recommend the amendment to the Committee.

Mr ATKINSON: There is no greater partisan of the Westminster system in this House than me. I appreciate the arguments for tradition which the member for Peake has put. They are arguments that support the restoration of the name Public Accounts Committee because that is the name of the equivalent committee in the House of Commons, and it is the name which the equivalent committees have in the other Australian States.

Mr Brindal interjecting:

Mr ATKINSON: No, I have to inform the member for Unley that the Public Accounts Committee came after the loss of our treasured royal family, the Stuarts. I understand that the member for Peake wants the name restored so that, when the Chairmen of the Public Accounts Committees around Australia get together for their annual convention in a luxury hotel, they all have the same name. I can understand that he desires that. However, when the parliamentary committees system was changed, the jurisdiction of the Economic and Finance Committee exceeded that of the old Public Accounts Committee. Reference to the Bill before us will show that extension because the committee deals with more than just public accounts. The committee can deal with economic and financial matters of non-government organisations and the non-government sector. That is why I support the retention of the name 'Economic and Finance', although I can see that, on the grounds of sentiment and tradition, there is some argument for the name 'Public Accounts'.

Mr FOLEY: As a member of the Economic and Finance Committee, I feel that I am able to reflect on that committee: as it currently stands, it appears to be a very effective committee—

Members interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: Very good membership, indeed. I find the establishment of this new Statutory Authorities Review Committee in the Upper House somewhat strange, at least. The name is an issue that is of concern to me as a member of that committee. The Economic and Finance Committee is a very relevant terminology and I do not think that simply changing the name back to the Public Accounts Committee would be particularly relevant. The name Economic and Finance Committee gives a better clarity to what the role of the committee is. I think going back to 'Public Accounts' is—

Mr Brindal: You liked the name State Bank, too.

Mr FOLEY: No, I didn't actually like the name State Bank.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member for Unley is trying enter into the debate by way of interjection, which is not permitted.

Mr FOLEY: I would simply argue that the name 'Economic and Finance' is a far more appropriate title. It is a modern title and reflects the broad nature of the committee, and to go back to the name Public Accounts Committee would be a retrograde step.

Amendment carried.

Mr BECKER: I move:

Page 1, lines 25 to 28 and page 2, lines 1 and 2—Leave out all words in these lines and insert—

(c) by striking out the definition of 'Committee' and substituting the following definition:

'Committee' means—

- (a) the Public Accounts Committee;
- (b) the Environment, Resources and Development Committee;
- (c) the Legislative Review Committee;
- (d) the Public Works Committee;
- (e) the Social Development Committee;
- or
- (f) the Statutory Authorities Review Committee, established by this Act:

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

New clauses 3A, 3B and 3C.

Mr BECKER: I move:

Page 3, after line 10—Insert new clauses as follows:

3A. Substitution of heading. The heading to Part II of the principal Act is repealed and the following heading is substituted:

PART II

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

3B. Amendment of s.4—Establishment of Committee.

Section 4 of the principal Act is amended by striking out 'Economic and Finance' and substituting 'Public Accounts'.

3C. Amendment of heading. The heading to Division II of Part II of the principal Act is amended by striking out 'ECONOMIC AND FINANCE' and substituting 'PUBLIC ACCOUNTS'.

New clauses inserted.

Clause 4—'Functions of committee.'

Mr BECKER: I move:

Page 3, lines 12 and 13—Leave out all words in these lines and insert—

4. Section 6 of the principal Act is amended—

- (a) by striking out 'Economic and Finance' and substituting 'Public Accounts';
- (b) by striking out subparagraph (i) of paragraph (a) and substituting the following subparagraph:
 - (i) any matter concerned with the public accounts or finance or economic development;
- (c) by striking out subparagraph (iii) of paragraph (a) and substituting the following subparagraph:

Mr ATKINSON: I find it extraordinary that we are about to convene a conference of managers between the two Houses to resolve a deadlock over the name of a committee. I think the electors of South Australia will be quite surprised that this is the way that their representatives spend their time.

Mr BRINDAL: On a point of order, Mr Chairman, I ask whether the member for Spence is asking questions about a relevant clause or whether that was a superfluous comment to this debate.

The CHAIRMAN: I think we are getting down to pettifogging debate. If members could clearly enunciate the questions and keep the debate flowing, the Committee will make some progress. I do not propose to allow that point of order.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I will respond to the gratuitous comment by the member for Spence. The facts of life are that Parliament has discretion and control over its own destiny. What the Upper House does under these circumstances is up to it. It may well see the wisdom in the light of day. When we return the Bill the Upper House may agree with the amendments placed before it. Until that matter has been tested the honourable member can draw no conclusion whatsoever on the final outcome of these amendments. I remind the honourable member that he is totally out of court.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clauses 5 and 6 passed.

Clause 7—'Insertion of part 5A.'

Mr FOLEY: Regarding new section 15C, I want to register my concern about the role of the Statutory Authorities Review Committee, which clearly to my mind is unnecessary as I think the Economic and Finance Committee is more than adequately suited to perform that role. It is my understanding that it is in the Lower House that State budgets are delivered and the Treasurer resides. For want of a better expression, it is the money House of the Parliament. The Statutory Authorities Review Committee will be responsible for organisations such as the State Bank and the SGIC which, whilst they are in public ownership, are responsible to the Treasurer; ETSA and the Pipelines Authority, which are responsible to the Minister for Infrastructure; and Tourism SA, which is responsible to the Minister for Tourism, all of which Ministers reside in this place. So, I make the point that this is the appropriate House for scrutiny of those organisations, and I am disappointed that that role will be taken over by another House where the responsible Ministers do not reside.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: We spent some time considering this issue. We believed that the Economic and Finance Committee could not dispense the full range of responsibilities, particularly when we have the problem of trying to understand how many statutory authorities there are. One of the major missions of this Government is to succeed in getting control of our contingent liabilities and reducing the number of statutory authorities, particularly those which have no relevance to today's operations and about which we know little. This matter has been talked about in this Parliament for some years, but it was believed for a number of reasons that the formation of a Statutory Authorities Review Committee was essential for that purpose. The member for Playford would recognise that the Economic and Finance Committee (now perhaps the Public Accounts Committee) simply did not have the opportunity or the time to go through a list of 404 statutory authorities and make strong recommendations on their future conduct and how many should even exist under the legislation that has been in place virtually since the first settlement.

So, it was believed that this role had to be performed by the Parliament. Statutory authorities do not come under the same review and scrutiny that normally pertains to departments. As members would appreciate, they have a different reporting responsibility. Unfortunately, they do not have the same level of accountability, as we discovered with the State Bank and the SGIC. If those organisations had been departments and subject to the ongoing day-to-day relationship between the Minister and the Public Service we would not have had those problems. There are special difficulties and there is a special challenge with statutory authorities. The need was identified. How it was handled was a matter of some conjecture and consultation over a period. It was believed that the Upper House, which generally does not have enough to do, was the appropriate place.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: Members in another place do not have electorates to look after. They say that they look after the whole State, but I know that every member in this House works hard looking after his or her constituency. Therefore, in many ways it was a matter of practicality and it was believed appropriate for the Legislative Council to take on this task. We have Ministers in both Houses of Parliament and someone would miss out whether it was in this House or another place. That is the basic reason.

Mr ATKINSON: I express my profound admiration for what the Deputy Premier has just had to say. Can he say whether private or voluntary associations that receive public funds from the State Government for a particular purpose would come within the scope of the Statutory Authorities Review Committee?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: During the period of the last Government the Auditor-General had a right to scrutinise their accounts. I do not believe there would be any further need for scrutiny of statutory authorities because they do not necessarily come under the auspices of the Act. Some organisations are created as a statutory authority—some are created by statute. I refer to one or two schools and other statutory authorities and, frankly, they have to be taken off the statute. Those things are the province of Government. We have a safeguard in respect of the Auditor-General as of right being able to intervene where public funds are injected into these organisations. This definition is tight to the extent that it has to be a statutory authority.

Mr ATKINSON: Does the Deputy Premier believe that universities and other tertiary education authorities should be subject to scrutiny of the Statutory Authorities Review Committee?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: Yes.

Mr ATKINSON: Not long ago the Deputy Premier and I debated the Administrative Arrangements Bill under which Ministers were made bodies corporate. Does the Minister regard this Bill as bringing Ministers, as bodies corporate, under the purview of the Statutory Authorities Review Committee?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: No.

Mr FOLEY: Is there a demarcation line between the role of the Public Accounts Committee and this committee? As a member of the Economic and Finance Committee I am interested in the Treasurer's comments. Will my committee still have the ability, if it sees fit, to venture into any of these areas? Is there a brick wall or a Chinese wall between the divisions? Has the Minister thought through these demarcation issues?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: This important question has been discussed and talked about as to where we draw the line. The existence of the authorities and the role that authorities play is an important issue for the Statutory Authorities Review Committee. In terms of issues that relate to statutory authorities it is my interpretation that (and there may be further debate and discussion, which I believe is healthy, anyway) that some issues can be visited upon those authorities by the Public Accounts Committee or the Economic and Finance Committee. They are matters of negotiation. There will be points of dispute as to which committee should investigate a particular matter. If there is a dispute between the two, I will knock their heads together.

Mr FOLEY: I refer to the situation of local government created under statute. One of the realities is that councils have public moneys, whether that be public money directly funded from State or Federal Governments or for that matter their ability to borrow substantial amounts of money using the Local Government Finance Authority. I do not want to open up a whole new debate, but there is an argument that local government requires some further scrutiny, perhaps through this Parliament. Why has this been omitted from the functions of this committee, and does the Treasurer share those concerns?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: Again, it is a matter of conjecture as to what role should be played by State Governments

and the extent to which they should intrude on local government affairs. As the honourable member would appreciate, local government thinks it should be the second, not the third tier of Government. Any intrusion by the State Government into its affairs, unless it is on an issue in which the State has a deep interest, would be seen by local government to be beyond our charter and to lead to a crisis of management or confidence between the two arms of the of Government. There will be occasions when there are matters of common interest, particularly relating to things where we have to work in conjunction. I remember the Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources talking about councils and the influence of creek systems on the Patawalonga and those sorts of issues. That is not investigatory; that is simply a working relationship. There may be one or two situations where the State Government may wish to investigate a matter which has implications for local government, but as a general rule we will be leaving local government to look after itself.

Mr QUIRKE: There are a couple of bodies, in particular the MFP corporation, which are statutory bodies in every sense of the word. The MFP corporation now has to report by statute to the Economic and Finance Committee at least once a year—in practice it is every six months—and a report is prepared and tabled in this House in accordance with the MFP Development Act. Public corporations is another area where the Economic and Finance Committee was given a specific task by this House. What happens to those two tasks now? Do they transfer to the new committee or do they stay with what will probably be known as the Public Accounts Committee?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I will take some advice on that matter. I do not believe that reporting arrangements should change, because I am looking at the Statutory Authorities

Review Committee as a somewhat different body. The question was that there are bodies—public corporations and the MFP—which are required to report to the Economic and Finance Committee. I do not believe that relationship should change.

Mr QUIRKE: It is not changed in this Bill: it is still the *status quo*.

Clause passed.

Clauses 8 to 13 passed.

Clause 14—‘Transitional provision.’

Mr BECKER: I move:

Page 7, lines 4 to 7—Leave out this clause and insert—

(1) The Economic and Finance Committee as constituted immediately before the commencement of this Act continues in existence as the Public Accounts Committee for the purposes of the principal Act.

(2) The first members of the Public Works Committee and of the Statutory Authorities Review Committee must be appointed under the principal Act as soon as practicable after the commencement of this Act.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Schedule.

Mr BECKER: I move:

Page 8, after line 9—Insert paragraph as follows:

(aa) by striking out from the schedule ‘Economic and Finance Committee’ twice occurring and substituting in each case ‘Public Accounts Committee’.

This is consequential to the other amendment.

Amendment carried; schedule as amended passed.

Title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

At 10.23 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday 13 April at 2 p.m.