HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 22 March 1995

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

RETAIL SHOP LEASES BILL

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

That the sitting of the House be continued during the conference with the Legislative Council on the Bill.

Motion carried.

SCHOOL CLEANING

A petition signed by 180 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to repeal the new cleaning specifications for schools in South Australia was presented by the Hon. Frank Blevins.

Petition received.

EUTHANASIA

A petition signed by 81 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to maintain the present homicide law, which excludes euthanasia, while maintaining the common law right of patients to refuse treatment was presented by Mr Evans.

Petition received.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

A petition signed by 2 256 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to hold a referendum at the next State election to determine the will of all South Australians in relation to the reintroduction of capital punishment was presented by Mr Rossi.

Petition received.

ROAD TRAINS

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Minister for Industry, Manufacturing, Small Business and Regional Development): On behalf of the Minister for Transport in another place, I table a ministerial statement in relation to road trains, Adelaide to Perth.

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Mr CUMMINS (Norwood): I bring up the twenty-second report of the committee and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

QUESTION TIME

FLINDERS MEDICAL CENTRE

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): Is the Minister for Health concerned at the large budget deficit which now faces Flinders Medical Centre, and what action will he take to ensure that this financial crisis does not result in a crisis in patient care? The Opposition has been informed that the Flinders Medical Centre board will shortly consider recommendations to cut expenditure by 15 per cent over the next two years to cope with a likely shortfall of $4 million in this year's budget. This will result in the loss of a further 400 jobs at the hospital in addition to the 200 jobs which have already gone this year.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I am pleased to be able to put on record the real situation at Flinders. In the first half of this financial year, Flinders Medical Centre experienced an increase of activity over and above its activity last year of 14 per cent. That was far greater than the other major teaching hospitals. Needless to say, when you increase output by 14 per cent it leads to some budget speculation and, accordingly, the Health Commission has assisted with a review of the budget strategy at Flinders. That is now occurring and that has the full concurrence of the Flinders Medical Centre board. That strategy is due to be reported to the board on about 1 April.

I understand that a number of very simple strategies are being looked at, and those simple strategies include things such as the fact that the car park loan, which was brokered under the previous Government, has enormous interest rate pressures causing a direct effect on patient care. The budget strategy review believes that it is quite appropriate to re-finance that loan, and accordingly it will lead to much less budgetary pressure. That is the sort of simple strategy and, indeed, I would say first class, first-base management strategy, which will be looked at.

The CEO, Professor Blandford, wrote to a variety of people in the hospital seeking details of their plans. That, of course, is part of the strategy in hospitals today, to allow devolution of responsibility to the level of service providers. One of the things that I have been quite struck by over many years is the fact that people in hospitals do not want decisions made centrally: they want the responsibility. So Professor Blandford wrote to these people seeking plans for consideration by the board in April, and those plans were due to be submitted I am told yesterday. A number of those divisional heads have, perhaps precipitously, grasped the nettle and have indicated some things which I am not sure will come to pass after the budget strategy is fully reviewed.

I reiterate that Flinders Medical Centre increased its activity in the first half of this financial year by 14.7 per cent. However, the change that may well occur is not a cutting of services: it is a settling down of the services so that they will be within the budget that they were given in the early part of this financial year, as we would expect all managers in all systems to be. The taxpayers of South Australia quite clearly expect managers of major enterprises to manage within their budgets; we would expect them to do that, and they will do that.

However, I would emphasise that in so doing there will still be a great increase in the number of services provided at Flinders Medical Centre to the people of the south this year, compared with last year, despite all the dire predictions in relation to casemix funding from the Opposition. There will be more services provided this year than last year. I will give the House a couple of examples of what has happened at Flinders in relation to this 14.7 per cent increase. In the whole of the 1993-94 financial year, 57 heart valves were put in. Until January 1995, 55 had been done—so there were 57 last financial year, and 55 up until January. Last year, 45 knee operations were done. In the first seven months of this financial year, 42 knee operations were done.

So there is a huge increase in services provided to the people in the south. There was a 14.7 per cent increase in activity in the first six months of the year. Flinders management, which has the responsibility, is making a quite reasonable reduction in its activity so that it will be able to come in as close to budget as it can, while still providing a greatly increased number of services during the whole financial year.

GRANITE ISLAND

Mr CUMMINS (Norwood): Will the Premier explain to the House the plans now finalised for the development on Granite Island?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: There is further good news for South Australia: this morning the State Government has signed with a number of different parties a memorandum of understanding for the development of Granite Island at Victor Harbor. This is again one of those stories where, for 11 years, the former Labor Government could not do it, but in just over 12 months this Government has now brought the parties together, come to an understanding with those parties and has signed a memorandum.

I highlight that it is a very significant development: $11 million to be invested by the Greater Granite Island Development Company over a five year period with the first stage to be completed by next summer. It is a very significant development of Granite Island which will include a cafeteria, a fairy penguin interpretive centre and an upgrade of the causeway. No wonder Opposition members are laughing: they are embarrassed by their failure, over 11 years, to bring about substantial development such as this Government is now achieving. For 11 years the Opposition could not achieve one tourism development for South Australia. This Government, after just one year, has secured two significant developments.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader will obey the instructions of the Chair. The member for Playford will also obey the instructions of the Chair.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: It is interesting to see the obvious embarrassment coming from the other side. The Leader of the Opposition was Minister for Tourism; he is the person who failed to secure these developments that this Government is now achieving.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: He could not even achieve a significant upgrade of the facilities on Granite Island while in Government over an 11 year period. I point out that the groups that have been brought together for this development include the Greater Granite Island Development Company, PPH Resorts from Malaysia, which is putting $11 million into the venture, and the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal community, which community will be very much a part of the development of the other part of the island. The good news is that the first stage is expected to be finished by next summer, and all four stages of development are due to be finished before the year 2000, which will again help to boost international and national tourism for South Australia.

In particular, I commend the Minister for Tourism and his staff on the work they have put into this project, and also the Victor Harbor council, which has been very much part of the development in wanting to ensure that it goes ahead as quickly as possible.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: I suggest to the Deputy Leader that he cease interjecting so that his Leader can ask the next question.

QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): Will the Minister for Health allow the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to solve its current budgetary problems by further reductions in patient services? The Opposition has received a memo from the Chief Executive Officer of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in relation to a projected budget blow-out of $2.6 million. The memo states, and I quote:

> In spite of being casemix efficient we just attract too many urgent patients.

The CEO then suggests that the hospital's Division of Medicine will have to consider, and again I quote:

> ...the transfer to other hospitals of patients who require admission for whom there is no available bed nor adequate resources for optimum care at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: If the Leader of the Opposition is so concerned about this alleged problem at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, perhaps he will write, with me, to the Federal Minister for Health and suggest to his—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE:—Federal colleagues that they ought to do something about the level of private health insurance. As I told the House yesterday—and the Leader of the Opposition clearly has a very short memory—60 000 people last year dropped out of private health insurance and 7 685 of those became a burden on the State, in other words, patients who were not privately insured, and this is exactly—

Mr Foley interjecting:

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

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE:—the sort of effect those 7 685 patients have on the public hospitals.

Ms Stevens interjecting:

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: The member for Elizabeth interjects, 'That's rubbish.' Let her identify that to the meeting of Commonwealth and State officials from where that information is taken. That is not my information: it is information directly from officers of the Commonwealth and the States. If the member for Elizabeth wishes to say that that is a biased political opinion, I would ask her to write to those officers, because she will be laughed out of court. I will compose the letter to the Federal Minister for Health and give it to the Leader of the Opposition. I look forward to his signing it on a bipartisan basis so that we can have a change made to private health insurance, in order that the 7 685 people will not become a burden on the public sector. As to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, one of the ways that we can look at cutting non-medical services—

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: That's the point I am making. Rather than cutting medical services, we wish to make sure that those medical services are provided so, with the Leader of the Opposition's support, we will look at all the other non-medical areas such as the caterers, cleaners, porters and all those other sorts of people. We will look at the members of the Miscellaneous Workers Union, which contributed $50 000 to the Labor Party campaign prior to the last election. We will look at all those areas and, with the Leader's support, we will see whether we can reduce those

areas so that the medical services at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital can be preserved.

GRANITE ISLAND

Mr BASS (Florey): Further to the Premier's reply to the first question, will he explain to the House the significance of the involvement of the Aboriginal community in the Granite Island development?

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable Premier.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: A key part of this morning's announcement was that the Ngarrindjeri people were there as a community as part of the signing this morning. There has been about 12 months of discussion with the community to make sure that it is very much part of the development of Granite Island. A vast area of the island is the original part left to the Ngarrindjeri people to develop: they will turn it into a series of walkways, bush tucker experiences and Aboriginal heritage areas, particularly highlighting their own heritage as a community for the benefit of tourists going to the island. Employment will be created as part of an overall employment scheme.

Agreement has been signed between the Ngarrindjeri people and the Victor Harbor council, part of which includes a job creation scheme. As part of that, they are looking at trying to establish housing for the Ngarrindjeri people in the Victor Harbor area. Also, I am delighted to say that there have been extensive discussions already to establish a heritage agreement with the State Government and I expect that to be finalised in the near future. Those who were fortunate to be present at this morning's announcement could see the overwhelming support that this project had, and I quote to the House what Robert Day said this morning: that with this particular development, unlike some other developments that have been put up in recent years in this State by previous Governments, there had been a very close association with the Aboriginal community and a great deal of discussion, with the specific objective of including the Ngarrindjeri community in the project development itself. I am delighted to say that I sat down with Robert Day and other members of that community about 12 months ago. We have worked extensively on it since then, and today is a very fruitful outcome.

QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): Will the Minister for Health confirm that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital faces a shortfall of about $11 million in 1995-96 unless drastic cuts to services are now made? Will he say how many jobs will go from the hospital to achieve these cuts? A memo from the Chief Executive Officer of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital states:

> The carryover of this and other issues to the 1995-96 budget could see us facing a shortfall to projected activity of some $11 million.

The memo then states that one medical ward and one surgical ward will close from 14 April 1995 with the loss of 50 to 60 beds.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I remind everyone that the only reason why the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is still a teaching hospital is that this Government rejected the Audit Commission findings and rejected—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: —a large number of moves which had been afoot when the previous Government was holding the reins of health administration to make it a community hospital. We are only too delighted that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is still a teaching hospital, and it will remain a teaching hospital with north-west access through the Lyell McEwin and Queen Elizabeth Hospital amalgamation. I look forward to questions from the member for Elizabeth in relation to recent board minutes, meetings, and so on, which have been so supportive of that concept. The only thing I will confirm with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, as I did with the Leader of the Opposition, is that if there is a suggestion that the provision of health services to South Australians will be cut, with the assistance of the member for Elizabeth, because she is clearly suggesting that ought not to happen, we look forward—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is warned under Standing Order 137.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE:—to making moves which will see the appropriate downsizing of non-medical areas which will allow us to continue to provide health services in this fine hospital, which I remind everybody is a teaching hospital because of direct action taken by this Government.

TAFE LIBRARY

Mr EVANS (Davenport): With the ever expanding Hills population, will the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education indicate whether the current TAFE and community library facilities will be extended to cope with the increase in demand for their services?

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: I am pleased to announce that Mount Barker is getting a new facility. It is funded out of—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: We'll put you on a staff in a minute. I think that the Deputy Leader needs a lesson in manners and listening skills. We will enrol him in the program. The new facility at TAFE will be funded totally in terms of the TAFE contribution from State resources. We are funding it from within our own sale of properties. The local council is contributing $1.1 million. As a result, the community in that region will get a fantastic library facility and additional teaching facilities which will cater for the needs of that area for many years. It is a good example of local government and State Government working together for the benefit of local people. It is a rapidly expanding area, as the member for Cavell would attest. I am also keen to acknowledge the contribution of the former local member, now a ministerial colleague, who supported this project for many years. We have had the announcement, it is going ahead, and it is another sign that South Australia is back in business and committed to training and employment initiatives in the Hills area.

HEALTH SERVICES

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): Does the Minister for Health still claim that cuts to the health budget are not affecting patient services? The Opposition has been contacted by an 85 year old western suburbs pensioner who has been receiving home help every fortnight to enable her to remain in her own home. Recently she received a letter from the executive officer of Western Domiciliary Care, which states:

You will no doubt be aware that all public services are under great stress in trying to meet the needs of people within the present economic environment. Waiting lists for all services are now established and we regret to inform you that your home help service can only be offered once every four weeks in the foreseeable future.

Mr Brokenshire interjecting:

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

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I remind the member for Elizabeth and other members opposite that the blame for the economic environment lies totally at their feet only. Who lost the $8 billion—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! There are far too many interjections. I have already spoken to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and he knows the consequences. The Chair will not tolerate any more of it.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: The economic environment with which we are dealing—and we make no bones about it, because it is difficult—was caused totally by the Labor Party members sitting opposite. It was members opposite who wasted taxpayers' dollars and left us with the overwhelming support of the people to make some changes to get this State back on its feet again—and those changes are being made. The sorts of changes are in the areas of administrative efficiency, domiciliary care, and so on. We are looking at a number of strategies which will see administrative efficiencies made. We are working with the people in the field, domiciliary care, the district nursing service, Meals on Wheels and all sorts of people in that area to ensure that those services are provided as cost-effectively and as cost-efficiently as possible. Obviously, the savings made go back into those services. We will deal with the problems with which we have been left. We are not particularly happy about it, but we will deal with them.

Mr ROSSI (Lee): My question is directed to the Minister for Health.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lee has the call.

Mr ROSSI: What initiatives are being pursued by the Government to focus resources on patient and health services?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I am delighted to address the question from the member for Lee, and it follows on perfectly from the question that I was asked most recently by the member for Elizabeth. This is a prime example of how this Government is dealing with the situation effectively and making savings for the taxpayer rather than letting things lolly on, as was the case with the previous Government. Goods and services form a major part of our health budget. In the past year we spent $393 million on goods and services in the health area, which represents 29.6 per cent of the health budget. We are very keen, as I have said before, to cut costs but at the same time minimise the impact on services. In doing so we are determined to get the best value for money for the taxpayer.

A key initiative in relation to this is the specialised purchasing agency. Mr Speaker, as you and other people in the House would recognise, hospitals and health services purchase a large range of quite specialised medical products such as heart valves, implants, prostheses, arterial catheters, and so on. Despite the fact that that has been well known, the previous Government did absolutely nothing about it. Until now, all of these purchases for these specialised items have been largely uncoordinated, and there has been no organisation and certainly no leadership from the previous Government to make sure that that huge amount of money was utilised most efficiently.

On the demand side, in the past hospitals have ordered specialised medical and surgical supplies individually from a range of different suppliers. They tended to do it on an *ad hoc* basis, and each individual hospital paid prices on their individual volumes. On the supply side, importantly, there were no system wide contracts with suppliers for these specialised products. Indeed, this led to a situation in South Australia where vendors sold similar products at significantly different prices.

So, at the instigation of this Government, a consultancy was let to Coopers and Lybrand. It has now been completed and it has identified $25 million to $30 million of specialised purchases that would be amenable to a planned purchasing approach. It has been estimated that, if the hospitals were to cooperate—and they are willing to do so—and decide on a more limited range of products and if supplies were negotiated with the suppliers for, say, a two year period, the Government and hence the taxpayers of South Australia could immediately garner savings of 10 to 15 per cent. That is a significant saving on $25 million to $30 million. So, we are establishing a specialised purchasing agency designed to purchase this very specialised medical and surgical equipment on behalf of the hospital system in a coordinated manner with appropriate protection via contracts.

Obviously, these efficiencies will generate a lot of savings, which will be able to facilitate patient services, and they will produce a better service. So, here we have a prime example of where the Government is providing a public sector response to a public sector problem. We do not carry any ideological brief to move work out of the public sector. We have an absolutely pragmatic view that we want to get the best possible health care for South Australians at the best value for money for South Australians. Here we have just one other example of this Government doing it but the previous Government dropping the ball.

RADIOACTIVE WASTE

Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens): Why did the Premier advise the House yesterday that he was first made aware of the presence of plutonium traces in the waste bin transported to Woomera for storage by reports appearing in the previous weekend's media? Today's *Age* states:

Federal Government sources told the *Age* that members of the Premier's Department were given documents on 8 March relating to the transfer of the radioactive material, including evidence that the cargo contained traces of plutonium.

This has been confirmed by the Department of Industry, Science and Technology.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: We have tracked this down—the only area where we know there was an original contact on this. I point out to the honourable member that, if she wishes to raises this issue, she should feel rather embarrassed as a member of the Labor Party, because it has been the Federal Labor Ministers who have been communicating to me; Senator Cook, the Acting Prime Minister and other Ministers as well have written to me, and I point out to the honourable member that nowhere in any of that correspondence does it mention plutonium, even though it refers specifically to St Marys and higher levels of radioactive waste coming to South Australia.

I explained to the House in some detail yesterday that, if the Ministers at the Federal level were being honest, the least they could have done was to send me a letter clearly spelling out that this material from St Marys contained plutonium. Instead, what did they do? They went to a non-core agency that has not been involved in any of the discussions with the Federal Government on the transport of radioactive waste; they went to the Department of Housing and Urban Development and through that department they asked whether or not, in a whole series of documents they sent, there was one reference only to traces of plutonium. I told the House—

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The honourable member only had to read my ministerial statement yesterday in which I said that in the House. It appears to me that the honourable member opposite stood up and asked a question without even bothering to read my ministerial statement of yesterday. I pointed out specifically that to my knowledge the Department of the Premier and Cabinet has received no notification at all—none whatsoever. We certainly acknowledge that a letter did come in to HUD, and I gave the detail of that to the House yesterday. But what concerned me yesterday was the lack of frankness by Federal Ministers in correspondence to me as to what material was included.

If the honourable member wants to be further embarrassed, I point out to her that at no stage in terms of the 10 000 drums of material previously shipped to South Australia did they refer to the slurry; at no stage did they acknowledge to the South Australian Government that the lids of some of the drums were rusty and were therefore leaking; at no stage did they highlight to the South Australian Government some of the other problems, and certainly there was a lack of description of the material they were trying to export to South Australia. As I pointed out to the House yesterday, we have been treated in a very shabby manner by the Federal Labor Government, and I would have thought that members opposite—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Let me point out to the House that for several years the former Labor Government was negotiating with the Federal Government over the transportation and storage of this waste material in South Australia, and there is no record anywhere of any objection to this material being stored on a short or medium term basis in South Australia. Nowhere do we see the sort of question put to the Prime Minister that I have put to him; namely, if they are being stored at Woomera on a temporary basis, how long is temporary? That is the sort of question we want answered here in South Australia at present. It is the shabby treatment from the Federal Government that is the reason why this State Government has not yet given approval for the transportation of the material from St Marys.

HOUSING TRUST PROPERTIES

Mrs KOTZ (Newland): My question is directed to the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations. As the financial projections developed in the triennial review of the Housing Trust clearly demonstrate the link between stock numbers and the level of debt, can the Minister advise what is the Government's policy on the sale of trust properties and how this relates to the terms of the current—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I would suggest to the honourable member that she is now commenting.

Mrs KOTZ: The question is: can the Minister advise what is the Government's policy on the sale of trust properties; how does this relate to the terms of the current Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement?

The Hon. J.K.G. OSWALD: The triennial review has provided a tool to model the financial outcomes of the trust against policy decisions. Although it is a fairly lengthy one, I commend the report to members who have an interest in the balance of the financing of public housing. Trust tenants who can afford to do so are actively encouraged to purchase their own homes, either in full or under a progressive payment scheme whereby the tenants are able to buy their homes in affordable stages. However, some properties are for redevelopment and some cannot be separated because of their titles, and these are not available for sale.

The trust also restricts the sale of some properties, particularly those which recently have been bought, built or upgraded. They have to have an age of at least three years; after three years from acquisition or upgrade they become available for sale. The house sales program has been very successful and we estimate that in 1994-95 some 1 130 properties to the value of $55.2 million will be realised. As at 28 February this year, 890 houses have been settled to a total of $43.8 million. Under the current CSHA agreement, the net proceeds of the sales are to be returned and spent on public housing, and that is a policy which we totally support. However, in my discussions with Brian Howe, I am working for a far more flexible Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement which will allow us to use some monies from the sale of the Housing Trust stock to retire debt.

The overall reasons for that are clearly spelt out in the triennial review which, as I have said, I commend to the House so that members can have a better understanding of the various levers that have to be pulled to reduce the overall debt which is crippling the Housing Trust.

RADIOACTIVE WASTE

Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens): Why will the Premier not acknowledge that the South Australian Environmental Protection Authority received correspondence from the Commonwealth in January indicating the presence of plutonium traces in the material for storage at Woomera, and that on 20 February the SAEPA responded indicating that in its opinion there was no need for an environmental impact statement?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I understand that the correspondence did not go to the EPA: it went to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). I explained that to the House yesterday and I even named the person in HUD to whom it went. It appears that the Commonwealth Government does not even know where to send correspondence to the South Australian Government. The correspondence was sent to HUD; I have named the person in HUD; and, in fact, a response went back from HUD indicating that no environmental impact statement was required. The honourable member may not appreciate that it was HUD that made the decision whether or not an environmental impact statement was required. It appears to me that the honourable member is on her feet trying to defend the defenceless; she is trying now to support and back up her Federal colleagues, who have clearly—

Mrs Geraghty interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The clear evidence is that the member for Torrens is now trying to support her Federal colleagues who are wanting to use South Australia as a short-term or temporary dump for the whole of Australia for radioactive material, and I find that unacceptable. The only reason why they have picked Woomera is that it happens to be Commonwealth land and they do not need the approval of the State Government to store the material there. For any Federal Government to be dealing with a State Government on this sort of basis I find very shabby indeed. Certainly, the South Australian Government will not cooperate with the Federal Government whilst it treats us in that shabby manner.

NOARLUNGA COLLEGE THEATRE

Mrs ROSENBERG (Kaurna): Will the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education outline the details of the Government's offer regarding funding for the Noarlunga College Theatre?

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: I thank the member for Kaurna for her question and continuing interest. Along with her other colleagues in the southern area, including the Premier, she has expressed great interest in the future of the theatre. It is owned by TAFE but is not part of TAFE's core business. It was built at a cost of $6 million and is worth in excess of that. Last Friday I made an offer to the Noarlunga council regarding the theatre basically for a peppercorn rental arrangement, a $50 000 grant and the salary of a manager for one year. I was surprised to hear on ABC radio this morning that the council had rejected that offer, which was a very generous one, given that every dollar put forward is at the expense of our training apprentices and other trainees and that it comes out of our training budget.

However, I will still endeavour to resolve the issue, because TAFE cannot continue to operate that theatre. It is costing $4 000 a week at present and, as I said, that money is at the expense of our training commitments. I am willing to talk again to the council, and I have had approaches this morning from private entrepreneurs who are interested in taking over the theatre. I have offered that the name of the theatre can be changed so that it can reflect more accurately a southern focus. It is located in an expanding area, which deserves a good theatre. It is not central to what we do in TAFE but it is something that should continue in the area. However, I face the dilemma of TAFE's having to fund something which we do not need and do not want as a department, but it is one of the best theatres in the State and it would be a tragedy if it were lost to the community.

I again make the plea to Noarlunga council to reconsider its position and to reconsider what is a very generous offer from this Government, which is determined to see a theatre retained to serve one of the important areas of South Australia.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr QUIRKE (Playford): My question is directed to the Minister for Emergency Services. How will the Government make up the $500 000 shortfall caused by the transfer of the Air Ambulance Service to the Royal Flying Doctor Service, and will the Minister guarantee that patient and staff safety will not be compromised by the move from twin to single-engined aircraft? The Air Ambulance Service currently earns approximately $500 000 in excess of expenses per annum. The Royal Flying Doctor Service's central section, which covers all of South Australia, has decided to move to single-engined aircraft, despite the fact that there have been several incidents involving the failure of one of the engines in its twin-engined aircraft.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: The honourable member has been shadow Minister for Emergency Services for some time. He rarely rises in this House to ask a question, despite public comments to the media that he will question me on particular issues and then does not. Today he stands in this House to ask a question about this matter, and I am very pleased to answer it. Last week, I met in my office in this Parliament with representatives of the Ambulance Employees Association and an ambulance officer from the Air Ambulance Service. Prior to meeting with me, those officers dispatched a package to the Labor Party with suggested questions to me.

However, it would seem that, after the meeting, they did not dispatch a package to the Labor Party advising the outcome of that meeting. At that meeting they were advised that there has not yet been any agreement to transfer the Air Ambulance Service to the Royal Flying Doctor Service. They were advised that the subject of the negotiations, the $500 000, would be returned to the ambulance service to further its other operations, and that is part of the on-going negotiations. The matter is by no means settled, and the only outcome of those discussions, if the decision were made to transfer the services of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, would be the insistence that that $500 000 go to the ambulance service so that there is no budget effect.

That is an eminently sensible item for negotiation, I would suggest. The other very important aspect is to ensure that the current level of patient transport service is preserved or, preferably, that patient service is enhanced. I would encourage the honourable member to talk with the union before and after it meets with me so that he can ascertain the facts of the matter before rising in this place.

PRAWN FISHERY

Mr KERIN (Frome): Will the Minister for Primary Industries explain how the season is progressing with the Gulf St Vincent prawn fishery and, in particular, how the yield and size of prawns in the fishery compares with previous years?

The Hon. D.S. BAKER: I thank the honourable member for his interest in this matter. I am quite staggered that I have not had some questions from the other side, but I will explain that in a moment. From the middle of December last year some changes in the management of the Gulf St Vincent prawn fishery were instigated. Some changes to the committee were made and I asked every section of the industry to put forward its own management plan—

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. D.S. BAKER: I cannot comment on that. Each of those management plans was looked at and discussed. The committee put in a massive amount of work to achieve a long-term management plan for that industry. It was agreed by all parties that there would be 32 nights of total fishing from February to June. In fact, the fishery was open for 10 days, from 25 February to 6 March. This is very good news, and I do not know why the Leader of the Opposition is not here to listen to it, because he has had some role in this.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. D.S. BAKER: Absolutely. Specifically, I wanted the Leader here to take the news back to the shadow Minister for Fisheries in the other House, who has made a lot of inane statements about this fishery. That is the reason why the Leader should be here. However, I was sitting here expecting that I would get some questions after the fishery opened, but no questions came from the Opposition. In the past the member for Napier has taken some interest in this matter, as has the member for Hart. Judging by his yellow stickers, he has taken quite a bit of interest in it. I must report to the House that it has been going very well. Eight nights were fished out of a possible 10. The catches ranged from 500 kilograms to one tonne per boat per night and, in fact, there seems to be general agreement amongst the fishermen that we have—

Mr Foley: Impossible!

The Hon. D.S. BAKER: It is a different management from when the honourable member was involved. With a bit of consultation and planning it is marvellous what can happen. We think we now have a sustainable fishery. We will fish 22 extra nights to the end of June, and it appears that once again we have been able to manage our way through these problems and get a very profitable fishery going for South Australia.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: We will proceed with Question Time when the House comes to order.

TAFE BUDGET

Mr CLARKE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education. What action has the Minister taken to ensure that proposed cuts to the TAFE budget do not adversely affect important industry training programs? The Opposition has been given a copy of a minute to the Director of Corporate Services, TAFE, outlining the significant effect budget cuts would have on the Education and Training Services Division. The minute says that areas to be disrupted by the proposed cuts to funding and staff would include the slowing of major training initiatives to meet industry restructuring and workplace changes, and reduction in the delivery of accredited curriculum that meets industry standards.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: The Deputy Leader left out one important word: 'if'. We have not finalised the budget. I said a week or so ago that the Deputy Leader thought he was a mind reader, but he is not. When the budget details are finalised I will ensure that he is made aware of them.

NATIONAL PARKS

Mr ANDREW (Chaffey): Will the Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources inform the House of the recent developments with the National Parks and Wildlife Service consultative committees, and what he intends to do about ensuring that communities in general continue to have a say in the management of their parks? The National Parks and Wildlife Service undertakes the important role of management of large areas of national parks throughout this State, particularly in my electorate of Chaffey. I understand that local communities do have significant involvement in park management through these consultative committees.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I take this opportunity to thank the member for Chaffey not only for his question but also for the significant contribution he makes in his electorate in regard to this matter, not only with respect to national parks but in many—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I am glad that members opposite also recognise the significant contribution the honourable member makes. Last Friday I had the opportunity to meet with the Chairpersons of the consultative committees from throughout the State. I invited the Chairpersons to discuss with me the activities with which they are involved. I am pleased to say that the commitment of these community-based committees was reflected in the almost 100 per cent attendance at the meeting by the Chairpersons or their proxies from all over the State.

These committees have been invaluable to policy formulation, as the member for Chaffey has said, and to the management of the national parks system in South Australia since I established the first of those committees in the early 1980s. The consultative committees were initially instigated to provide the Minister responsible for national parks with an appropriate mechanism for meaningful consultation within the local community and I believe, and I am sure that rural members would agree, that this has been successful.

I take this opportunity to commend both past and present committee members on their commitment to the sustainable management of South Australia's parks and reserves. Many of these people have made considerable sacrifices in terms of time, expense and travel to attend and participate in meetings all over the State; for example, in the case of the Far North consultative committee, a committee of which you would be aware, Mr Speaker, members have often travelled for a number of days by road to attend their committee or to visit a park.

At the forum I had the opportunity to have open and frank discussion on the structure, functions and operations of the committees on a Statewide basis. Importantly, we were able to review the relationship between the consultative committees, the local National Parks and Wildlife Service rangers and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, based in Adelaide. It was clearly recognised that decisions in general directly impact on the local community and, therefore, the community should have greater input into the initial decision making process. I am committed to ensuring that that happens.

The support of local community volunteers is essential to the successful management of our parks in South Australia. To formally recognise the commitment and valued input it is my intention to write National Parks and Wildlife consultative committees into the forthcoming National Parks and Wildlife Act amendments, which will be introduced into the House later this year. These amendments will ensure that the National Parks and Wildlife Service is more responsive to the community and, with the continued input from consultative committees, the National Parks and Wildlife Service will provide relevant and professional park management, ensuring sustainable conservation of our valuable parks system into the next century. Again, I commend the involvement of the member for Chaffey in the process as well as all those who are involved in these committees.

MEDICAL PRESCRIPTIONS

Mr De LAINE (Price): In the interests of public health and safety, will the Minister for Health take whatever action is necessary to ensure that doctors write legibly when filling out medical prescriptions for patients?

Members interjecting:

Mr De LAINE: This is a very serious question. Chemist shop and nursing staff in hospitals at times find it virtually impossible to understand the unprofessional scribble of some doctors when trying to read prescriptions. Despite some doctors being repeatedly requested to write legibly, they often get indignant and refuse to comply with the request, leaving the staff to take a guess at the medication being prescribed.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Chair is not sure whether to direct the question to the Minister for Tourism or the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations, who may also have had problems with this matter. The Minister for Health.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I declare an interest in this matter, because at no stage in the history of my writing prescriptions has anyone ever had any dilemmas reading my writing.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: The green ink's nice: I accept that. Obviously, this is a difficult matter, because it is a matter of how people write. I am not sure whether, after 50 or more years of a learned habit, one can reverse that, but I shall be happy to look at the potential options by whatever means possible and I undertake to get a briefing and, as I did yesterday, share it with the member for Price, about whether laptop computers could be used with a signature at the bottom. Of course, that has immediate cost implications and perhaps there are reasons why that is not a possibility. In no way do I underestimate the importance of the question: this matter has been raised on a number of occasions before and I will obtain a report on it.

COMPETITION POLICY

Mr CAUDELL (Mitchell): Will the Minister for Industry, Manufacturing, Small Business and Regional Development tell the House what key messages he gave to the Australian business community on the South Australian way of implementing national competition policy in his address yesterday to a conference organised by the Business Council of Australia on making Hilmer happen?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The forum organised by the Business Council of Australia and a number of other organisations and industry groups was in the lead-up to the next COAG meeting, which is to sign off on the Hilmer reform process. As the Premier and the Government have said on a number of occasions, from South Australia's perspective the principles are agreed to; it is the implementation of Hilmer and the resource sharing between the Commonwealth and the States that is absolutely critical. Of course, Hilmer wants to take our Government trading enterprises to international competition. I repeat that that is a principle we agree with. Speakers from New South Wales and Victoria focused on the impediments of the negative impacts, and particularly the financial impacts, of the reforms on the States,

South Australia was asked specifically to present its water industry initiative as an example of innovative public sector reform and what can and should be achieved by Government trading utilities within Australia, because it more than meets the Hilmer agenda. The principles of Hilmer are incorporated in the outsourcing proposal for our water industry. In fact, it goes beyond that: it sets up not only international competition but an industry base here in South Australia, following the principle that the Premier and Government have laid down on outsourcing our data processing, the objective of which is not only to get savings to the consumers and taxpayers of South Australia in the efficient operation of those systems but also to expand the economic base of South Australia by leveraging our purchasing power to get better industry and economic development within the State.

It was pretty clear that, whilst the others are talking, South Australia is actually doing something about it and setting an agenda for public sector reform that other States in Australia are looking at.

CONTESTABILITY POLICY

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): Does the Minister for Health propose to scrap the policy on contestability that he announced less than 12 months ago and, if so, how will employees in public hospitals compete against contractors for their jobs on a fair basis? The memo from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital CEO—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms STEVENS: —states (and I quote from the recommendations):

> Place contracts out for the balance of non-core services in a rolling program.

It goes on:

> It could well be that employee groups may win the contract.

It further states:

> As part of this process the hospital seeks formal approval from the South Australian Health Commission to bypass the 14 step contestability framework, otherwise we are set for a lengthy process which will defeat our aims.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: If and when any change is made I will be the first to announce it to the House. There is some evidence that the contestability policy has not delivered as many efficiencies as we hoped it might. We believe there may be some barriers to that. Perhaps those barriers to delivering cost efficient services at world quality are such that they have exposed hospitals and the public sector to the type of thuggery that has been exhibited within the last couple of weeks, where unions identified to the Industrial Relations Commission that their actions were affecting patient care. They are not my words but the words of the union when it went to the Federal Industrial Relations Commission saying, 'It is important that you take action under the Federal Industrial Relations Commission guidelines, because what we are doing is affecting the health care of South Australians.' That is what the union said.

If our contestability policy has set up barriers to proper competition such that that sort of thuggery is allowed, I will be the first to address that matter. I look forward to addressing it, because one of the things that I have been most vehemently saying since 11 December 1993 is that we will provide world-class services cost efficiently. That does not mean, however, that workers at present will not be allowed or even encouraged by us to be part of any tendering process. I repeat: if our policy is getting in the way of allowing reforms such that the health care of people in South Australia

can be held to ransom by union thuggery, we will change the policy.

CIRCUMCISION

Mr LEWIS (Ridley): I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

Mr LEWIS: In this morning's *Advertiser*, just drawn to my attention, as I was not in the metropolitan area overnight and earlier today, there is an article entitled 'Circumcision ban sought'. It states:

> Liberal backbencher, Mr Peter Lewis, yesterday described the draft legislation as 'blatantly sexist'. Male circumcision should be banned as part of proposed laws on female genital mutilation in South Australia. . .

At no time have I ever said that circumcision should be banned. The fact is that the date on the draft amendments will prove that.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

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

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): In answer to questions relating to the Flinders Medical Centre and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital today the Minister for Health left out half the picture. In the five minutes available to me I intend to give the full picture regarding the situation at Flinders Medical Centre, which is really the same as that faced by other hospitals today. I propose to quote from a special edition of the *Flinders Medical Centre News*, which attempted to explain to people in the community what is happening at Flinders Medical Centre regarding its budget position. It states:

> Flinders Medical Centre began the 1994-95 financial year with a budget shortfall of approximately $6 million.

This, of course, was brought in by the Government's cuts in the last budget. The paper continues:

> Our strategy to achieve the savings was twofold. Firstly, we implemented a major service reorganisation which was designed to increase our operating efficiency and enable us to do more work. This was expected to provide extra funding from the throughput and waiting list pools which had been set up under the Government's new casemix funding system. Secondly, we immediately embarked on a program of staff reduction through the Government's TSP scheme.

So, straight away the Flinders Medical Centre put into operation strategies that it hoped would work. It goes on:

> Despite the centre's success in reorganising services to increase activity, the savings were not realised. At the end of the first half of the financial year Flinders Medical Centre had treated 1 854 patients more than the base workload agreed with the South Australian Health Commission.

This is what the Minister referred to when he said that the activity levels were up 14 per cent. However, he did not say the rest, and I am now going to say it.

Mr CONDOUS: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. I do not know how this Parliament is supposed to run, but I believe that whoever stands up in debate should address the Chair, not the television cameras in the gallery.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Colton is correct. It has become a habit of certain members that they tend to pay more attention to the cameras than to the Chair. The Chair intends to insist that all comments are made through the Chair.

Ms STEVENS: As I was saying, the increase of activity should have been worth $3.7 million to Flinders Medical Centre based on the full benchmark price, or $1.7 million based on the throughput pool reimbursement. However, the throughput pool ran out at the end of the first quarter, so they got only $197 000. That is where the first thing went wrong, and it was in relation to the casemix funding throughput pool which was not there.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms STEVENS: The article continues:

> Savings from TSPs were also less than expected. In the first year TSPs actually cost an organisation more than they save due to annual leave and long service leave payouts.

This is another area where the Health Commission has declined to assist hospitals. The article later states:

> With a predicted budget deficit and no funds left in the throughput pool, we must reduce our workload to the level funded by the SAHC. This means that from January to June 1995 we must treat 3 708 patients fewer than in the previous six months. We have no option except to close beds on levels 4, 5 and 6 and close an operating theatre. To balance our budget by June 30, we must cut expenditure by $4.1 million.

This means a cut not only of 201 staff members, which they have immediately done, but also the 400 more about whom we spoke today in Question Time. When the Minister talks about casemix working, let him tell the whole story, namely, that his cuts have caused the problems in our hospitals.

The SPEAKER: The member for Frome.

Mr Atkinson: A good member.

The SPEAKER: And a well behaved member, unlike the member for Spence.

Mr KERIN (Frome): I should like to speak about blowers and stress the importance of country businesses taking care not to fall victim to these unscrupulous operators. Basically, a blower is a person who attempts to obtain money from businesses by printing advertisements without authorisation and then tricking his victims into paying the account. I can speak with considerable experience of this practice. They will normally lift a legitimate ad from a reputable publication and use the contact name mentioned in the ad or quietly ring the business and ask who is responsible for advertising in order to obtain that name. When they have the name, they will say that person authorised the ad. Alternatively, they will ring and ask for an ad's content to be okayed on a minor detail, such as a phone number, an address or whatever, leading the staff in the business to believe that they are checking the contents of an ad that has already been authorised.

During 1992 and 1993 I had very considerable experience with these operators and I finished with a file of accounts for thousands of dollars of unauthorised advertising. I think my experience highlights how ridiculous the practice has become. I placed an ad in the *South Australian Police Journal* which included wording along the lines, 'Kerin Agencies congratulates the South Australian Police Force on their work in the community.'

The first series of ads was used without any effort being made to take out the reference to the South Australian Police

Force. Ironically, having been selected as a Liberal candidate for the South Australian Parliament, I had ads congratulating the South Australian Police Force in magazines in Melbourne which were printing union rules without checking and getting the union's okay. They were also being taken to the cleaners.

The bills for the first three ads that I had were between $250 and $350 each. They came under three different company letterheads, each with a post office box number in a different suburb in Melbourne and each with a different telephone number. However, one did not have to be Dick Tracy to see that they were all typed on the same typewriter and shared a common fax number. After much effort to contact whoever was responsible and getting on to them, the excuse given was that the use of separate post offices in different suburbs saved clients a lot of confusion when it came to paying accounts.

I made the effort to ring all the South Australian businesses that had advertised in one of these magazines. I discovered that over half the businesses that had ads had paid the account, and on each occasion they thought that someone else within their business had okayed it. Despite refusing to pay for the first three ads, I soon had accounts for ads run in a variety of trashy magazines up and down the Eastern seaboard. There was also a variety of phone calls asking for proof checks on ads with claims that they were already authorised. When the blowers telephoned, they made all sorts of claims about the *bona fides* of these magazines and their circulation. For example, there was some fancy name to do with local government, and they said that you virtually had to advertise in this magazine to have any hope of picking up local government contracts around Australia. On checking with the LGA I discovered it had never heard of the body. It appears in many cases that only enough magazines are printed to coincide with the number of advertisers who receive an account.

Mr Atkinson: A very good speech.

Mr KERIN: It is a very good industry! I urge all country and city businesses to carefully check that all advertising accounts which they pay relate to ads which have been correctly authorised. I know that when I was trying to tackle the problem from a victim's position I found it very difficult because the issue crossed State boundaries. The Consumer Affairs Department, whilst very sympathetic, could do very little about it. In frustration I called the Trade Practices Commission, which was also quite sympathetic, and I was told that the same practice had been perpetrated against it once or twice. I urge strongly all businesses to be vigilant when paying advertising accounts to publications that are not well known to them, because the more businesses who pay these people the more they are encouraged. If 30 or 40 per cent of the businesses that they contact pay the account, the blowers prosper as they drag more people into the net.

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): I welcome tomorrow's initiative to bring together an Adelaide investment strategy. This joint project will seek to engage business and community leaders in identifying key infrastructure investments which will help boost Adelaide's export performance. It will be completed in the next four to five months and aims to identify and implement the major priority investments required to support Adelaide's economic future. During the presentation tomorrow there will be speeches by the Prime Minister and others, and it will include a presentation about Stephen Howard, the Executive Director of the Committee for Melbourne. I am aware of ideas for a committee for Adelaide similar to the Committee for Melbourne.

The Committee for Melbourne is perhaps not fully understood here in South Australia. It was set up in the late 1980s under the purview of the Cain Government. It had a vision that by 2001 it would establish a dynamic Melbourne as one of the commercial, industrial, intellectual and cultural capitals of the world while retaining 'their global leadership as a livable city'—that is hard to imagine. The Committee for Melbourne is a private, non-profit organisation which comprises leaders from business, science, the union movement, academia and the community. It is governed by a board of 33 directors and backed by a small, professional secretariat. Its mandate is to look at the need for a united, non-partisan vision for the City of Melbourne embracing the aspirations of the whole community.

It says it wants to look at a whole range of things in terms of six strategies which it believes hold the key to Melbourne's future. These include: improvements in Melbourne's position as a communications, transport and trading hub; the positioning of Melbourne as the manufacturing centre of Australia; export knowledge, skills and services; development of Melbourne through urban consolidation; and so on.

Whilst we can learn from the Committee for Melbourne, it would be silly to slavishly follow its model. I hope that is not the case. I am pleased that the investment strategy forum in the first instance will involve the provision of funds under the Strategic Assistance for National Priority Regions Program. This will focus on an assessment of Adelaide's international potential and trade linkages between the Adelaide region, the national economy and the growing Asia-Pacific region. It will involve an assessment of key infrastructure investments which will trigger further economic growth and could include an examination of the investment which might be needed to support Adelaide's international potential such as the extension of Adelaide Airport and the future of port facilities once standard gauge links are operational.

The investment strategy for Adelaide would, in the longer term, propose to look at providing a guide to business investment decisions, establish priorities for major Commonwealth public investment and assist Commonwealth, State and local government and business cooperation in economic and business planning. That is very good, and I think it needs bipartisan support; however, it is vitally important that, after Arthur D. Little, the MFP and 2020 vision, this is not another similar exercise, even though they were valuable. There must be no overlap with duplication of the EDA, the MFP, or other work.

There must be job creation for Adelaide, not a make work scheme for over paid consultants or former fat cat public servants seeking a role and a travel budget. The money must be used for projects—not bureaucracy. The money must be used for investment—not consultancy. It must be driven by the private sector rather than become a bureaucracy. Some hard heads need to look at it. I urge the Government to get behind this in a bipartisan way and, for goodness sake, not allow this to become a bureaucracy that seeks to allow consultants to feed off it.

Mr ROSSI (Lee): I refer to problems I am having in the electorate of Lee, especially along the foreshore. I was asked by a constituent to view the problem on 17 March 1995, and I found that sand was being blown onto the roof, the backyard, the driveway and the main road. On inspecting the

problem I noticed several things that I felt were inconsistent. There was an old type brush fence buried in sand-dunes. In addition, the vegetation that was planted between the fence line and the roadway was also covered in sand. The main cause of this dune was the sand that was dumped on the seaward side of the vegetation and the barrier fence. In fact, the mound was higher than the fence and the roadway.

My constituent told me that council workers had cleaned the roadway and had dug sand from the roadside, taking vegetation and other material with it, and had then dumped it over the other side of the fence. With the mound being higher than the fence, it took only a few days for the sand to return. This has been going on for quite a few years, including when my predecessor, Mr Kevin Hamilton, was the local member. He did very little in the electorate, and as a result the foreshore is as bad as it is. I will share my ideas with the council and the Coast Protection Board in the hope that the problem is fixed. This problem occurs right along the foreshore of Tennyson from Grange jetty to Bower Road in the north. There should be no shrubs between the roadway and the barrier fence. If sand is blown onto the roadway, council workers should use a bobcat to pick it up and dump it further out towards the sea, rather than spending hours cleaning it up.

Another thing is that, being made of vegetable matter, brush fences do break down and decay. The best solution would be to erect a fence with nylon netting, preferably about 1.2 metres high and clear of all mounds of sand, when the sand replenishment program takes place. The other side of the fence should be clear of shrubs to at least another 3 metres so that any sand that does accumulate through wind action can be cleared by bobcats, thereby saving labour. A strip of vegetation—shrubs and so on—should be planted and on the sea side of these shrubs there should be at least another metre of sand below the level of the roots of the shrubs. By this method, any wind which is generated and which picks up sand will not accumulate on the vegetation and suffocate it, and the ease of cleaning the surroundings will cause less sand to blow into people's houses, gutters and even into their backyards and garages. Many people are concerned that no sooner do they clean up their backyard than in the next couple of hours and the next day they have to clean up again. Another problem is that walkways that give access to the beach are covered with knee-deep sand.

Mr De LAINE (Price): I refer to a major problem in my electorate over the past eight years (as far as I know), and it involves a person called Noel Hewitt. He is the owner of 15 houses in the Rosewater and Ottoway areas of my electorate. Since 1967 Mr Hewitt has been the focus of various forms of action under the Housing Improvement Act because of substandard housing. Of the 15 dwellings that this person owns, 14 have been declared substandard and have fixed maximum weekly rentals. The problem is that, since that time, most of these properties, which I have seen, have become empty in recent years. They are in various stages of disrepair. They are in a shocking condition, and some have been vandalised and are quite unsafe. This person refuses to upgrade or sell them, and they are an embarrassment to the whole community. They are not only an eyesore to the area but also attract vermin, weeds grow and the fire brigade has to come in and clear them because of the fire hazard in the summer months.

From time to time the Port Adelaide city council serves orders on him to clean up a particular house. He has a certain amount of appeal time; he waits until the very last day before he pays the fine. In other cases, when the council intervenes and, for instance, makes him replace the iron on a leaking roof, he waits until the very last week of the order, then he takes iron off the house he owns next door, repairs the roof of the house that is leaking, and thereby gets himself out of that situation. Then he has time to wait until an order is served on him for the other house. He does this all the time. It is like musical chairs, musical roofs, or whatever. He continually uses materials from one home and puts them on another just to escape the system. Television crews have been down there on more than one occasion. I have made complaints to various Ministers over the years but he seems to fall through all the nets there are, and it seems that some sort of legislative change is needed in local council and State Government regulations to try to catch up with this person.

He is always appealing against the housing improvement and rent control provisions which make it illegal for him to charge more than a certain amount in rent, and most of the rents are fixed at between $30 and $50 a week. Unfortunately, people do not even pay rent in some of the houses; they just squat in them. They light fires, and some of the places have been burnt out, so it is a real hazard to the local community. Apart from the fact that these houses devalue the properties of people who look after their homes and that those people have continually to look at these derelict places and deal with the problems of vermin and overgrown weeds becoming fire hazards in the summer, intruders break into the houses and local children play in them. Apart from the usual dangers, there is the added danger of out of date and frayed wiring. People in the local area fear for their children's lives and their safety.

It also raises the matter of insurance. What happens if children—or anybody else, for that matter—are injured or even killed in these houses? Who pays the insurance? It is a very unsatisfactory situation. It has been going on since 1967 and for some reason this person still seems to be able to continue. If only he would sell one of his houses, spend the money to upgrade the other places and get back to some sort of normality, it would be all right, but he will not do that and it is a disgrace.

Mr LEWIS (Ridley): What an incredible performance we saw during Question Time today and during the first grievance debate from the member for Elizabeth. Talk about crocodile tears, short memories and selective recollections, wherever any such recollection is possible. The member for Elizabeth wants as all to believe that the problems of the South Australian health system have been created by the current Government and are the policy child of the current Minister, the member for Adelaide. What nonsense! The most significant single factor contributing to the present problems we have here in this State is the current Federal Government's policy in relation to private health insurance and whether or not there is any taxation benefit to the people who take it out. More particularly, as the statistics show, we have seen thousands upon thousands of people walking out of private health insurance into an overloaded public health system—

Mr Brokenshire: Thanks to the Federal Labor Government.

Mr LEWIS:—thanks to the Federal Labor Government—adding to the queues that were created by the policies of the Minister in the previous State Labor Government, which was one hell of a mess at the time of the last election. The one

thing that emerges from that is that the member for Elizabeth is capable of doing a great deal of work; more is the pity that she would not work on the facts.

One other thing I would like to mention before I tackle a matter of further great concern and substance is the remarks made by the Leader of the Opposition. I agree with him, I agree with the Premier and I agree with the Prime Minister that the proposals they have jointly agreed to, namely, the South Australian and Federal Governments' proposals for South Australia, are to be applauded. We need that extension of the airport; we need improved rail transport between Islington and Port Adelaide; and we need improvements on the South-eastern Freeway. In fact, I believe that, if we used the same tunnelling technology as is occupationally healthy and safe for the people who work at Roxby Downs, we could put a tunnel right through the Hills from the Greenhill quarry to Callington, for probably no more money than the present tiled bathroom standard that is being proposed from Eagle on the Hill to the Devil's Elbow. There is no necessity whatsoever to put expensive tiling on the inside of that tunnel and all the other flash accoutrements that go with it. Indeed, it would be less safe with a rigid cover than it would be with the flexible spray-crete lining that is being used by Western Mining at Roxby Downs.

Notwithstanding that, let me pass on and say that we need the improved water quality for market gardens north and south of the city; we need a streamlining of arrangements for rail freight exchange between regional Victoria and New South Wales and South Australia; we certainly can do with some assistance for the arts; and, more particularly—and leaving the best to last—South Australia, and indeed Adelaide, should become the university State and city. We are good at that and we have that reputation. Let's use it.

Now let me turn to the incompetence of the Federal Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. That fellow must have been running a separate agenda altogether when he decided to intervene in the Hindmarsh Island bridge affair. Either he is power-crazed as Senator Evans was when he authorised the spy flights over Tasmania a few days after the Labor Party was first elected to office and was sworn in as a Minister or he did not have any brains to start with. He certainly has not used the ones with which he was blessed if he was given a normal amount and developed them. He has been careless of the State law; he lacked rigour in the brief that he provided to Professor Saunders; and he failed to consult with any of the people who were likely to be able to provide valid, historical and culturally relevant information about the matters on which he briefed Professor Saunders to investigate.

I believe that he was conspiring with the rest of the Left in Australia to bring down, by this additional act, the measure of credibility of retaining separate constituted States in a Federation in the way in which we govern our society in this great nation of ours, Australia. He sought to override State law by attacking it in this way, simply ignoring that the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in South Australia could have been a valuable resource to him if he were sincere about it. Indeed, he insulted not only South Australia's Minister but also the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal people.

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

CONSENT TO MEDICAL TREATMENT AND PALLIATIVE CARE BILL

The Legislative Council intimated that it had agreed to the House of Assembly's amendments Nos 4, 7 and 8 and had disagreed to amendments Nos 1 to 3, 5, 6 and 9.

MFP DEVELOPMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 9 March. Page 1889.)

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): The Opposition supports this Bill for the amendment of the existing MFP Development Act. I can see a look of relief on the Minister's face. This amendment to the Act affects such changes as an expansion of membership of the MFP Development Corporation, including the appointment of a Commonwealth Government representative; streamlining of reporting arrangements to Parliament; more explicit focus upon the environmental objectives of the project; and arrangements for the disposal of land no longer part of the core site of the MFP.

In supporting these amendments, the Opposition hopes that the Government appreciates certain matters about the nature and importance of this project which, let us remember, was awarded to South Australia largely as a result of the vision, commitment and determination of the previous Labor Government. Let us also remember that the Liberal Party in opposition during those years did not always adopt the constructive stance of this Opposition about the MFP. Basically, there was a policy to try to white ant the MFP, the submarine project and the Grand Prix. I can assure the House that this Opposition will, as I have said in the past, be a patriotic Opposition that puts the interests of South Australia first. I know that the Minister for Industry, who has courageously put his own job on the line in recent days on other matters, will support my stand.

The Opposition understands that the MFP project—a project of national significance—is one that will provide immediate rewards to the people of South Australia and Australia, but the really significant rewards will occur not tomorrow, next week or next year but over the next decade and beyond. This is a long-term project. The success of the project requires a sophistication and loyalty to South Australia on the part of all Parties in this Parliament. Division in the Parliament on this issue would see the delay and possible loss of international confidence and investment at a time when South Australia most needs productive investment to modernise existing and create new industries, particularly in the area of traded goods and services. If ever a project required bipartisan support in Parliament, it is this one.

Regardless of all the hype at the time from the then Opposition, the present approach to the development of the MFP does not differ significantly from the line pursued by the previous Government. The difference is that this Labor Opposition will not seek to act as a spoiler. We will provide constructive and, where appropriate, critical input in support of this project. Where we can assist the development of the MFP by use of our links to our Federal Labor colleagues in Canberra, we will endeavour to assist, whether that is specifically about the MFP or whether it is about defence and electronics projects that could come South Australia's way.

The re-focusing of the MFP to Technology Park, about which the Liberals made so much noise, always involved a little bit of sleight of hand. The MFP proposal required that Technology Park be a focus of the project in its legislation. Indeed, the legislation was to incorporate Science Park and Technology Park into the project as central MFP sites. More generally, the original MFP proposal was not focused solely upon the Gillman site and always involved making maximum use of other existing strengths, such as the State's excellent educational institutions. Of course, the then Opposition was quite correct to draw attention to the long lead times associated with the development of the MFP and of the Gillman site in particular—correct, that is, to draw attention to these long lead times but not to complain about them.

Perhaps the Government now appreciates that a development of such significance with the potential to launch South Australia into the next century will not and cannot come to fruition overnight. None of the successful projects of this type undertaken overseas, for example Sophia Antipolis in France and Montpellier, were developed over a short time. I should visit the area in order to be better acquainted. Bipartisan support is critical and I have previously registered certain concerns regarding aspects of the investment attraction deals struck by the Government.

The development of the industries of the future requires much more than a barrel full of money thrown at one or two large international firms, as has been the case on several occasions with this Government, and we want to ensure that investments that go into attracting new businesses to MFP sites are up to the standard of the MFP, just as we insisted that Technology Park and Science Park could not be just a marketing address for companies to use the name: they had to add value, they had to have a strong R&D component and they had to be of international standard. If we do not maintain the standards of excellence in terms of what we permit to be included in the MFP, the MFP will fail. It is as simple as that. And none of us want it to fail.

The Government rightly says that it seeks to use investment attraction as the basis from which to attract additional players. There is no argument from this side of the House about the desirability of that goal, but we are far from convinced that this can be done by spending large amounts of public money in the attraction of a tele-marketing back office function relying on low wages and concentrating on low-skill operations. Investment such as this do not come anywhere near to fulfilling the goals of the MFP, and we must endeavour, in a bipartisan way at a State and Federal level, to ensure that the high standards of excellence occur with each new MFP activity.

Considering other aspects of the Bill, I am happy to support further emphasis in the Corporation's function being given to the development of environmental research and environmental goods and services. However, the existing MFP Bill did give emphasis to the social and economic importance of this issue; we are pleased to see the emphasis repeated. The environmental goods and services industry is growing at rates in excess of 10 per cent per annum worldwide. It is one of Australia's brightest growth prospects, given our engineering and infrastructure expertise, provided that we can link effectively to the export opportunities in Asia, in particular.

A couple of years ago, as Business and Regional Development Minister, I publicly supported the industry's push for the establishment of a national research and development program for this industry in response to a series of 'do nothing' recommendations from the Industry Commission. I also lobbied for recognition of the MFP's status as a project of national significance and its role as a possible demonstration model for environmental research and development. We worked and lobbied hard for the establishment of the Federal program now in place for this industry.

The MFP should be an important mechanism by which South Australia leverages its fair share of Commonwealth assistance for environmental industry development. As I have said, this emphasis was always a key to the MFP, but I am delighted to see the Government and, in particular, this Minister reaffirming the importance of the environmental waste management industry to the MFP, and of the MFP's importance as a vehicle for the industry's further development in this State and in Australia. I note that the amendment expands the membership of the Corporation, including a person representing the Commonwealth Government, to be nominated by the State Minister in consultation with the Federal Minister.

I would again emphasise that such appointments must have regard to the need for bipartisanship, and I know that the Minister for Industry, Manufacturing, Small Business and Regional Development would be only too eager to consult with me on any future appointments. This project will be developing and growing well after this Government has been voted out of office. It is vital that decisions made today be realistic for circumstances of tomorrow. I note also that the amendment provides for reduced reporting requirements of the Corporation to various committees of Parliament. I know that there was probably an expectation that I would come in here today and oppose that because of my commitment to accountability, to transparency and to the highest and most rigorous standards.

However, I know that members of the Economic and Finance Committee are keen to ensure that they do not waste the time of officers in the MFP by having them constantly appearing and reappearing before committees of State and Federal Parliaments: it has become a substitute for action. I know that the committee is keen to get on with the job: it must have these impediments removed. There must be accountability, but once a year is enough. I sympathise with the desire to streamline reporting and allow the corporation to get on with the job, but only if it is a genuine streamlining and not a reduction in effective parliamentary scrutiny, which I know members of the Economic and Finance Committee would not allow.

The Opposition will support this clause of the amendment on the understanding that the opportunity for rigorous and detailed parliamentary scrutiny is not diminished; rather, we will simply ensure that the officers and managers of the MFP get on with the job for which they are highly paid. I repeat that we will not adopt the role of spoiler, which the Liberals sometimes relished in Opposition. This is a project that requires bipartisan approach and maturity on both sides of this Parliament. It is a project that will reward intelligence, determination and patience with new industries, new opportunities for growth and an improved quality of life for ordinary South Australians.

I hope that some of those briefings I was given early last year, which have not been given to me in recent times, will continue so that I can be of assistance to the Minister with my Federal colleagues and, indeed, of assistance to members of the MFP. As the Minister would be aware, I granted tax exempt status to MFP sites in terms of enterprise zone status, giving a 10 year exemption from all State taxes and from any

council rates for any development on MFP sites. I am sorry to hear that that no longer applies in Whyalla and elsewhere. I have just been corrected by the Minister and, as he knows, I am always prepared to listen.

I am pleased that the Government has reversed its announcement that it was to drop the enterprise zones and pleased that, by way of interjection, the Minister is endorsing my policies. We in the Labor Party, the Opposition, remain keen and strong supporters of the MFP, and I certainly want to respond at some stage to the invitation to look at those parallel projects internationally. I look forward to the Government's assistance in that regard.

Mr FOLEY (Hart): I rise, following my Leader, to support the Government's Bill. It is a Bill that I believe emanated from the good work of the Economic and Finance Committee which, as a committee of the State Parliament, was charged with the responsibility of reviewing the operations of the MFP not once but twice per year. That was further complicated by the Environment, Resources and Development Committee and the Public Works Committee of the Parliament reviewing its operations once a year, together with investigations by the Estimates Committees, a State and Federal Minister, the IDC, the Senate Estimates Committees, a junior and senior Federal Minister, the Premier and, occasionally, the Prime Minister. There has never been a Government—

An honourable member: Mark Brindal.

Mr FOLEY: And Mark Brindal. There has never been a Government organisation subject to such rigour and scrutiny. To make it almost comical in nature, we would then come into this Chamber and criticise the MFP for not doing anything. No wonder it did little at times, because it was forever in the Parliament suffering scrutiny. It is a very good reform—and I can see that the member for Mawson is hanging on every word. I apologise, Sir, for a bit levity in my contribution, which I will leave there.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr BECKER (Peake): Yes, it is a hard act to follow. I am not having a good week: I am congratulating the Minister, and following the Leader of the Opposition and congratulating him for his understanding of the legislation before the House, and that means I am not having a good week. The Leader of the Opposition interpreted the legislation correctly. The important aspect is that there will be two additional members on the MFP board, and we assume that they will be senior Federal and State public servants. I have no idea who the South Australian public servant will be, but probably someone from economic development, someone held in high regard by the Minister. Doubtless, there will also be a person of equal standing from the Federal Parliament.

There has been a considerable change in the whole understanding and operation of the MFP. This organisation has taken a long time to establish what it is all about. In his report to this House dated 23 February 1995 the Presiding Member of the Economic and Finance Committee said:

> The committee recognises MFP Australia as an organisation which is primarily a catalyst, coordinator and facilitator for other organisations. The nature of its role in relation to establishing models and leading centres of excellence, particularly in IT&T [Information Technology and Transfer] and business education, places the MFP under an implicit obligation to serve as a model in its own right for other organisations. The committee therefore anticipates that MFP Australia will be seeking to establish benchmarks for its performance and striving to ensure that its own practice approaches world best practice.

That is what is happening. We understand that it could take as long as 30 years before we really see vast benefits from what the MFP is doing for South Australia and this country. Committee members had the opportunity last week to visit the wetlands site around Barker Inlet, and no one could fail to be impressed by the work that has been undertaken in such a short time. The work has been managed by Salisbury council, which has developed expertise in this type of project. More importantly, I note the benefit that these wetlands will bring to ecotourism. I am pleased that the Minister for Tourism is here, because I can see huge benefits from what is planned and what has been done there, and I refer to the $9 million project that I understand will be opened next month.

The Hon. G.A. Ingerson interjecting:

Mr BECKER: I thought the MFP told us today that the project would be opened in April. I hope that every member of Parliament as well as members of the public have an opportunity to visit that project. I hope that TransAdelaide will run buses out there so that members of the public have the opportunity to drive down the extension of the Salisbury Highway to see what wetlands development is all about.

This Bill recognises the work of the MFP in that regard, and the Minister made clear in his statement that the MFP will be able to become involved and use its expertise to solve the problems of the Patawalonga. It can use a smaller model of the Barker Inlet work on the Patawalonga and West Beach area, because there is land there for that activity as well as part of the Sturt Creek and Brownhill Creek around the airport. I have no fear that the quality of the water discharged to the sea through the new Sturt Creek outlet will be entirely different from what has been discharged from the Patawalonga recently.

We must remember that the water that settles in the Patawalonga for a few days or a week or so is filthy. The area has several metres of silt and rotting debris, and every time there is movement of water much of that foul debris is washed out to sea. If we institute a wetlands system as at Barker Inlet, undertaken, designed and developed by the MFP, then the protests by a certain minority in the Henley and Grange council area will fall on deaf ears, because what they are saying at present is just not true. There is a real plus in what the MFP has been able to achieve. The reporting to the Parliament was a recommendation of this committee, and I thank the Minister for recognising what the Economic and Finance Committee said in its 23 February 1995 report at page 16 under 'Committee comment', where we stated:

> The Economic and Finance Committee recognises that MFP Australia is an entity dissimilar from most other statutory authorities in South Australia, and with Commonwealth as well as State stakeholders. The charter of the MFP clearly impinges on the areas of interest of the parliamentary committees to which it reports, and in its initial stages it was both logical and desirable that it should report not only widely but relatively frequently. However, with two years' experience of this reporting structure, the committee now questions whether this multiplicity of reports is still necessary and whether the requirements should be streamlined.

The committee's recommendation is:

> The State Government review the reporting requirements in the MFP's legislation with a view to reducing the multiplicity of reports required.

This will mean that, under this legislation, the Economic and Finance Committee will receive the annual report of the MFP. We will look at it and report to Parliament. We have some

concerns about the cost of the administration and the structuring of the organisation because, as we learned today, there is a general manager, a chief deputy general manager and eight other general managers with various functions in the divisions or core sections of the MFP. Our fear at this stage is that it may become top heavy with bureaucrats. There is a risk that the well paid executives could create a top-heavy situation.

But we must not forget that the MFP is a facilitator, coordinator and originator. It is involved in the start of many long-term projects that we want to see developed through Technology Park. We want to see the development and encouragement of technology in South Australia. From what I have seen, in my role as Chairman of the Economic and Finance Committee and also from the Industries Development Committee, we are in a very good situation at present within the information technology field, and we also have the opportunity to be the Asian jumping off point for all European and foreign companies that want to come to Australia before going to Asia.

Members interjecting:

Mr BECKER: We will not export any more flowers. I will agree to the extension of the airport if we can get more crayfish on those planes. The southern rock lobster boys would like to export more lobster, and they can take flowers with them. Of course, it has to come. That is all part of the development. We must have modern communications and direct air links with Asia. Just as night follows day, it follows that Adelaide Airport has to be upgraded. It is a pity that the runway has not been built where the reserve land is and taken out to sea, which would allow us to have an operation almost 24 hours a day. The land content would be used purely for taxing purposes, but that is another thought.

The whole point of this legislation is to correct a few anomalies. We would expect after two years that one or two areas in the legislation would need to be reviewed. From the experience that I have gained on our committee, I do not believe there is a need for a major review of the legislation. It achieves what the State and Federal Governments want: to strengthen the recognition and credibility of the organisation. It got off to a shaky start, partly because of the misunderstanding, partly because of the way that it was marketed and sold and partly because of the lack of general communication with people. The MFP is addressing that aspect now with a better set of public relations personnel who should be able to solve those problems. I see a very exciting future for the MFP.

As regards accountability to Parliament, the Leader of the Opposition need have no fears because the Opposition has three members on the Economic and Finance Committee. There is still a process in place for reporting to the Parliament through the Budget Estimates, the Auditor-General and the Environment, Resources and Development Committee. I believe that it should not be necessary to report every year and run the gauntlet of the Environment, Resources and Development Committee. I think that, like the Public Works Committee, it should be required only if and when there is a major project that needs to be looked at. However, the Minister has decided that the two main committees of this House will continue their overseeing role in that respect.

There are huge opportunities to sell the MFP expertise to the Sydney 2000 Olympics. I am surprised that we are setting up an office in Sydney costing $700 000 to snare business from the Sydney 2000 Olympics. If we have an opportunity to sell anything, it is the housing estate that is being developed at Osborne or North Haven. About 69 houses are being built there. The estate will be wholly contained. There will be recycling and holding of the stormwater. There will be no wastage from this estate. The Homebush site for the Sydney 2000 Olympics would be an ideal location to establish this type of housing for an Olympic village, using this experiment, particularly in relation to recycling all the waste water.

The waste water will go through the drains in the much narrower streets in this housing development and into a tank. The heavy contaminants, lead, and so forth, will be filtered out and the water will be recycled for use. There will be a drip feed system for the reserve and the oval. The sewerage system will also be wholly contained. It is a brilliant scheme, which has been done in conjunction with the MFP. The expertise that we are developing can be sold. This is probably the most exciting and only opportunity that we shall have to get anything out of the Sydney 2000 Olympics. I have spoken to people in Sydney and, frankly, they cannot see what else we can get out of it, except selling some of our expertise in these areas. Although this legislation might appear to be minor, it is significant because of the increase in the membership of the board, from the point of view of accountability and proving and developing a project that we hope will stand this State in good stead for decades to come.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Minister for Industry, Manufacturing, Small Business and Regional Development): The Government appreciates and welcomes the support of the Opposition for the measure before the House. I should like to respond to a number of points made by the Leader of the Opposition. In welcoming his support for the measure, I noted his remarks about the need for runs on the board to be developed through the MFP. If at any time the Leader and members of the Opposition want briefings of any nature, they can certainly take up that opportunity with the CEO and staff of the MFP.

The Leader of the Opposition was right in saying that there has been a very long lead time and that the tangible outcomes of the MFP are not as good as we or the Federal Government would want at this stage. With the refocussing of the MFP last year we sought to get it to concentrate on a number of key and specific objectives in a strategic way so that during 1994-95 we were able to highlight some of the MFP's significant achievements. There is no doubt that this is a critical year in terms of delivering tangible outcomes to both Parliaments and Governments and the people of South Australia. We are pursuing that vigorously with officers of the multifunction polis.

In relation to the Leader of the Opposition's comments about attracting investment, the critical mass that is now being developed at Technology Park is important and essential. It is important because the attraction of EDS and Motorola has enabled us to get doors opened overseas. People listen and ask why they selected Adelaide or South Australia for a location. It gives us credibility that we did not have before in terms of negotiating with companies overseas. Whilst there are some incentives that we put in place to attract those companies on site, what needs to be taken into account is the intangible asset of simply having them as part of the locality.

In relation to having telemarketing on site at the MFP, I draw to the attention of Leader of the Opposition that in the previous five or six years there had been little development over that which was established in its early years. What we are seeing now at Technology Park with the Motorola

building, the Australis building, the soon to be constructed EDS and IIDC buildings and possibly a third building, is a rapid expansion and development of critical mass. Whilst the numbers attracted to Technology Park by Australis do not 'incorporate significant value adding in research development,' to which the Leader of the Opposition referred, they give some critical mass on site in numbers of people to give the economies of scale that enable us to put in a range of facilities that companies like Motorola insist upon having available on site, and rightly so. For example, we need appropriate eating facilities, whether restaurants, tavern-type facilities, child care facilities, gymnasium facilities and other types of accommodation that we will have to look at in the course of the next year.

In attracting companies like Australis—and whilst it does not meet the significant value adding in research and development—it gives a critical mass and some economies of scale to put in place at Technology Park facilities that add to Motorola, which qualifies for the value adding and research and development that the leader referred to and which are required in a stand alone site like Technology Park. Therefore, they are meeting that requirement.

As the leader pointed out in his comments about scrutiny, a whole range of bodies and committees of Parliament (Federal and State) have been looking at the functions of the MFP. As the leader said, it is almost as if that has been used as an excuse for not delivering tangible benefits and outcomes on the MFP; that is, there has been a very long gestation period with little to show. I acknowledge that in some respects, but I believe it would be useful for the Leader to have a briefing about what happened in respect of Barker Inlet, what is being proposed at Magazine Creek and the development that is taking place with the Virginia pipeline. One would hope that in the next six to eight weeks there will be some significant progression of that if the business plan being developed by the farmers, which will form an irrigation district in the Northern Adelaide Plains, comes to positive fruition.

The Australia-Asia Business College will be taking its first intake in the first quarter of 1996. This is crunch year for the MFP in delivering those tangibles. By removing the bodies that are constantly scrutinising the MFP it cannot be, as the Leader has said, an excuse for delivering benefits to the broader community. As the Leader indicated, it is the Opposition's wish that the MFP be successful. It is certainly my wish that it be successful at the end of the day. My endeavours and those of my Federal counterpart (Senator Schacht) are for this project to succeed in South Australia's and Australia's interests. As the second reading explanation indicates, the Bill will streamline the procedures and, in addition, it will provide South Australian Government representation at MFP board level, where previously only the Commonwealth Government had a direct representative. This addresses that anomaly of the past. I welcome the Opposition's support. I assure the Opposition that the Government and I will pursue tangible outcomes from the significant investment that the taxpayers of South Australia have put into this project over a number of years.

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

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY LONG SERVICE LEAVE (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 8 March. Page 1835.)

Mr CLARKE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I note in the Minister's second reading explanation that the changes contemplated in the Bill were supported fully by the industry following detailed consultations through a tripartite industry working party. According to my information, that is correct with respect to the union representatives who were on the board. However, as whips do occur from time to time, one organisation—I will call it the electrical trades union, but it is known by some other name through a series of amalgamations and it will take too long to go through and provide the full—

The Hon. G.A. Ingerson: A super union.

Mr CLARKE: Another super union, as the member for Bragg interjects. The Minister is aware of the concerns of the electrical trades union. The Opposition has put forward an amendment which has been circularised. It is a small amendment that will be dealt with in the Committee stage. The Opposition supports all other aspects of the Bill. We have circulated this information to various employers in the industry and to the trade union movement. Apart from the issues raised by the electrical trades union with respect to the definition under clause 3(f), which I will deal with in Committee, the Opposition is pleased to support the Bill.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3—'Interpretation.'

Mr CLARKE: I move:

Page 2, lines 9 to 26—Leave out paragraph (f) and insert—

(f) by inserting 'or distribution' after 'transmission' in paragraph (b)(i) of the definition of 'electrical or metal trades work' in subsection (1);.

Although there may be other members who have questions relating to the Bill, this is the only point that I want to make. My amendment seeks to delete paragraph (f). The words 'distribution line' after the words 'a transmission line' need to be inserted because there has been a change in the way the electrical industry goes about its business these days. Because of the split up that the member for Kavel has been involved in with respect to ETSA—the creation of a distribution centre as far as ETSA is concerned—those words need to be inserted to maintain the relevance of the Bill in line with the various changes in industry. With respect to the balance of the amendment, the Opposition has raised these concerns by way of amendment following recent representations from the electrical trades union.

On checking the history of the provision I note that it is almost exactly the same amendment word for word that was moved in November 1992 in the Legislative Council by the Hon. Julian Stefani. It was considered by the House of Assembly in November 1992 and was opposed by the then Government. The basis of the opposition was that the electrical trades union believed that a change to the definition would mean that a number of its members would lose the benefit of long service leave. By way of explanation, I will read out a letter that was sent to the then Minister, Mr Gregory, on 12 November 1992 by the Secretary of that union which explained its opposition to the Stefani amendment at that time. It states:

The consequence of the amendments passed in the Legislative Council is that approximately two-thirds of the electrical employees working in the electrical contracting industry would be in practical terms excluded from ever obtaining long service leave. The current financial ETU membership in the contracting, lift and refrigera-

tion/air conditioning area is 1 436. The electrical contracting industry, being cyclic in nature, fluctuates between purely installation/construction work and service/repair and maintenance work. This occurs essentially as a direct result from the level of activity in the building/construction area. The incidence of an electrical contractor operating exclusively within the installation area is virtually nil. The application of the proposed amendments within a company where the operations span all types of electrical contracting work would be horrendous. It would necessitate calculating the workers' long service leave accrual on a daily basis. Notwithstanding the administration problems above, the ramifications of workers being denied equity in terms of long service leave, due to possible segregation of groups of workers undertaking specific work within a company, will undoubtedly cause industrial disputation.

The letter goes on further about a particular incident that occurred in October 1922, and I think it referred to a chicken farm or something of that nature at Murray Bridge when there was a dispute about whether or not an electrical contractor had to pay under the construction industry long service leave provisions. That was basically the genesis of it. The union makes quite clear in the letter of 12 November that it was not the union and that, as of that date, the ETU had had only one industrial dispute with regard to long service leave provisions with an electrical contractor in metropolitan Adelaide, and that was some 18 months prior to the date of this letter being sent in November 1992.

I know there is a grandparent clause within the transitional provisions of this Bill which would protect existing workers who, under the current definition, are entitled to their long service leave entitlements. However, that does not apply with respect to prospective or newly engaged employees into the industry and, as a consequence, whilst rights are not taken away from existing employees, nonetheless the union's concerns in this area are quite real and valid in terms of the future membership who will be engaged in this area. Simply, in the nature of the electrical contracting business, workers will be shifted from service installation work to construction sites and *vice versa* and, depending on the skills of one group of workers on a particular site, personnel can change.

An employer could be in the invidious position where some workers performing similar duties would be in receipt of long service leave benefits under the Construction Industry Long Service Leave Act while others would miss out altogether. I believe that that position was also adopted by the Electrical Contractors Association at that time, which shared similar concerns to those of the ETU. For those reasons, we urge the Government to support our amendment, which would retain the *status quo*, except with respect to the addition of the words 'distribution lines'.

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: I thank the Deputy Leader for his comments. We do not support the amendment. I remember that when Mr Stefani introduced this amendment in another place I thought it was a very good one. Now that the board believes that it is a very good amendment, it is very simple for the Government to pick it up. I would like to make a couple of points. I was surprised that the Deputy Leader did not mention that the Evatt Foundation found that industrial relations under this State were the best in Australia. I was very surprised that that issue was not raised, because—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: It was not 15 000, and you know that. We are very proud of our industrial record, and this is just another example of how the Government works with the unions to make sure that we achieve good outcomes. As the Deputy Leader suggested, it is recognised that those who are in the scheme are not affected by this amendment, but it does affect new employees. I have been advised that, while there are often difficulties in deciding the predominance rule, it is not a major issue and that the unions' and employers' representatives on the board have not found this predominance rule to be a significant issue.

We do not accept the Opposition's amendment as it currently stands, and consequently we will oppose it. Notwithstanding that, the Government accepts the Opposition's point about distribution, and we will be moving an amendment in another place that in essence corrects paragraph (f)(b)(i). So, our amendment will provide 'a transmission or distribution line'.

Mr CLARKE: I will not take too much of the Committee's time, particularly as I feel considerable pressure from the member for Giles on this issue, but the Minister was being quite provocative with respect to the Evatt Foundation report: as he well knows, it was operating on figures that included those derived from a significant part of the former Labor Government's term of office. We have never enjoyed 15 000 workers standing outside on the steps of Parliament House protesting against Government decisions such as trying to gut the workers compensation system in this State. I would not want to hang my hat on this Minister's industrial relations record as far as South Australia is concerned.

I regret that the Minister does not see fit to take up the concerns we have raised on behalf of the present and future members of the electrical trades union. This matter will need to be pursued in another place. We maintain our position in respect of that organisation. I will leave the matter there.

Amendment negatived; clause passed.

Remaining clauses (4 to 22) and title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

DAIRY INDUSTRY (EQUALISATION SCHEMES) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 9 March. Page 1893.)

Mr CLARKE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): This Bill essentially formalises the arrangements of the voluntary price equalisation scheme, which has been in place in South Australia over the past few years. I have been advised that there is some danger that the scheme may contravene the Commonwealth Trade Practices Act and this Bill includes a provision to overcome that risk and therefore protect the scheme which has been agreed to and which is in fact working reasonably well for all parties. I can see the Minister for Emergency Services, who has an intimate knowledge of the dairying industry, as I do, nodding his head.

The second aspect embraces an adjustment to the legislation to avoid a possible, although I am advised a technical, breach of section 25 of the Dairy Act, which deals with payments to dairy farmers in respect of farm gate prices and national transport cost additions. The Opposition understands that the provisions of this Bill will address these matters adequately. My colleague in another place is being briefed, I think, at this very time, and if our beliefs are incorrect amendments will be moved in another place. However, I stress that we do not expect that to happen and we will support this Bill in this place without amendment.

Mr VENNING (Custance): I support the Bill. The dairy industry in South Australia has been operating under the Diary Industry Act 1992 since 1 January 1994, and that legislation replaced the Metropolitan Milk Supply Act 1946

and the Dairy Industry Act 1928. The dairy industry in South Australia operates a voluntary price equalisation scheme through a representative body known as the South Australian Market Milk Equalisation Scheme. The scheme is very involved and it takes one some time to understand it. I had a meeting with four of the industry people, the member for Light and the member for Frome, and I was very grateful that our four guests put down the facts, because it takes time to understand this very complicated equalisation scheme.

The scheme allows all dairy farmers to share equally in the market milk returns. The processors are required to pay into a pool the farm gate price for market milk, which at present is 46.29¢ per litre. Section 25 of the Act requires that a dairy farmer must be paid the farm gate price for milk which is manufactured into market milk. Under the equalisation scheme, the processors pay the farm gate price for market milk but the farmers do not receive the gazetted farm gate price because three things happen. First, an administration fee is deducted from the pool. Secondly, the dairy industry in South Australia has been structured into four regions—north, central, the Riverland and the South-East. The State's average percentage of market milk over and above the total production is 28.7 per cent. The region's actual market milk percentages therefore are: central, 31.91 per cent; north, 66.04 per cent; the Riverland, 69.12 per cent; and the South-East, 5.58 per cent.

These areas are well delineated and most people are aware where the regions are. Certainly, members will recognise that the northern region is by far the biggest producer and it includes most of my electorate. Three regions produce more than the State average while the South-East produces less than the average. Under equalisation, all farmers are to receive the market milk rate (an adjusted farm gate price) on the portion of their total production equal to the State average of 28.7 per cent. Since there is sufficient milk produced in the north, central and Riverland areas to meet the market requirements, there is no need to physically transport South-East milk to the other regions. This is where the words 'notional transfer of milk' arise.

However, in an open, free and deregulated industry, the South-East would have to bear the cost of transporting milk to the other areas. The cost of transporting the volume of milk that is supplied on behalf of the South-East from Mount Gambier to processing plants in the other three regions is calculated and then deducted from the South-East and transferred as an adjustment to the other three regions. This adjustment has the effect of lowering the price of milk to some farmers. As I said, this represents the notional transfer of milk rather than the actual physical transfer of milk between these regions. Like the equalisation scheme, it is fairly self-explanatory.

The third point is that, after the aforementioned deductions and adjustments are made, the balance remaining in the pool is paid to farmers at the dollar per kilogram protein rate. Because the protein percentage varies between breeds of cows and even between herds, the lower protein percentage herds produce fewer kilograms of protein and therefore earn fewer dollars. When the cents per litre rate is calculated, farmers will be receiving less than the gazetted farm gate price. Because of the three aforementioned adjustments, there were some misgivings over the validity of the scheme because a processor apparently does not comply with section 25 of the Dairy Industry Act 1992 if the processor pays its dairy farmers in accordance with the agreement.

Industry has now agreed that there is to be no greater difference between the regions in the market milk rate than the appropriate freight rate phased in by the end of the five years, that is, by 1 January 2000. I know that long and arduous negotiations have gone on between the dairy farmers to come to these agreements, and certainly a very good compromise has been reached. I know that not all regions were happy but is that not so of every agreement? If some people from both sides are not happy, you could almost think that the agreement was fair.

In relation to the amendment of section 25 by the addition of clause 6, this section does not apply to the sale of milk under an authorised price equalisation scheme if the price paid for raw milk by wholesale purchasers under the scheme is at least equal to the farm gate price for the milk. That will allow the equalisation arrangement to continue and it has the full support of the northern industry, which is by far the larger producer and which probably has the most to lose by this equalisation scheme.

An amendment of section 3 inserts the definition of 'an authorised price equalisation scheme' so that the Act then acknowledges the existence of such a scheme and permits it to be approved by the Minister by notice in the *Gazette*. In relation to the replacement of section 26 with a new section 26, an authorised price equalisation scheme is necessary to give the Minister authority to establish an equalisation scheme under the terms set out in new section 26. Amendments to section 3 and the inclusion of new section 26 have the support of producers in the north and will ensure that the Commonwealth Trade Practices Act is not contravened.

The introduction of this legislation was in line with the direction being taken in all States to give more responsibility to industry for its own price mechanisms and quality control. If South Australia did not operate a market milk equalisation scheme, the national levy arrangements would be under threat. The Australian dairy industry has drastically altered its operations over the past decade. It has gone to a national industry that required massive subsidisation to stay afloat. I give great credit to my favourite Labor politician—a previous Federal Minister for Primary Industries, Mr John Kerin.

Mr Brokenshire: He should have been a Liberal.

Mr VENNING: Yes, I agree with the member for Mawson: John Kerin was probably the most liberal Minister there was. I gave him great praise when he was in office, and it was a great shame to see what happened when he was made Treasurer and the Labor Party crucified him. We still see him about, and he has some less than charitable words to say about his former colleagues, the current Government and, certainly, the current Prime Minister. I give John Kerin every credit for what he did: he took on the industry and dragged it into the twentieth century. It was very courageous, and I would hope that most dairy farmers would now thank him for it—not all, but most.

Subsidies are only good in the short term to overcome an immediate situation. Long-term subsidies cause industries to become fat and sluggish and are grossly inefficient. Today's Australian dairy industry is world efficient and has the highest health standards in the world. It is an industry of which we can be proud. We are now competing effectively with all our competitors in the world market, even against New Zealand, and we know how competitive that country is, because it had the market on its own for so long. I congratulate the milk industry on its initiatives, especially with respect to marketing. Packet milk, as you, Sir, would know, is very well presented today.

We now see milk products, especially low-fat iced coffee, outselling Coca-Cola in many areas. What a success that is. I am walking testimony to the success of low-fat iced coffee—although I would ask the companies to make it even lower in fat while maintaining the flavour, because I have a problem, as anyone can see. Packet milk is extremely well marketed and is extraordinarily well accepted in the market place.

Mr Foley interjecting:

Mr VENNING: If, as my colleague says, it was started by Lynn Arnold, I give him every credit for that, because it certainly has been a success story. It does not matter: if the research has been done and the product fits the niche, it will be a success. I also congratulate the industry on its preparedness to share the various milk markets equally with its producers, removing the friction between the regions and the individual milk producers. This equalisation scheme is the industry's own scheme. The industry put it up, decided the formula, and it makes the work, even though I know all regions are not totally in favour of it.

Finally, I thank two gentlemen who live in my electorate in the Barossa Valley for their help in relation to this Bill: Mr Murray Klemm and Mr John Nietschke. They attended a meeting in my Kapunda office, together with the members for Light and Frome. I am sorry that I omitted to ask the member for Chaffey, but he has since spoken at length with us and we have shared the knowledge. We certainly appreciated that meeting. These gentlemen, and two others from the northern region, gave us a very good briefing. That is what this job is all about: when an industry is as complicated as this and you can call on two or three experts to sit down and go through it, it is very much appreciated.

That is the parliamentary system working at the best level. So, I thank those gentlemen very much. Milk has been a very difficult political issue over the years, and it is good to see a period of great stabilisation. I hope this Bill meets the industry's total satisfaction and I commend it to the House.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

Mr ANDREW (Chaffey): I assure the member for Ross Smith that I will do my best to give this Bill the justice and recognition it deserves. I rise briefly to make a contribution in support of the principle of this Bill. I particularly thank the member for Custance for his detailed and comprehensive overview of the current status of the South Australian dairy industry. Although, with the passage of the Dairy Industry Act 1992, the dairy industry was still a regulated industry with respect to a farm gate price, I must say that in comparison with other States South Australia has led the way down the deregulation path, and the industry in this State can be congratulated for that. It is commendable and a great example to the rest of the nation.

Of course, as the industry knows, this process has brought with it specific challenges and demands to ensure that all dairy farmers in South Australia receive a fair share of the premium milk market sector. I endorse the principle of the Bill because it supports what I believe has been a genuine attempt by the dairy industry to put into place the voluntary milk price equalisation scheme through the South Australian Milk Market Equalisation Committee. For the record, that committee consists of equal representation from the South Australian Dairy Farmers Association and the three milk processing companies operating in South Australia. After all, cooperation as a cohesive industry will bring about optimum benefits to both producers and processors, and that is what rural and primary industry is all about.

We do not live in a perfect world, and I would have to say that, no doubt, various sectors of the industry have different objectives. Nevertheless, the industry knows, and it has been demonstrated through the working process, that deregulation has worked since it was implemented a year or two ago. Without some type of practical working structure, everyone in the industry will be worse off. Given the fact that there is a risk to the current arrangement, in that it may contravene the Commonwealth Trade Practices Act, and the fact that this risk can be averted by defining an authorised price equalisation scheme and permitting the Governor to approve, by the Minister's giving notice of such a scheme in the *Gazette*, it is appropriate to continue to allow the industry to have that prerogative and opportunity to make its own equalisation arrangements.

I also acknowledge that, with respect to section 25, because the market milk payments received by dairy farmers under the agreement may not technically be at farm gate price, to achieve this equalisation the costs of the administration of the scheme and the costs associated with the notional transfer of milk between the regions within the State need to be taken into account. Therefore, I acknowledge and endorse the fact that this anomaly needs to be addressed, which we are doing in this Bill. It is appropriate to use this opportunity to place on record the concerns of dairy farmers in the Riverland who believe they have been discriminated against under the current agreement.

During the first 12 months of operation of this new equalisation arrangement, these dairy farmers benefited from funds provided by section 21(3) of the Dairy Industry Act. I understand that these funds were contributed by processors and provided for regional adjustments to ensure that no dairy farmer would be disadvantaged in comparison with prices received before the introduction of the Dairy Industry Act of 1992. However, this fund ceased on 1 January 1995 in accordance with the full deregulation of milk pricing post farm gate prices. In light of this, dairy farmers in the Riverland have indicated to me that their average returns per litre in comparison with January 1994 to January 1995 have decreased significantly, perhaps of the order of 5¢ to 6¢ per litre.

I understand that the dairy industry is currently reviewing the operation of the first year of the agreement and that some modifications will be made to the agreement to overcome the difficulties seen by the dairy farmers in the Riverland region. I am currently awaiting a response from the South Australian Dairy Farmers Association on this aspect. It is no secret that the sharing of the proceeds of the premium milk market between regions has been controversial. Although I am told that the South Australian Dairy Farmers Association has resolved the issue between the major dairy regions, particularly the central South-East and the mid-North regions, my Riverland suppliers, who supply a milk market factory at Renmark, still feel aggrieved. With that in mind, it would be more appropriate for me to seek clarification in Committee. I support the second reading.

Mr BROKENSHIRE (Mawson): First, I must declare my interest as a dairy farmer, since I am going to speak on a Bill that affects the dairy industry in South Australia. I am pleased to support this Bill. I am particularly pleased to say that, after discussing the Bill with industry leaders and farmers, they are happy to see the Bill put into place. The Bill

is merely a housekeeping Bill, because all the work has been done. As some of my colleagues have said, it has taken a long time to get equalisation and agreement across the State, but everyone should be commended—including the South Australian Dairy Farmers Association (SADA) and the Department of Primary Industries—for their effort, interest and input into the Bill. I thank the officers of the Department of Primary Industries for their assistance to the dairy industry.

It is interesting to reflect on the positive points relating to the overall growth of our industry. As I am speaking here today, being held not far from my Mount Compass farm is the successful Mount Compass farmers field day, something I helped instigate about nine years ago. Today we will have more than 3 000 people—primarily dairy farmers, but also grape growers and graziers—moving through a record 125 sites. That is in the heart of the central region, one of the four dairy regions of the State. These statistics show that the industry is not in decline but is showing a lot of growth, with an increase in cow numbers and overall production in South Australia.

Even with the 1994 drought we have seen an increase in litreage to milk companies of about 10 per cent, which is good news for South Australia. It is particularly good news when we consider that at the ABARE conference in Canberra a few weeks ago one of the highlights was the dairy industry. People talk about the wine industry, in which I have much interest as my electorate encompasses a large wine growing area, but the other area projected to show enormous growth over the next five years is the dairy industry.

Whilst people project growth in the wine industry of up to $1 billion in exports in the next three or four years, at the same time they expect about $2 billion in exports from the dairy industry, so it is a strong and powerful agricultural industry. I also would like to give an accolade to John Kerin, the former Labor Federal Primary Industries Minister because, although he did not actually push the industry a few years ago, as the member for Custance suggested, he worked closely with the industry to achieve the Kerin plan, which was an essential element in the future direction of the dairy industry in Australia.

We all know that the industry is currently going through deregulation, which is why from South Australia's point of view we had to have this State equalisation opportunity to provide for our dairy farmers. Further, Dairy Vale and National Foods, the two major dairy companies in South Australia, are performing well in manufacturing and marketing our milk product. Indeed, it was great to see Dairy Vale having its float of $14 million over-subscribed just a few weeks ago, well within the projected date. That $14 million will allow the company to provide much upmarket and innovative packaging, which is essential to the dairy industry. Along with National Foods, we will see the industry in South Australia jump ahead in leaps and bounds, because we have always had the quality product here.

Farmers have worked hard to make sure the product is of excellent quality, but we have lacked the product packaging to enable us to compete with some of our bigger competitors in the Eastern States. National Foods has been moving well in this area and, now that Dairy Vale has that opportunity, I believe we will see much growth in the dairy industry in South Australia. We have done well in the past and are doing well even now, despite an unfortunate rise in high interest rates, which is affecting the industry. Grain prices have jumped $40 to $60 a tonne and have an enormous impact, and I do not mind saying that dairy farmers do not seem to get the rapid increases in price that some other agricultural commodities obtain. Perhaps it is because dairy is a staple part of the diet and Governments are not keen to see milk prices increase.

Nevertheless, we have a strong and vibrant industry here. We now have this equalisation process, including the important freight component. The South-East, the Riverland and the Central Region are the three major milk producing regions of the State, and they all need to be commended on the way they have pulled together in the best interests of the industry. Under State equalisation and a regulated farm gate price, which form the essential and underlying principle of our pricing, I believe our dairy industry in South Australia has a good future. I commend the Bill and I commend the Minister for Primary Industries who has got on with the job. I look forward to seeing the South Australian dairy industry go from strength to strength in the future.

The Hon. D.S. BAKER (Minister for Primary Industries): I thank members for their contributions. For those members who have an interest in the matter, I reiterate that this Bill amends the 1992 Act, which was passed when the Hon. Terry Groom was the Minister. I and many of my colleagues then in opposition had much input into the Bill, and we all worked hard to achieve that legislation, because it involved the bringing together of several Acts. The aim of these amendments is to make the legislation work. The amendments have nothing to do with quotas or equalisation, which are industry matters, and I want to make that clear to the House.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 3 passed.

Clause 4—'Authorised price equalisation schemes.'

Mr ANDREW: I note the Minister's concluding second reading comments. If certain producers in the industry, for example, Riverland producers, believe that their interests are not being fairly served by the current equalisation scheme or the South Australian Milk Market Equalisation Committee's agreement and they can produce evidence, for example, with respect to fair transport costs or notional costs, does this provision not give the Minister power to intervene, approve or revoke the equalisation scheme?

The Hon. D.S. BAKER: That is correct. I think that you must explain to the people who are asking questions of you that the industry has been to the previous Minister and to me and we are now agreed that equalisation has a principle that it will be the price delivered Adelaide, less freight. Under the legislation the Minister has power to negotiate, alter, vary or do all those things. Provided that we stick to and work towards that principle, all interests will be looked after. If not, I am happy to hear from people and to make sure that they are.

Clause passed.

Title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

FISHERIES (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 9 March. Page 1892.)

Mr CLARKE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): The Opposition will support this Bill without amendment. This

will no doubt come as a great surprise to the Minister. I usually try to avoid anything to do with fisheries. Whilst I have not had the opportunity to be briefed on this Bill personally, my colleague in another place, the Hon. Ron Roberts, has received a briefing from the fisheries section of the Department of Primary Industries. I am advised that the Bill clearly defines the powers of fisheries inspectors investigating breaches of the Fisheries Act. Some of the breaches of the Act have been difficult to prosecute in the past, and people who have been in obvious breach of the intentions of the Act have been able to slip through these loopholes. I am told that the provisions inserted by the Bill are in similar terms to those found in other Acts, including the Summary Offences Act. I am advised that considerable discussion has taken place with those involved in the fishing industry and the South Australian Fishing Industry Council and that all parties agree with the amendments embraced by the Bill. Therefore, it is with much pleasure that the Opposition supports the Bill.

The Hon. D.S. BAKER (Minister for Primary Industries): There has been a lot of consultation about these amendments. As the member said, they are designed to tidy up the powers of officers and to make quite transparent what they can do. They will also help fish processors and the registration system. These amendments really are about streamlining the Act. Consultation has gone on, and the briefings given to the Opposition have resulted in the Bill being allowed to go through without dissension.

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

NATURAL GAS PIPELINES ACCESS BILL

In Committee.

(Continued from 21 March. Page 2080.)

The Hon. D.S. BAKER: Mr Chairman, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

A quorum having been formed:

Clause 25—'Arbitrator's duty to act expeditiously.'

Mr CLARKE: Mr Chairman, you may be able to assist me. I have a feeling that last night or early this morning I made my point known with respect to what I think is a terribly wishy-washy and weak dereliction of duty.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: With respect, I explained that the protection of consumers is already in place. The Deputy Leader asked, 'What about the poor consumers?' I think it was Fred and Freda Smith, or some such name, that the Deputy Leader used as an example. I said that protection was already in place with regard to the sale price for gas and, indeed, the price which is placed on that gas at the point of consumption. A committee determines those matters, and that will remain in place. The arbitration point goes wider than that issue.

Clause passed.

Clauses 26 to 32 passed.

Clause 33—'Termination of arbitration in cases of triviality, etc.'

Mr CLARKE: The issue that I want to raise with the Minister relates to subclause (2), which provides:

> The arbitrator may terminate an arbitration by consent of the parties.

I appreciate that the words are 'may terminate', although there can be a legal interpretation that 'may' almost means 'shall' in terms of the consent of the parties. What worries me is that if the proponent and the operator have a disagreement, go to arbitration, come to some cosy arrangement with respect to price and then agree to withdraw from arbitration proceedings, even if public interest matters may have been raised, the arbitrator cannot see it through to a conclusion.

The two parties might get together in an act of collusion and as a result the arbitrator would have no choice but to cease arbitration proceedings. We could have inserted a provision in these terms: 'except in cases where the arbitrator believes it is in the public interest for him to continue to fully explore the dispute and any agreement that may be subsequently reached before the final arbitration'. That would ensure that there is no collusion between the proponent and the operator. It may seem like I am drawing a long bow, but I have been involved in other types of disputes where interested parties get together after arbitration has already started and a deal is done. It could be argued that there was a certain amount of collusion because it suited both sides. The public interest may not necessarily have been looked after and the matter should have gone through to finality. The arbitrator, to make sure there is no collusion, should ensure that any consent agreement matches up with the public interest.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: The member is drawing a long bow, because the public interest issues are provided for elsewhere. What we have is a dispute between the proponent and the respondent in this situation which seems to be insoluble. If an agreement is reached which is inconsistent with the thrust of the regulations and the provisions of the measure, it is visited under other areas of the legislation. We are really only talking about the extent to which two parties can reach agreement. The member would recognise that, if they had reached agreement in the first place by collusion, the arbitrator would never have been called in. The provisions of the legislation would still prevail if the agreement was not in the best interests of the general populous of South Australia. That explains the issue, and it is the same when two parties are hitting head on. If they consent to do something which is illegal, the law prescribes that they shall be brought to justice. If the consent is inconsistent with the law, the law will be brought to bear. I cannot think of a situation where the Deputy Leader's point would prevail.

Clause passed.

Clauses 34 to 36 passed.

Clause 37—'Consent awards.'

Mr CLARKE: Under this provision the arbitrator has to be satisfied that the award is appropriate in all the circumstances. The difficulty I have with the consent awards or when arbitration starts but then ceases halfway through because the parties decide to come to some agreement is that, even if agreement is reached at the very outset and there is no arbitration, the Minister of the day, under this Bill, has no capacity to invoke arbitration proceedings in his or her own right. That is the difficulty I have with this type of legislation.

My basic dispute with respect to this legislation is that there is no legal mechanism in the Bill where the Minister, acting in the public interest, can bring the matters before an arbitrator. We are talking about only a few consumers, including the gas company, ETSA, the pipeline authority and perhaps one or two large organisations that can have separate and direct access to the pipeline operator. If a deal is done and the public interest is not served, the Minister does not have any authority to invoke the powers of arbitration to have the matter reviewed.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: The Deputy Leader has raised a number of issues. I refer the honourable member to clause 25, which again includes the word 'may'. It provides that the Minister 'may' participate; and clause 37 provides that the arbitrator 'may' make an award. If you interpret the legislation as 'may' and in respect of the arbitrator it says 'shall', the Minister is required to participate. The 'may' statement holds in both cases, and in terms of consistency we have to recognise that. Where the public interest may be involved, it would appear appropriate for the Minister to participate. As an example, I refer to a township that previously did not have access to the supply and where the price of access may be deemed to be very high. The Crown would maintain that it is in everybody's best interest to have access at a reasonable price.

If there were a dispute between the parties, the proponent might say,' I would like to put in the pipeline; this is my access proposal' and the pipeline owner might say,' Well, I do not like that proposition; I want a higher price for the access'. In those circumstances the Minister could intervene and put a point of view that this town is very important to the development of South Australia and that should be taken into account in any of the arbitration results. They are the sorts of things we are talking about here. The 'may' statement allows the arbitrator that wide capacity to force the parties back to the table if he or she is not satisfied that they have complied with what the Minister might have said.

If that is not consistent with the award or the arbitrator's direction, remembering that the arbitrator is responsible for ensuring that the legislation is adhered to in spirit as well as in law, there would be considerable obligation to not consent under those circumstances. I am not sure that there is any easier way of doing it that is also consistent with what the Federal Government requires of us. We cannot say that the Minister has an ultimate right. That is the issue that comes up later with the amendment. The Federal Government will not allow us to sell a pipeline on that basis.

Clause passed.

Clauses 38 and 39 passed.

Clause 40—'Appeal from award on question of law.'

Mr CLARKE: My question relates to the fact that appeals can only be made from an arbitrated decision on a question of law to the Supreme Court. I understand that it is six of one and half a dozen of the other, because there are some advantages. We are investing in an arbitrator who may or may not be a legal person, who may be a commercial person or whatever, but nonetheless an appointed person without any accountability to the Parliament or for the policies the Government of the day may wish to set in terms of, for example, providing access to a particular town which the Government of the day believes ought to be serviced by a gas pipeline. All the Government of the day can do is put a submission to the arbitrator.

What concerns me is that (and I realise the dangers of this), if an arbitrator makes a horrendous mistake as to merit, not on questions of law, all options are closed off. The Government and the community at large have to wear the decision of this unelected person who, despite a whole range of other attributes, might have made a huge blue on the merits of the case which may significantly impinge on the rights of our citizens, and there is no effective method of appeal. Whether the Supreme Court would be the right forum for an appeal on the merits of a matter such as this is debatable, but I am concerned that it is limited simply to questions of law of any appeal, given that we are dealing with such an important issue.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: It is an important question, but I would remind the Deputy Leader that a process is being followed. If the parties are able to agree in the first place about the access and the terms and conditions of this access, it does not go to arbitration. Secondly, one would suspect that the two parties are both attempting to make a profit from that arrangement; otherwise, it is uncommercial, and nobody I know from either side of the fence wants to throw away dollars. If there is a dispute—a difference of opinion—then arbitration is involved, in the same way as ministerial powers are delegated on a range of issues across the board.

The Deputy Leader might have a case in one area, but there would have to be a whole set of circumstances in place before that would occur. If an award is refused, it means the parties cannot reach an agreement, and therefore there is no access. That can be visited down the track, because one or two months later somebody will say, 'Let's try again.' So, that applies only in the circumstances where an award is made and where some difficulties could have been created as a result of that award by arbitration.

If they are inconsistent with the law, obviously, the Supreme Court can take up the issue, but one would presume that the parties had come together and reached an agreement or had been forced to reach an agreement through arbitration that both parties feel comfortable with. They have done their sums, they have made a deal and said, 'I want access at 20¢ a gigajoule and the pipeline owner wanted us to have access at 60¢ a gigajoule' and they have met in the middle. One would presume that, given the parties involved, they would have sorted through the issues of whether or not it was profitable to do so. There is probably some area where that situation could arise but, if it is inconsistent with the Act—and the Supreme Court obviously rules on law—the Minister can intervene in the public interest if something important is happening in the rest of the State that really needs to be taken into account.

As I said previously, the regulator will be appointed in a manner that will be consistent with the Federal Government's requirements placed upon us. In all probability that will be a public person within a Government agency, but we are waiting on advice from the Federal Government in relation to that matter. In so far as we are capable of putting the safeguards into the provisions, I believe that we have met the requirements of the Parliament and the people in that regard. I concede that a situation may well arise, but it probably means that someone—either the proponent or the respondent—has been uncommercial in their decisions because, if the arbitrator has said that this is the best deal they can do, both parties have agreed and something has gone wrong, one of the parties has not done their sums. They can still walk away from it. They can still say, 'That is the best you can arbitrate: no deal.' You cannot force someone to take access if they have put a proposition.

Clause passed.

Clauses 41 to 48 passed.

New clause 48A—'Ministerial power of direction.'

Mr FOLEY: On behalf of the member for Playford, who cannot be with us this evening, I move:

After clause 48—Insert new heading and clause as follows:

PART 6A

MINISTERIAL POWER OF DIRECTION

Ministerial power of direction

48A.(1) If the Minister is satisfied that a direction under this Part is necessary in the interests of the State, the Minister may direct the operator of a pipeline to provide access to the pipeline for the haulage of natural gas in accordance with the terms of the direction.

(2) The terms of a direction under this Part must provide for access to the pipeline on fair commercial terms.

The insertion of new clauses 48B and 48C is consequential on the insertion of proposed new clause 48A. I do not need to say much on this amendment, because I am sure the Deputy Leader will adequately address it. This arose from the Opposition's view that sufficient protection was not available for the consumer in terms of the power of the Minister to intervene. I guess the Deputy Premier will argue that, due to the Federal Government's competition policy, this is not the case. We have a point of dispute on that position, however, and the Opposition sticks to its belief that there is not sufficient ministerial control over such an important resource for the State. The Electricity Trust and the Gas Company are the two clients of the Pipelines Authority and, clearly, between them those two organisations provide the State's full power generation. It is such an important commodity that we believe that the Government of the day must have more power than that which is enshrined in the legislation, and we would urge the Minister to consider that.

Mr CLARKE: I will not take up too much of the Committee's time, because I canvassed the matter during the second reading contributions last evening and during the Committee debate that we have had. I appreciate that the Minister will say that we are all subject to the Hilmer inquiry and its recommendations and outcomes with respect to the Federal Government's policies; however, we are a sovereign State. I would have thought that a Liberal Government would take some cognisance of the fact that we are a sovereign State and that we are free to pass laws in this State within the jurisdiction of our own Constitution. If it is the wish of this Parliament and the people of this State to hand over the arteries of this State (as the member for Giles said last night), namely, the supply of our energy source to industrial and domestic consumers, if we as a State say that we will give them away or sell them to a private sector monopoly, we want safeguards.

Despite what the Minister has said, he has not convinced me to date and certainly never will convince me that the legislation as it is currently drafted provides sufficient protection of the public interest in South Australia and, in particular, ability for the Government of the day to act decisively in support of that public interest. There is virtually negligible ministerial authority in the whole of this legislation—and the Minister nods in agreement. I am glad we are in agreement on that. Where we differ is on the basis that the Minister believes that market forces will prevail and, in addition, that this is the wish of the Federal Government with respect to these matters. The Minister nods also in agreement with my last comment concerning the Commonwealth Government. As I said earlier, we are a sovereign State; we are free to make a decision in this State as to what we believe is right and in our best interests, notwithstanding what the Commonwealth Government might do with respect to this matter.

I know of all sorts of financial pressures and other things that it can bring to bear on the States, but nevertheless we should be prepared to say, 'We are not prepared to hand over our public assets to a private monopoly without ensuring that there is firm ministerial control and accountability to the people of this State in matters of such vital importance.' If that is annoying to the bureaucrats in Canberra or to some of the Federal Government Ministers with respect to this matter, so be it. They do not seem to hesitate one iota in Canberra: if they wish to implement a policy or decision which may react adversely to the interests of a particular State but which enhances their position, they are more than prompt in doing just that. The Opposition wants to ensure that our interests are fully protected because, if South Australia does not do it, no-one else is going to do it for us. That is the reality of life, irrespective of which political Party happens to be in power in Canberra at any point in time.

I do not want to belabour the point, although I could probably regale the Committee for hours on this point. I think I have made my views on this matter well known to the Committee over the course of last evening and the early hours of this morning. I simply restate it and encourage and urge all members of the Committee to support the Opposition's amendment.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I took great note of the very strong representations that were made last evening. Obviously some of my points have already been canvassed, but I do not know of any new pipeline being built in the world today that is built by Government. That means that we are talking about the arteries of every country in the world—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: No; there are control mechanisms in the same way as this legislation provides control. That is the whole issue; the whole motivation for the Hilmer report was the fact that we had items in public ownership which were not performing to their capacity and which were restricted by political intervention to the extent that they were restricting their own capacity to perform in the market place. I have made that point before.

The second point is that competition policy will not allow for Ministers to have overriding power. That is not allowed; that is the new policy; that is what all the Premiers are signing up to. The only thing we are arguing now is whether the States will get a bigger dividend because of what we are doing than the Commonwealth, which is actually to get the major share of the revenue.

So, every Premier is signing up for that policy, which says that you cannot have ministerial intervention. For example, in relation to the gas pipeline, someone from Coober Pedy might say, 'I want to have access to that pipeline' and the Minister says, 'That sounds like a good idea; I will insist that that pipeline be put in, because I think it is in our best interests to see it happen.' What is the commercial price? The commercial price that the user pays is very limited, so what is commercial to the pipeline and what is commercial to the user under those circumstances are poles apart but, because there is a ministerial direction that it shall happen, one would assume that the people of Coober Pedy get the gas and the pipeline authority wears it, and that means there is a cross-subsidy in the system.

The same issue arises when a township or locale is making decisions about sources of power, whether it is gas, electricity or solar. Members opposite are saying that the Minister should intervene and say, 'In these circumstances you have to ensure that gas gets through because it is under ministerial direction.' That is what everyone is trying to avoid; we do not want ministerial direction. If it stands on its own two feet and there are compelling reasons, it is going to happen. The other thing is that, if a community service situation arises and the

Government believes in it so profoundly, it should not be forcing other people to be disadvantaged by that decision. It is up to the Government to come in with a community service top-up to ensure it does happen because it is uncommercial as it stands. So, if there is a strategic reason, the Government should be there to assist the process, not to direct it. So it is my belief that this and the next amendment are inconsistent with the Federal Government's view and the Federal Government will not allow us to sell the pipeline if these provisions are taken up.

The Committee divided on the new clause:

AYES (10)

Atkinson, M. J.	Blevins, F. T.
Clarke, R. D.	De Laine, M. R.
Foley, K. O. (teller)	Geraghty, R. K.
Hurley, A. K.	Rann, M. D.
Stevens, L.	White, P. L.

NOES (27)

Andrew, K. A.	Armitage, M. H.
Ashenden, E. S.	Baker, D. S.
Baker, S. J. (teller)	Bass, R. P.
Brindal, M. K.	Brokenshire, R. L.
Buckby, M. R.	Condous, S. G.
Cummins, J. G.	Gunn, G. M.
Hall, J. L.	Ingerson, G. A.
Kerin, R. G.	Leggett, S. R.
Lewis, I. P.	Matthew, W. A.
Meier, E. J.	Olsen, J. W.
Penfold, E. M.	Rosenberg, L. F.
Rossi, J. P.	Scalzi, G.
Venning, I. H.	Wade, D. E.
Wotton, D. C.	

PAIRS

Quirke, J. A.	Brown, D. C.

Majority of 17 for the Noes.

New clause thus negatived.

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

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

Motion carried.

Clauses 49 to 52 passed.

New clause 52A—'Haulage charges to be subject to price regulation.'

Mr FOLEY: I move:

After clause 52—Insert new clause as follows:

52A (1) After considering a recommendation from the Prices Commissioner, the Minister may, by notice in the Gazette—

(a) fix the maximum charges that an operator may make for haulage services; or

(b) vary or revoke a maximum charge fixed under this section.

(2) The maximum charges may vary according to factors stated in the notice.

(3) The Minister—

(a) must, at the request of the operator, have the Prices Commissioner conduct a review of the maximum prices fixed under this section; and

(b) must, within 10 weeks of the date of the request or a longer period agreed by the operator—

(i) inform the operator of the result of the review; and

(ii) make any adjustment to the maximum charges that the Minister considers desirable in view of the Prices Commissioner's recommendations on the review.

(4) An operator must not make a charge for haulage services in excess of the relevant maximum fixed under this section.

Maximum penalty: Division 4 fine.

(5) A pipeline user may recover any amount paid in excess of the permitted maximum as a debt.

In moving this amendment on behalf of the member for Playford, it is again consistent with the comments made in relation to new clause 48A. This is simply a case of the Opposition's not believing there are sufficient safeguards in the Bill in respect of haulage charges, and we would urge the Government to take our amendment into consideration and support it.

Mr CLARKE: Many of the points I would want to make about price regulation I have already made under other headings with respect to this Bill. However, I would like to reiterate the point made last night by the member for Giles with respect to the Gas Act. When the former State Labor Government sold its shareholdings in SAGASCO—and there was some criticism from within even our own Party's ranks with respect to the sale of those shareholdings—we pointed out that the Gas Act was there and subject to ministerial control with respect to the setting of prices. We also pointed out that it could go into private hands 100 per cent, but with the Parliament and, in particular, the Government of the day being able to protect the consumers of the State from unnecessary price hikes with respect to gas.

That did not dissuade any potential investor coming forward to buy shares from the South Australian Government. Indeed, there was a queue a mile long; it was just a question of picking the company which had the best price available and which conformed to the Trade Practices Commission in terms of which company would be allowed to buy those additional shares that came onto the market. With respect to the monopoly position, we are handing over to a private company the sale of the pipelines and it will be subject to price control, which is no different from private shareholders of SAGASCO deterring either a foreign or Australian investor from wanting to pick up a cash cow, such as the Pipelines Authority has been and is for the South Australian Government.

The Minister will make comments about the regime in Canberra, the Hilmer Report, the pricing competition and how the various State Premiers are approaching this whole issue. The fact is that we are a sovereign State. We have a small regional economy. We are not Queensland, Western Australia, New South Wales or Victoria with their far more burgeoning and vibrant economies. We have a fragile economy, and we must make every post a winner. For that reason—and as the Deputy Premier's forebears would testify, Sir Thomas Playford of the former Liberal Government saw the need to break the ideology and nationalise the former Adelaide Electric Supply Company and its involvement with the South Australian Housing Trust—the intervention of the State Government was seen as absolutely necessary in a small regional economy such as South Australia's to add to the attractions to industry and for people to live and create wealth in this State.

For all those reasons, the Opposition firmly believes that the amendment should be supported by the Committee. The Opposition will not call for a division on this matter, not because it does not regard it as important but because the key test was the ministerial power of direction under proposed

new clause 48A. We know where the numbers lie in this Committee on this issue. If the Government wishes to abrogate responsibilities to the State in that way, that is for it to do. We in our Party will have to assess our position in the light of the Government's attitude to these three fundamental points which the member for Playford outlined yesterday in his second reading speech on behalf of the Opposition.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: Again, I will be brief. I do not know whether the point has got through, but I will say this quietly and calmly. If agreements are put in place that are inconsistent with agreements reached in terms of the competition policy, the Federal Government has said that they will be voided or altered. This is not one of the principal issues that is being debated. The honourable member may realise that Canberra wants to control everyone's destiny. We are not happy with that arrangement. Canberra wants its Trade Practices Commissioner—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: Look, it wants its Trade Practices Commissioner to be the sole arbiter on what happens in South Australia. That is totally unacceptable. However, he has come back from that position and said, 'If you put in place an acceptable oversight regime which preserves the public interest and which allows competition, we believe that is in line with our policy.' However, if we put in place an interventionist regime, which was the issue regarding ministerial direction, this amendment is not far off the pace, because whilst it is unacceptable to the Federal Government an umbrella surveillance organisation will have to be put in place in South Australia; otherwise the Federal Government will assume that role.

I assure the honourable member that it will not be the Prices Commissioner. We put up that proposition and it was soundly belted on the head. However, there will be an umbrella surveillance organisation to preserve the public interest. We are attempting as far as possible to be completely consistent with that, because that issue of total Federal control has now reverted to the State's having a place in the sun and being able to make some decisions provided that there is the scrutiny which the Federal Government believes is appropriate. That is our intention and the intention of the Bill. I can say only that it will not involve a Prices Commissioner or a Trade Practices Commission, but there will be an oversight body of which the Federal Government will have to approve.

Mr FOLEY: I want to pursue that point a little further. If that is the case—and I will read the Hilmer report with interest over the next day or so—why can a State have an electricity authority and a water authority and set the price but not leave it open to market forces? From our State's point of view, if the Victorians sell their electricity utility, I think the Victorian Government will still maintain some influence over price. So, how does the Minister rationalise his comments on gas delivery with the Federal Government's saying that there must be a hands off policy but that it will allow the State Government to regulate the price of electricity and water?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: The honourable member is not quite correct. What the Federal Government has said with regard to electricity is that there shall be a national grid and there shall be access to that national grid. That means that there will be people in South Australia under that configuration who can buy electricity from a power station in Melbourne. That is the competition policy. The sticky issue, about which the Federal Government has been a little shy to talk, is whether the price that is charged will be a marginal price, which will mean that the Victorians, if they have enough grid capacity, can virtually walk in and take away our total marketplace, or whether an average cost will be set, meaning that we can compete with some more efficiencies. In terms of that, what we are doing here regarding the pipeline is totally consistent, because there will be Federal oversight of that process and because the Federal Government is saying that there shall be a national marketplace.

With regard to water, all the Federal Government is asking for is access. That really means that every time you put down a pipeline it will have to be commercial. What I believe will be the end point to that process is that, for example, every time a pipeline is extended in South Australia, we will not get competition from Victoria, at least not for the next 10 or 15 years—and I cannot imagine why Victoria would want to compete in this area. However, the Federal Government will insist that the water authority is competitive and allows access. That is consistent with its competition policy. So, there is a Federal framework, a price setting mechanism and a pricing authority. The difference lies in the capacity to access the national regime for electricity. They have been debating whether the access regime should start at 10 megawatts or at one or five megawatts, so that people can buy into the system. As we discussed earlier, Fred and Freda—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: That is not true. The facts of life are that, if you believe the modelling process, competition means that we will have a reduction in prices and some power stations will become redundant. We hope that they are not South Australian power stations, because that is what we are working on now, to increase their efficiency so that we can compete. It means that consumers are assumed to benefit and everyone has agreed with the modelling of that process: if you are facing up to your competition, you must get a cheaper price out of the process.

From an ideological point of view the Deputy Leader might argue that that is not true, but it is accepted wisdom that this will occur so that industry, households and other interests will all benefit. Those who will benefit most will be those who have the best buying power. There is assumed to be significant benefit to all consumers in the process. We are already seeing that the Federal Government will bring in its coal or carbon tax and tax the benefit that is there. But it is accepted by everyone that that will be the outcome if the Federal Government does not come in and tax the hell out of it.

New clause negatived.

Clause 53 and title passed.

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

That this Bill be now read a third time.

Mr CLARKE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I will be brief and try not to repeat myself, but I make these points for the Deputy Premier's education. Basically, all the arguments used by the Deputy Premier against our amendments obviously place the Labor Party in a position where it will need to consider further the Government's views as to the position we adopt in another place. If the Deputy Premier is right that we cannot put in a regulatory regime when we are handing over a monopoly to the private sector—and our amendments seek to put in a very light regulatory regime, in the sense that the Government is one or two steps removed from being able to intervene directly in matters affecting the energy supply for the State—that, in itself, is almost an

answer as to why this pipeline ought to remain under State ownership and control.

If we cannot privatise it without sufficient ministerial control to ensure the protection of the public interest and the Government of the day has to stand back several feet from being able to intervene decisively on behalf of the citizens of the State, it a real worry and concern for everyone, and something that we as a Party will need to consider further.

Bill read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

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

That the House do now adjourn.

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): I will spend a few moments tonight revisiting the issue that is causing much concern amongst charitable and social welfare organisations across the State; that is, the issue relating to the payment of the increases that was granted to the Social and Community Services Award. Those increases had to be paid from 18 November 1993. As we raised in a question last week to the Minister for Family and Community Services, it was this Government—then in opposition—that made a clear undertaking to that sector that:

> . . . in keeping with our commitment to maintain the vital services provided by the non-government charitable and welfare organisations, we undertake to provide additional funding to support the implementation of the award variations to take effect from 18 November 1993.

Up until last week there had been no public word from the Minister about this matter and, certainly, no money has been put into the hands of the social welfare organisations across the State. This, unlike the Minister's answer when he said that they were not in crisis, is not what they have been saying within the sector, and to me and other people. The types of organisations involved are many and varied and they undertake some of the most important work in terms of the social fabric of our community. We are talking about the big ones—organisations such as the Central Mission, Catholic Family Services, Anglican Community Services, Lutheran Community Care and other organisations of that size and stature.

There are also numerous small organisations across our community performing work that supports and rescues many people and keeps their heads above water. I am referring to organisations such as the Noarlunga Volunteer Service, the North-Eastern Community Assistance Program, the Migrant Resource Centre, numerous neighbourhood houses and an organisation such as the Australian Relinquishing Mothers Society. These organisations, as I said, are many and varied, but all play an essential role in picking up the pieces for many people and helping many people come to terms with very difficult issues. In fact, the small ones have very small budgets, saving in the long term much money for the State in being able to alleviate the crises in which people find themselves.

The big organisations, such as the four that I mentioned earlier, have numerous social welfare programs that stretch out throughout our community. The large ones were in the situation of having to draw on their reserves in order to pay that award increase, but the smaller ones had to cut back services. They did not have any fat, and certainly no reserves, that they could dive into to help them out.

As a result of my question last week the Minister made a statement the next day in which he said that the Government would indeed honour this commitment and pay up. In fact, the Government is not honouring the commitment to the full extent. It is estimated that the cost to the sector of this award increase is about $1.5 million, and last week the Minister offered $1 million, so the sector is still down to the tune of about $500 000 a year.

I was interested in the Minister's response, from which I propose to quote, because it is a familiar refrain with a number of Ministers in this Government when they talk about cutting back. The Minister said:

> It will be necessary for the sector to achieve efficiency gains or restructure to meet any costs over the $1 million allocated and any future costs resulting from the award.

We are talking about $500 000 across the sector. The Minister continued:

> Negotiations will be undertaken with the sector as to the most effective way to achieve these efficiencies with the least impact on service.

We have heard this rhetoric about achieving efficiency gains, restructuring and coming out with only a minor, if any, impact on services. I think it is about time that we started to understand that these words are a euphemism for saying, 'Do your best, but in fact there will be service cuts.'

We need to understand that organisations of the kind that I have mentioned do not have a large unwieldy administrative bureaucratic structure. Those organisations plough as much as they possibly can into their service delivery. They are not into empire building. These non-government charitable organisations exist with a mission to serve the community. They do not have administrative structures and bureaucracies into which they can cut. If they have to restructure and make efficiency gains, they must take them out of their services. Therefore, we need to be clear that when this happens it means that they will be able to do less because they will have less to do it with.

One of the organisations, in a copy of a letter that has been sent to the Minister, points out that the organisation—it is one of the big ones—has noted a 40 per cent increase in demand for financial counselling alone as a result of the introduction of poker machines. The author of this letter mentions that this is a major strain for them.

Mr Ashenden interjecting:

Ms STEVENS: I point out to the member for Wright that this Government is gaining a windfall of about $1.5 million—

Mr Ashenden interjecting:

Ms STEVENS: That is not the issue. Let us be clear: the issue is that this Government is getting $1.5 million per week into its coffers—

Mr Ashenden interjecting:

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

Ms STEVENS:—as a result of poker machines. What I am saying and what these people and organisations across the board in this sector are saying is that they are the ones who are picking up the pieces, that they are playing their part in this whole gambling issue and, therefore, with this much greater windfall than expected, they could expect that that award would be fully paid and that the gamblers' rehabilitation fund money, which was promised, would be delivered right away. They are saying that instead they are being expected to pick up on this for the Government, with more clients and less money. The writer of the letter made a very pertinent point. He said, 'If these circumstances were to exist

in the commercial world, I believe that the relationship between this industry and the Government would indeed be poor and under great strain.'

They feel that they are the poor relation and that their cause comes as a very low priority in this Government's discussions. The final point I make is that the Minister in his statement said that some increases had been paid and that some small amounts of money had been paid to people who have done the right thing and provided information. This person says, 'We have provided information to your department and we cannot understand the delay in information coming back out of your department or the decisions being made.'

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

Mr ASHENDEN (Wright): Before I address the point on which I was going to speak, I must make one point in relation to the contribution by the member for Elizabeth tonight, namely, that she and the Opposition overlook one important issue. There is only one reason why we have so many families seeking welfare assistance today: because the previous Government brought poker machines into this State. The Opposition is trying to blame this Government for a problem that it created but, let us face facts, if these poker machines had not been brought into the State, the problems that exist today would not be there. Therefore, to the argument that the Government should be providing greater assistance I say one thing: the assistance would not be needed at all if we did not have poker machines.

The main issue I want to address tonight relates to an issue which the member for Playford raised in Question Time today wherein he asked the Minister for Emergency Services a question about the change from twin engine to single engine aircraft to be used by the Royal Flying Doctor Service in recovery in the rural areas. Whether the honourable member was trying to create mischief, or whether he has a genuine misunderstanding of the safety of aircraft, I do not know. I point out to the member for Playford that the twin engine aircraft that he implied today are safer than the single engine Pilatus aircraft that the Royal Flying Doctor Service is purchasing is an absolute fallacy.

I know that you, Mr Speaker, along with the President and I are pilots and do a lot of flying. I speak for the majority of pilots, who would acknowledge that a twin engine aircraft can be much more dangerous to fly when it 'loses' an engine than is a single engine aircraft. All that a second engine does on the older, small twin engine aircraft is keep you in the air a bit longer than if you have only one engine. In the meantime, in keeping you in the air a bit longer, they are much more difficult to control. The vast majority of accidents that occur with twin engine aircraft happen when they are flying asymmetrically, in other words, when there has been an engine failure.

Unless a pilot is flying a small twin engine aircraft all the time, frequently, day in and day out, the skills needed in controlling that aircraft when it 'loses' an engine are very great indeed. The average pilot flying the small twin engine aircraft, when an engine goes down, will invariably find himself in very severe trouble. It is not at all uncommon when an engine goes for an aircraft to need full opposite rudder. If the right hand engine goes, you will need full left rudder. Therefore, it is virtually impossible to put that aircraft into a left hand turn. When these aircraft get close to the ground they are then difficult to control.

Members will note, if they look at accident records of twin engine aircraft, that, invariably, the accident occurs when the aircraft is preparing to land, usually as a result of a stall because the pilot is unable to control the aircraft in a turn with only one engine operating. When the member for Playford asked his question today, I desperately wanted to stand up and answer it, because the aircraft that are being replaced can be anything up to 20 or 30 years old and the technology is very old. The engines in the twin engine aircraft to which he referred were of the normal high octane avgas, four stroke petrol engine type, and their technology is very old indeed.

It is far more common for those engines to fail than it is for the type of engine which is in the single engine aircraft that the Royal Flying Doctor Service has purchased. The big difference is that, instead of the single engine in the new aircraft being the old reciprocating petrol driven engine, those which are in the Pilatus and which are purchased from Switzerland, are turbo props; in other words, they are a turbo jet engine. These engines, which are being used in the Pilatus, have been used in many aircraft for many years. There is no engine anywhere in the world with the safety record of the engine which the Pilatus is utilising in its single engine aircraft. In fact, these engines are so safe that in the United States of America it is very close to a situation where single engine aircraft utilising turbo props will be licensed to undertake commercial activities. At the moment in Australia, the United States and in virtually all countries of the world commercial operations can be conducted only by utilising twin engines. However, that is about to change because of the remarkable safety record of the turbo props.

I assure the member for Playford that the engines, the systems and in fact the whole Pilatus aircraft, which the Royal Flying Doctor Service has purchased, will be far safer than any of the twin engine aircraft presently being used by the service. I reassure the member that, as far as those aircraft are concerned, this is a step in the right direction. Not only are the engines in the aircraft much safer but the aircraft are, too. More importantly, they are far easier to control and are much cheaper to operate because you have only the one engine instead of two.

While I am referring to aircraft I will mention something that has occurred in an organisation which, apart from the Speaker, probably nobody else in this House is aware of. I refer to the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association. Recently, the annual elections were held and a major change occurred in the management committee which will be operating AOPA, as is it known. This is a marvellous step in the right direction. My comments should not be seen as critical of members of the previous AOPA committee. I believe that they were dedicated people who genuinely tried to do what they thought was best for general aviation in Australia.

General aviation of a level below commercial operators, and it is an area where there are far more pilots and aircraft than in the commercial area. Unfortunately, in the past AOPA tended to not represent the members of its organisation. Because of that the CAA has been able to walk roughshod over the general aviation industry in Australia with the result that it is far more expensive to fly general aviation aircraft in Australia than it is in any other country in the world. In our nearest neighbour, New Zealand, it costs approximately half the amount to fly than it does in Australia. This is because the CAA has been unmerciful in the way it has brought in penalty after penalty and cost impost after cost impost on those involved in general aviation. It has been able to do this because general aviation has not had a united voice to stand

up and fight the Federal Government and the CAA and say, 'Look, what you are doing is grossly unfair.'

The way in which avgas is taxed by the Federal Government and other charges that are levelled against general aviation pilots and aircraft is absolutely criminal. In the past AOPA has said, 'Rather than confronting them, we will try to work with the CAA and the Government.' The result was that the CAA and the Government walked all over the general aviation area.

The committee elections were held recently. Dick Smith was elected 12 months ago, and we all know the marvellous job he did with the CAA. However, we also now have Boyd Munro and three others elected with the result that we have a committee with a majority of members who are determined to act as an organisation should do in representing its members, and that is to stand up to the Government. I genuinely look forward to some major changes that will benefit that very important area of general aviation. Members probably do not appreciate just how much income and work is generated in the general aviation industry. I believe that at long last we are taking a step in the right direction.

Motion carried.

At 6.26 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday 23 March at 10.30 a.m.