

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 2 October 1996

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

CRIMINAL ASSETS CONFISCATION BILL

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

HENLEY BEACH ROAD

A petition signed by 414 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to install a pedestrian crossing on Henley Beach Road near bus stop 12 was presented by Mr Becker.

Petition received.

SHOOTING BANS

A petition signed by 1 240 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to ban the recreational shooting of ducks and quails was presented by Mrs Geraghty.

Petition received.

FISHING, NET

A petition signed by 80 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to ban net fishing in Venus Bay was presented by Mrs Penfold.

Petition received.

PAPER TABLED

The following paper was laid on the table:
By the Treasurer (Hon. S.J. Baker)—

Motor Accident Commission—Charter.

MOTOR ACCIDENT COMMISSION

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Deputy Premier): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: In tabling the 1996-97 amended Motor Accident Commission Charter, I wish to draw to the House's attention the fact that the amendments made to the charter in October 1995 were not tabled at that time. This oversight has now been corrected and arrangements have been made to ensure that in future amendments to the charter are tabled in a timely fashion. The charter was amended in October 1995 in preparation for the sale of SGIC by the Asset Management Task Force. The amendments made in October 1995 reflect more closely the core business of the commission as it was after the SGIC business was separated from it in preparation for sale. The changes excluded from the charter those functions such as life insurance and general insurance that were included in the sale of SGIC and focused on the compulsory third party scheme and running off assets not included in the sale of SGIC; for example, residual value insurance.

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to announce that the changes to the Motor Accident Commission Charter for this financial year further strengthen the ability of the commission to focus on its core business. In particular, I have included in the charter a provision to enable the commission to undertake a range of anti-fraud campaigns. Fraud remains an unacceptable cost to the Compulsory Third Party Fund, costing South Australian taxpayers more than \$10 million a year, a figure that this Government believes is far too high. Investigations have led to reductions in claim settlement offers and, in some instances, to the referral to the police for prosecution. The implementation of a number of anti-fraud campaigns in the next 12 months is an important element in the commission's ongoing efforts to contain the cost of the scheme to motorists. Other changes to the Motor Accident Commission Charter will result in improvements in the management of investments and claims. Mr Speaker, I am confident that these changes will serve to strengthen the operations of the Motor Accident Commission and commend them to the House.

LEGIONNAIRE'S DISEASE

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE (Minister for Health): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I wish to make a ministerial statement in tabling the report by Professor Mike Lane into the recent outbreak of Legionnaire's disease on Kangaroo Island. Professor Lane is a former Director of the Centres for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta. Six years ago he retired from the CDC and is currently Associate Professor of Medicine at Emory University, Georgia. Professor Lane has been involved in field epidemiology for the majority of his professional life as a field worker, a manager and ultimately as a teacher and has had close involvement with the research into many major outbreaks.

His resume is staggeringly impressive and includes responsibilities such as:

- being part of CDC's top management during the initial outbreak of Legionnaire's disease in Philadelphia;
- being Director of the Centre for Prevention Services during the full two years of initial investigation of what was initially called 'Kaposi's Sarcoma and Opportunistic Infections', later becoming known as AIDS;
- holding the post of lead investigator on outbreaks of hepatitis A, rubella, several salmonella outbreaks, an ECHO virus outbreak, poliomyelitis, staph enterotoxin and measles in Pittsburgh;
- joining the smallpox eradication program in Atlanta and working on many outbreaks of smallpox and measles in several African nations, Indonesia and Yugoslavia;
- being involved in outbreaks of yellow fever and meningococcal meningitis in West Africa;
- being a field worker on a large outbreak of St Louis encephalitis, a mosquito borne disease found in the Eastern United States;
- becoming involved in famine relief in Western Africa;
- doing much management and consultative work in the United States, such as doing work in antibiotic resistant gonorrhoea, syphilis, tuberculosis, measles, pertussis and a variety of famine and diarrhoea outbreaks in Asian refugee camps;
- teaching field epidemiology at Harvard, the University of California at Berkeley and in several short courses throughout the United States, Jamaica and Thailand;

- helping to start the Emory University School of Public Health; and
- working in Australia on behalf of the Commonwealth Government, following a request from the World Health Organisation to help start a training program for field epidemiology. In doing so, he exhibited the ability to put in place programs to train Australian epidemiologists and deal with bureaucracies.

These are prime examples of the expertise, reputation and eminence of Professor Lane in the area of public health dealing with epidemics and working with bureaucracies to further the cause of public health and disease control. On 28 July Professor Lane received an invitation from the South Australian Health Commission to review the matters surrounding the outbreak of legionnaire's disease on Kangaroo Island. On 4 August Professor Lane arrived in Adelaide and was given unrestricted access to documentation and staff within the Health Commission's public health section, plus receiving a file on the media coverage of the outbreak.

I was pleased to accede to a request from the Opposition to meet with Professor Lane. At this meeting Professor Lane was provided with various pieces of information, particularly parliamentary debates surrounding the actions of the Health Commission. Professor Lane's initial work in South Australia also dealt with answering a series of questions, particularly whether the Health Commission's environmental investigation was timely and well performed; whether the epidemiological investigation was appropriate; whether the spa pool was implicated in the outbreak; whether the notification procedures were appropriate; and whether the policies and procedures within the Communicable Disease Control Branch of the Health Commission met best standards for field investigation of outbreaks.

Professor Lane's conclusions were as follows:

1. The outbreak of *legionella* on Kangaroo Island was handled promptly and expeditiously, in the best tradition of epidemiology and modern laboratory science.
2. Existing staff in the Communicable Disease Control Branch of the South Australian Health Commission's Public Health Unit are well trained and experienced and capable of handling most problems related to communicable diseases.
3. Existing policies and procedures relating to communicable disease control are excellent.

Professor Lane said we might benefit by making these policies more formal and inviting scrutiny from interested parties throughout the State and perhaps Australia. According to Professor Lane, the decisions made by the South Australian Health Commission were prudent. He stated:

It was prudent public health practice to assume that the initial two cases and the isolate from the spa pool were related and to take appropriate action without waiting for additional cases. There was considerable doubt that there was an outbreak until the third case was confirmed on 8 August. I am impressed that the staff [of] the Communicable Disease Control Branch acted swiftly on the basis of the initial case and were fully engaged by the time the second case came to light. It is biologically plausible that the spa pool could have been the source for aerosolised *legionella*. . . [but] we cannot say with scientific conviction that the spa pool was the source of their infection. I am impressed that the CDCB quickly decided that wise public health practice dictated action to shut it down and sterilise it.

In relation to notifying the public, Professor Lane described as sufficient the widespread media coverage of the situation, coupled with notification of physicians in a position to see patients who may have visited the island. He stated:

Many epidemiologists would not have decided to contact the guests at the hotel directly, given the relatively low risk for acquiring the legionnaire's disease, the unproven nature of the association with the hotel and the general adequacy of notification of the public and the medical profession through the media. In my opinion, the massive call back was unnecessary and somewhat wasteful. All the other of these steps were wise and prudent actions and are consistent with the best public health practice.

Professor Lane's pre-eminence in the field of disease control and investigation and his neutrality and independence made him a logical choice to carry out such an investigation into diseases such as the Kangaroo Island legionnaire's outbreak. An expert of his calibre was necessary to get straight to the nub of the issues involved in the outbreak without being caught up in the emotion which was being whipped up. Professor Lane has indicated that he will be available to return to South Australia to take a wider look at the functions of the Health Commission's Communicable Disease Control Branch in early 1997. I will keep the House informed of his subsequent findings.

PIG AND POULTRY PRODUCTION INSTITUTE

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Minister for Primary Industries): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: Today I had the pleasure of commissioning the new Pig and Poultry Production Institute at Roseworthy campus of the University of Adelaide. The pig and poultry industries stand to gain enormous benefits from this cooperative arrangement. The institute now has facilities which are state-of-the-art and represent an innovative joint venture with industry, SARDI, PISA and the University of Adelaide. The institute consolidates research and development across several agencies and focuses the group on delivering outcomes in high industry priority areas.

The combined farm gate value of the pig, chicken and egg industries in South Australia exceeds \$200 million a year. Off-farm, downstream value adding is approximately a further \$100 million a year. A major trigger to the development of the PPPI was an interest by industry in securing its own research and development base. I should like to praise the foresight of those people involved in the pig and poultry industries who had a vision for their industries and agreed to the establishment of modern and united research facilities. Their support and financial commitment convinced the Government to reinvest \$4 million from the sale of the previous sites at Parafield and Northfield into the Roseworthy campus.

The PPPI now comprises a nutrition research laboratory, a pig nutrition research facility, a poultry research facility, a commercial piggery, an experimental feed mill and a commercial feed mill. The institute is the culmination of hard work and a commitment by many people and several organisations and all should be proud of their achievements. It is a client focussed centre through which industry can steer programs to meet industry priorities. The PPPI has also secured the skills base to drive economic development and support further initiatives at the Roseworthy campus. Staff have been instrumental in progressing the Mallee plan, a major initiative for integrated development of the pig industry and associated industries in the Mallee. If implemented, this plan will give a major boost to economic growth in the Mallee and create significant employment opportunities in the area. Further initiatives at the Roseworthy campus include the following:

- a new chair in animal nutrition and health;
- a further \$1 million for infrastructure for animal science at the University of Adelaide;
- the development of a centre of excellence in nutrition; and
- discussions are also underway to secure a significant research and development capability in animal health either at the Roseworthy campus or at another location but with extensive collaborative links with Roseworthy.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Mr OSWALD (Morphett): I bring up the thirty-sixth report of the committee on the Mile End netball stadium and the thirty-seventh report on the Glenelg safe harbor and move:

That the reports be received.

Motion carried.

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

That the reports be printed.

Motion carried.

QUESTION TIME

HEALTH BUDGET

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Premier. Why did the Government cut more than 500 nurses jobs and force hospitals to close beds while the Health Commission increased its bank account to \$78 million? The report by the Auditor-General says that during 1995-96 the Health Commission's deposit account increased by \$38 million to a total of \$78 million and, of this, \$30 million was committed to enterprise bargaining and capital works. The report shows that, during the same period, the Government cut 803 health jobs, including 545 nurses. In February the Queen Elizabeth Hospital announced it had a \$13.5 million budget gap that would result in 200 staff being cut, 50 beds being closed and a reduction of up to 5 000 in the number of patients being treated this year.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: The Leader of the Opposition well knows that, in the first instance in relation to predicted budget overruns early in the second half of the financial year, that allows one a period of five to six months to deal with those matters, and that is exactly what has happened at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. In this Chamber, I have dealt with the fact that that \$13.5 million is simply not the fact. He may choose to look back at *Hansard* and refresh his memory on that.

In relation to nurses and bed closures, the simple fact is that the Opposition, and the Leader of the Opposition in particular, is still dealing in the days of Dr Casey. Things have moved on from him and Dr Kildare.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not want any further interjections.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: We actually do things now in the ways of the late twentieth and, indeed, in some areas in health care in South Australia, the early part of the twenty-first century already, because we are at the world leading edge. We now treat people differently. They do not need so long in hospital. I will requote the example that I have quoted before, because clearly the Leader of the Opposition did not listen. In the days when I was a medical student, if one had a cataract operation, one would lie in

hospital for two and a half to three weeks with a sand bag on either side of one's head so that one did not move and so that the liquid inside the eye, the aqueous humour, did not leak out. Nowadays, one goes into hospital at 7.30 or 8 a.m. for the same operation and, at 3.30, one is home. So, clearly, there is no need to focus—

Mr Caudell interjecting:

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: The member for Mitchell points to his knee. I do not know whether he has had a knee procedure, but we all remember the days when those heroic Norwood footballers would have major knee injuries and be out for the season. Nowadays, the operation takes a couple of hours and they are back within weeks, and that is because we are employing more efficient usage of technology and we simply do not have the need for the same numbers of staff, the same numbers of beds and so on. It is no longer appropriate in the latter tenth of the twentieth century to focus on beds, which was the measure used some 30, 40, 50 and 60 years ago, when patients would lie around in hospital, having nothing done to them. What is important is to look at procedures.

As this Government has been at pains to tell the Opposition—and members opposite have been at pains not to listen, or they have been at pains selectively 'to amnesia'—if we look at the number of procedures undertaken since we came into government, we see that we are doing 23 000 more procedures every year than was the case under the previous Administration. That is 23 000 more people who are having operations. That is the figure to focus on, not the number of beds.

ASSET SALES

Mr BASS (Florey): Will the Premier advise the House of the benefits to South Australia as a result of the program of targeted asset sales by the Government? This morning on Adelaide radio, the Leader of the Opposition claimed that the Government's asset sales strategy was flawed.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I noted the line taken by the Leader of the Opposition this morning, and I highlight to the House the fact that the Leader of the Opposition still has not learned the fundamental lesson: by having situations such as the State Bank and SGIC we, the people of South Australia, carry the liability for those organisations.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The clear facts are that, because the Leader of the Opposition had not learned that fundamental lesson when he sat around the Cabinet table, we the South Australians have lost over \$3 000 million. The biggest single benefit that has come out of the sale of the non-core assets—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and that includes the Leader. I do not want any further interjections. Today the House will be dealing with important issues, and every member will get the opportunity to participate. It is not helpful to have interjections.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: By selling these non-core assets, we have their potential liabilities off the backs of South Australians. We now have the monkey of the State Bank and the SGIC off the back of every South Australian taxpayer, because they are the people who have had to pay for Labor's mistakes in the past. Let us look at the facts in terms of what these four organisations that have been sold

have done for South Australians over the past five years. Instead of just taking—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN:—the best returns these organisations have ever put in, let us look at the past five years. I refer to the State Bank, SGIC, Forwood Products and PASA. In 1991-92 those four organisations combined cost South Australian taxpayers \$3 095 million—\$3 billion. If we did not have them on our books, we would not have been paying that amount of money. In 1992-93 those same four organisations cost the taxpayers of South Australia \$167 million. In 1993-94 those same four organisations contributed to the taxpayers \$52 million. In 1994-95 they cost the taxpayers \$40 million, and in 1995-96 they contributed \$78 million to the taxpayers. If we put those five years together for the four organisations, we see that the net loss to the taxpayers of South Australia is \$3 172 million. That is why the assets have been sold—so that we the taxpayers of South Australia do not carry the liability. How the Leader of the Opposition can possibly come out and say that that argument is flawed is beyond me.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not want any further interjections. The tolerance and good nature of the Chair has been tested.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The Leader of the Opposition, who is saying that the asset sales program is flawed, is the same Leader of the Opposition who in this House, as a Minister, said that the State Bank was one of South Australia's greatest success stories. It goes straight back to the Leader of the Opposition. On another occasion, the now Leader of the Opposition told this Parliament that 'Marcus Clark's appointment was a major coup that stunned the banking world'.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Can I say that—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! If members continue to interject, it will be obvious that they do not want to ask any questions, and we will proceed with the business of the day. The Chair has other alternatives which it does not want to have to use. It is the second day of the session, and I suggest that members concentrate on the productive side of their role. The honourable Premier.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Let all South Australians see the Leader of the Opposition for what he is. In 1996, he is saying that we should still hold on to the State Bank and SGIC.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I never said that.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Yes, you did. You said it this morning. The Leader said this morning that the whole process of selling assets has been flawed.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Leader of the Opposition for the second time.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I want all South Australians to understand this: we have an alternative Government in South Australia that still wants us to hold on to the State Bank, SGIC and those other assets that have been losing taxpayers millions of dollars a year. He still wants to have the monkey on the back of all South Australians.

Let us look at the facts that have come out. Let us look at this figure of \$110 million, which was a snapshot not of just

the past 12 months but an attempt to go through and pick out the best return from these organisations each year for the past five years. In fact, for the State Bank and SGIC the figures for 1995-96 were selected, and then it was necessary to go back to 1994-95 for Forwood Products and PASA. In fact, we had put those organisations into a condition where we had ripped down their costs in preparation for sale. So, of course, in the last year before sale they gave a better return for the shareholders, the people of South Australia. Equally, we have come through a period where there have been lower than usual interest rates compared with the past six or seven years.

If the people of South Australia want any justification for why these non-core assets are being sold, it is because year after year they have cost the taxpayers of South Australia millions, in fact billions, of dollars. The facts are clear: we now have that liability and that monkey off the back of the people of this State.

MOUNT GAMBIER AND PORT AUGUSTA HOSPITALS

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): My question is also directed to the Premier. On what basis did the Government decide to build the Mount Gambier and Port Augusta Hospitals with private money given that yesterday the Auditor-General revealed that private sector involvement has increased construction costs by \$4 million and \$2.5 million respectively compared with using public sector funding? I want to stress that the Auditor-General has stated—

The Hon. S.J. Baker interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I take it that the Deputy Premier has a point of order.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: The Leader of the Opposition is again indulging in comment.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Chair did not—

The Hon. H. Allison interjecting:

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

The Hon. H. Allison interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gordon is out of order for the second time. I did not hear the Leader of the Opposition seek leave. I suggest that he seek leave to briefly explain his question, but that does not permit him to make a speech.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Thank you, Sir, I apologise. The Auditor-General stated:

On the basis of Government agency analysis, some projects have been entered into which result in a net additional financing cost to the Government when compared with the use of public sector funding (page 35, Auditor-General's Report).

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I anticipated answering this question in about an hour's time, but I am delighted to answer it now. In answering the question, we should review the history of the Mount Gambier Hospital, in particular, because the member for Gordon rightly reminds me of broken promises by the Labor Party made on a number of occasions over the past 15 or 16 years—sheer unadulterated broken promises: John Cornwall once, Don Hopgood twice, and I presume Martyn Evans once. For the past four elections, the Labor Party has gone to each election saying to the people of Mount Gambier, 'We will build you a brand new hospital.' Mr Speaker, I ask you and the people of Mount Gambier—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Spence.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE:—to analyse what came of those promises—absolutely nothing—and a need for the better health care of the people in the South-East was ignored year in year out, election after election. In 1993 this Government was elected with a massive majority because of the matters the Premier detailed in his answer to the most recent question: for example, the State Bank, SGIC (the list goes on and on) and \$3.1 billion in debt. What would one do in that circumstance? Would one abandon the people of the South-East for a fifth time? Would the people of the South-East legitimately say—

Ms Stevens interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Elizabeth.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE:—that democracy had let them down if, for the fifth election in a row, they did not have a new hospital built? No, we did not do that. We acknowledged that they deserved an appropriate health care model and, given the fact that from the perspective of this Government the cupboard was bare, we looked at other creative ways of doing it. That only left one option, which was to go to the private sector for funding and to maintain the hospital as a public hospital. It is still completely staffed by the public sector. There will be a small private hospital within it, but it is not a private hospital; it is not being privatised, as the member for Elizabeth continually says. We have provided with a cost amortised over 25 years—and I emphasise ‘over the 25 years of the contract’—a new hospital which simply would not have been built and, indeed, probably the old one would not even have been renovated without going down this path.

Mr Clarke: It costs us more money.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition continually says, ‘It costs us more money.’ The simple fact of the matter is that the money it costs is more than covered by the efficiencies we are able to generate by having a modern state of the art hospital. It is a perfect example of how the taxpayers—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader has been warned for a second time. He does not want to start the session off in a bad manner.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: It is a perfect example of how the taxpayers in the South-East of South Australia can look to the Brown Liberal Government and say, first, it honours promises; secondly, it acknowledges that the health care needs must be met; and, thirdly, it is prepared to be creative in a responsible way to provide better health care.

ASSET SALES

Mrs ROSENBERG (Kaurna): Will the Treasurer respond to the view that there is a \$300 million hole in the budget and criticism of the Government’s assets sale strategy? Following the release of the Auditor-General’s Report yesterday, today’s edition of the *Australian* is running a headline ‘The Auditor-General identifies a \$300 million hole in the budget’ and the *Advertiser* also has a front page story referring to the assets sale process. Yet yesterday the Treasurer reported to this House that the Government had produced an underlying deficit of \$101 million for the 1995-96 year.

Mr ATKINSON: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I understand it is out of order for a member to ask a Minister whether or not a report in a newspaper is correct.

The SPEAKER: When the question was being asked, the Chair was considering the same matter as has been raised by the member for Spence. Therefore, I permit the Treasurer to answer the question dealing with the \$300 million, but he should not attempt to answer whether newspaper headlines are correct or otherwise. The honourable Treasurer.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: The question was not of that nature and if the member for Spence—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: Well, I have the question, for crying out loud. I wish to respond to particular statements made by the Leader of the Opposition last night on television and on Philip White’s program. Mr White said:

Yes. In fact, \$110 million a year cost to the taxpayers from the selling of assets to pay off the State debt; a very curious...and unfortunate series of circumstances, I imagine.

The Leader of the Opposition said:

That’s right.

That is the quality of the Opposition in this State. The Premier of this State clearly outlined that, if we take the past five years, we have just paid a dividend to the taxpayers of \$3.1 billion and a recurrent \$114 million saving every year, year in and year out, without this \$3.1 billion. That is what the headline should have said. I remind members—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I remind members of exactly what we have had to put up with. Let us analyse some of the information that is available to every member of this House. We have heard about the enormous losses of the State Bank and SGIC. We know about the \$1 billion debacle with the Myer-Remm Centre (and, of course, certain members of this House have some responsibilities in that area); Collinsville, Export Park, the overseas loans and the interstate loans. Then we look at SGIC, 333 Collins Street, the planes, the trains, the cherry pickers, the goats and cattle and Hurricane Andrew—if there was anything that could go wrong, the previous Government was into in a big way. We have seen five years of dividends minus \$3.1 billion.

On top of that we have ASER, with a \$160 million overrun in the cost of that building and a debt that it cannot climb over. Some of the things we have had to sort out since coming to Government—and we are doing it successfully—include Scrimber, with nearly \$60 million gone by the board; SAMCOR and its loss-making activity; the *Island Seaway*, involving a \$5 million subsidy every year to run it; and the unviability of State Clothing. When the Leader of the Opposition said, ‘That’s right’ this morning, he wanted those past practices to return. He wants a \$110 million dividend, which does not exist by the way, and he wants \$3.1 billion losses. I would like to clear up one more thing and, if anyone reads the Auditor-General’s Report—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: Part A of the overview on page 7 of the Auditor-General’s Report, dealing with the \$300 million, states:

Accordingly, the result of maintaining the projected outcome over the two-year period is, in itself, an important achievement.

He acknowledges the achievement of this Government in that report, and we will still reach it. I spoke to him last night and he said, ‘Stephen, you are hitting the bottom line.’ I say to every member of this House, that we are on target, and we will not expose the taxpayers of South Australia to another

\$3 billion loss, which is exactly what the Leader of the Opposition is trying to achieve.

The SPEAKER: The member for Elizabeth.

Mr Brindal interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Unley.

LEGIONNAIRE'S DISEASE

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Why were draft copies of Professor Lane's legionnaire's report referred to the Minister? Have they been altered, and will the Minister table copies of all drafts submitted by Professor Lane? Yesterday the Minister told the House that he had not received the final report but that he had seen early drafts of the report and made changes.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: On 9 August this year Professor Lane met with me at his request to discuss progress with his investigations. At that meeting I was shown an incomplete working draft (singular) of the report and, needless to say, I availed myself of the opportunity to discuss with Professor Lane a number of matters to do with his investigation and his broad conclusions, as the people in South Australia would expect the Minister for Health to do. I did this to satisfy myself that the investigation by the Health Commission and its response had been prompt and appropriate in case urgent remedial action had to be taken. Clearly, I needed to know that forthwith. As I said, the draft was incomplete.

I should point out to the House that from what I can recollect from 9 August until today—and I have not seen another copy of the report until today—very little has changed between my recollection of what the working draft was and the finished product; and certainly the findings of the investigation and the response have not altered in any way from my recollection.

ADELAIDE CONVENTION AND TOURISM AUTHORITY

Mrs HALL (Coles): Will the Minister for Tourism inform the House of the strategy of the Adelaide Convention and Tourism Authority's new campaign promoting Adelaide?

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: In recent days there have been some releases in relation to convention and congress meetings here in South Australia. It is interesting to note that we now have 17 per cent of Australia's international market—an increase of 2 per cent. As a result of that and as part of this significant business, the Adelaide Convention and Tourism Authority (ACTA) has developed a strategy to upgrade the promotion of the 'Sensational Adelaide' banner that has been used for a long time, particularly at the Grand Prix and at many other sporting events. The authority has looked at how to promote Adelaide and the sensational issues relating to Adelaide. The authority has made an arrangement with Ansett and Qantas at the airport so that visitors see the promotion of Adelaide as a city. People will see the promotion of wine and food, our heritage and our transportation system—all promoted with the support of the Federal Airports Corporation.

On Sunday, the first group of flags went up on Airport Drive. Unfortunately, the wind was strong and a couple of wooden barriers broke, but they have now been replaced with aluminium barriers. However, we will have a fantastic promotion of the City of Adelaide as people travel from the airport into the city. The authority has also made an arrange-

ment so that this promotional gear and all the images will be displayed in the Adelaide Convention Centre and the Adelaide Entertainment Centre. This is all part of the tourism industry recognising how good our city is and promoting it as the major single destination for tourists coming to South Australia. I congratulate ACTA on its latest promotion, which is part of telling the rest of the world how good our city is and making sure that the people of our city are aware of the advantages of the City of Adelaide.

AUDITOR-GENERAL

Mr FOLEY (Hart): Why did the Premier publicly criticise the Auditor-General for providing a critical analysis of the Government's economic and financial programs? On Radio 5AA this morning, when discussing the findings of the Auditor-General's Report, the Premier described the Auditor-General as being 'short sighted' and 'simplistic,' and he then accused the Auditor-General of attempting to rewrite history.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I indicated that the way that this had been picked out of the Auditor-General's Report in the summary was overly simplistic. In fact, it was only a snapshot of the past 12 months. In fact, it is not even that: it is a snapshot of what were the best one year figures they could try to produce for the four organisations that have been sold. I stand by what I said, which is that, quite clearly, the summary which is conveyed in the first part of the report does not paint the true picture. The true picture is that these organisations have lost us \$3 172 million, and no-one can deny that. Also, I highlight that what the summary highlighted—

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I certainly criticise the Leader of the Opposition, because the Leader—

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn members that I will enforce Standing Order 137.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The Leader of the Opposition has now become renowned for one day coming out and supporting asset sales and the sale of the State Bank and the next day saying, 'I am opposed to those sales.' The Leader is a straw man. He is not Leader of the Opposition but Leader of the opportunists. He is Leader of the opportunists, and the political opportunists at that.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Interjections are out of order.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Am I to take it from the interjection of the Leader of the Opposition that he believes that we should have retained ownership of the State Bank and SGIC?

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Yes, you are. Make up your mind.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Chair does not believe it is becoming for this level of conversation across the Chamber. The honourable member has asked his question. The Premier should not invite interjections. I ask the Premier to answer the question, and I advise the Leader of the Opposition not to interject again today.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I stress that the facts are there. We cannot rewrite history by trying to look at the State Bank and SGIC for just one year—no-one can do that. I am quite within my rights to point out that, in looking at the State Bank and SGIC, one cannot go past the fact that those

organisations have cost taxpayers over \$3 billion. Equally, one cannot go past the fact—

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I thought the Leader of the Opposition was told not to interject again today.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Chair will deal with that matter.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Equally, one cannot go past the fact that, in 1991-92, 1992-93 and 1993-94, Forwood Products did not return one dollar to the taxpayers of South Australia. Not one dollar. We cannot go past the fact that SGIC in one year returned nothing and in another year it incurred a loss of \$350 million to taxpayers. Another important point to realise is that by bringing down the debt we are bringing down interest payments, particularly payments to international bankers, and that means we have more money in our budget to pay for education, health and other community services. That is what this Government is about—putting more money into education and health.

Mr CLARKE: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Standing Order 98 provides that Ministers are supposed to answer the substantive question rather than providing a political haranguing.

The SPEAKER: I suggest to the House that it is not helpful to anyone to have this continual stream of interjections across the Chamber. I have already pointed out to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition on previous occasions that Ministers have more latitude in answering questions than members have in asking them. I also point out that Ministers should not pad out time unduly in answering questions and they should be precise. I suggest to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that, if he is particularly interested in that Standing Order, he should pay attention to a number of other Standing Orders.

Mr Clarke: Standing Order 137.

The SPEAKER: In particular.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I highlight one phrase from the Auditor-General's Report on which I have enlarged this afternoon:

It is recognised that through asset sales the Government has significantly reduced the business risks associated with commercial activities.

Instead of talking about a \$4 million benefit in one year, I think that should have said that the taxpayers have paid out \$3 000 million under that risk. That is the pertinent issue—not the \$4 million benefit in the snapshot of one year but the \$3 billion loss over the past five years.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I am glad that I now have a member of the Opposition supporting it.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I have the Leader of the Opposition who is opposed to the sale and who this morning on radio criticised the Government for selling these assets. The Leader of the Opposition is clearly jumping from issue to issue regardless of where he happens to stand on any one day.

LEGIONNAIRE'S DISEASE

Ms GREIG (Reynell): Will the Minister for Health inform the House about the validity of claims made by the member for Elizabeth regarding the suitability of Professor Lane's appointment to review the Health Commission's management of the *legionella* outbreak?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Chair is of the view that in his ministerial statement and in answer to other questions the Minister has gone very close to answering that question; therefore, I would expect the Minister to make only a very brief response, otherwise it will be repetition.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I thank the member for Reynell for her question, because it gives me an opportunity to indicate that Professor Lane was not merely an appropriate appointment as a reviewer but that indeed we were fortunate to have access to his services, as he is one of the world's leading public health practitioners. It is a fact that the member for Elizabeth appears to be trying to belittle the Professor's achievements and experience. There is a well-known cliché about that. Clearly, the member for Elizabeth, the Leader of the Opposition and indeed the whole Opposition do not like the message, so they are trying to assassinate the messenger.

If the member for Elizabeth were right in this instance—and she is not—that Professor Lane is a man of too limited experience to undertake this review, does it not seem odd that the former Labor Government invited him here with the World Health Organisation as an expert of such standing in the public health area that he would establish a training program for field epidemiologists? So, if the member for Elizabeth were correct, the former Federal Labor Government has jeopardised the whole future of public health in Australia by having this man guide the training of our future practitioners. Clearly that is not right. Clearly, the reason that the World Health Organisation and the former Labor Government asked this man to come to Australia and devise a system to train epidemiologists was that he is a world expert; that is acknowledged.

In the House yesterday the member for Elizabeth further alleged that Professor Lane 'had no practical experience in the management of epidemics'. Professor Lane either led or was involved in the management of outbreaks and epidemics in salmonella, ECHO virus, poliomyelitis, staph enterotoxin, measles and smallpox; he worked on many outbreaks of smallpox and measles in a number of African countries, Indonesia and Yugoslavia; he was involved in the management of outbreaks of yellow fever and meningococcal meningitis in West Africa; and he was one of the field workers on a large outbreak of St Louis encephalitis.

The member for Elizabeth also asserted that Professor Lane told her that he had never worked with legionnaire's disease scientifically or administratively. Clearly, the implication from the member for Elizabeth is that Professor Lane does not have the expertise to review management of a legionnaire's disease outbreak. That is absolutely amateurish. Does this mean that you cannot treat suicidal tendencies if you have not committed suicide? Of course it does not. In my ministerial statement I outlined a number of Professor Lane's achievements. They are simply encapsulated by saying that good public health principles and good public health practice can be generalised to a range of outbreaks; and Professor Lane is certainly a world leading practitioner of good public health principles and excellent public health practice. It is about time the Labor Party stopped trying to shoot the messenger.

NASSAR, Mr A.

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): I ask the Premier: what is the nature of his involvement with Mr Abdo Nassar, the Arab businessman who is a central figure in the Libyan trade fiasco; and why did the Premier recommend his appointment

to the Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission, despite opposition within Cabinet?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: First, let me make quite clear to the House how the Libyan trade mission came to my attention and how I received a request to write a letter. I released to the media (and the honourable member may not have a copy) a draft letter which was received in my office on 23 October last year and which set out how Henry Ninio carried my personal endorsement, etc. It was sent to John Scales in my office. At the bottom of the letter the following appeared:

Dear John, Please see if the attached is okay. I will forward you the name of the Prime Minister [of Libya] and exact title in the next hour. Thanks, Henry.

Here was a letter from Henry Ninio sent to John Scales in my office asking us to write a letter endorsing the trade mission to Libya.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: It has a great deal to do with Abdo Nassar, because the request for the letter came from the Lord Mayor. I have released a copy of that letter so that people can clearly understand. I was away at the time. I might add that John Scales amended the letter and sent back a draft to Henry Ninio as Lord Mayor, pointing out that he had changed the original and showing the changes he had made. It was still not presented to me for signing. When it was presented to me I refused to sign it, for obvious reasons, because it is quite inappropriate for the Premier to sign a letter like that. I therefore refused to sign it. So, this claim that the State Government was somehow secretly involved in preparing for the Libyan mission is absolute rubbish.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The honourable member asked two questions, and one was specifically about the Libyan mission.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I point out that the issues in terms of the mission came from the Lord Mayor and no-one else—and they did not come from Abdo Nassar. Secondly, Abdo Nassar's appointment as a representative of the broad Middle East community came up through the Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission and his name came up in a general recommendation of a whole list of names. His name came up on a list, from which Cabinet selected a number of names and put them on the commission. As soon as it came to my attention that he was bankrupt, I insisted upon his resignation and it was submitted. It was immediately requested and submitted.

Let us look at who is very close to Abdo Nassar. Evidence from a Supreme Court case that has been heard and from the Equal Opportunity Tribunal clearly shows that in 1985 the then Minister for Community Welfare, Greg Crafter, was very close to Abdo Nassar, so much so that he recommended him as an ethnic aide in the Department of Community Welfare. The court evidence that has come through from those two hearings—both the Supreme Court and the Equal Opportunity Tribunal—shows that it was the former Labor Government that specifically recommended and as a result got the appointment of Abdo Nassar to the position of ethnic aide within that department. So, quite clearly—

Mr Atkinson: What year was that?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: It was 1985. So, quite clearly, here is the Labor Party, which has been very close to

Abdo Nassar, trying to paint the picture that Abdo Nassar has shown an interest only in the Liberal Party. He has clearly shown considerable interest in the Labor Party as well, as is clearly shown in evidence presented to the Supreme Court and the Equal Opportunity Tribunal.

FIREARMS

Mr ROSSI (Lee): Will the Minister for Police inform the House of the progress being made to buy back prohibited firearms? I am aware that the buy back scheme started in South Australia on 9 September 1996. Along with a number of other significant changes to firearms laws, it included the introduction of new photographic licences.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: It is pleasing to report progress on the buy back scheme. From 9 September to 30 September, some 19 211 firearms have been surrendered to the Government, the total value of those firearms being approximately \$7 104 533. There were also prior payments to buy some firearms and parts from dealers.

I thank the police in particular and the members of the public for their cooperation. It is not easy trying to manage crowds and people who have varying points of view on firearms. There have been one or two small hiccups but the scheme has been an unbelievable success in the way it has operated. I would also like to note that some of the people who adamantly opposed the change to the firearms legislation have since communicated to me that they believe it is a step in the right direction. Whilst they regret that they must surrender a semiautomatic firearm, they are now more relaxed about it than they were previously.

South Australia has completed all its audit requirements. We are meeting the national standard. We were the first State to be paid some money to buy back these guns. I believe that we have so far received \$9 million in pre-payment. There have been some disputes between the States about the cost of the scheme. We have said that we are satisfied with the deal from the Commonwealth, but in certain of the States that do not have the infrastructure in place there is a need to get the scheme moving. I would support extra money being given to those States, otherwise the scheme will wander on and some of its success will be lost.

I also apologise to those people in the country areas who have handed in firearms. There was an expectation that a cheque would be in the post within 48 hours. That was not my expectation: it was an expectation which was created. Most of the cheques are getting out rapidly, unless the guns are not on the prescribed list. When they are not on the prescribed list, they must go through a different procedure. I apologise for any delays, but people will receive their cheques. I thank the public of South Australia for their cooperation in this venture.

NASSAR, Mr A.

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): When did the Premier last speak to or meet Mr Abdo Nassar; what was the nature of those discussions; and has the Premier ever met Mr Nassar in the Premier's home or Mr Nassar's home?

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member has asked three questions. He has been here long enough to know and has enough skills to frame a question in a manner which will elicit the information he wishes. If it happens again, the question will be ruled out of order. I will allow the Premier considerable latitude because of the nature of the question.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I have not spoken to Mr Nassar for quite some time—

Mr Atkinson: Quite some time.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: —let me be quite clear—except that at the welcome home for the Olympians he was in the Town Hall as a guest of the Lord Mayor; I saw him in the crowd and briefly said ‘Hello.’ I do not think I said anything further.

CHARITABLE AND SOCIAL WELFARE FUND

Mr WADE (Elder): Will the Minister for Family and Community Services advise the House when and how the \$3 million Charitable and Social Welfare Fund will be distributed?

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I am very pleased to inform the House about the considerable progress that has been made in regard to the independent board which was appointed last month and which has the responsibility under statute to oversee the guidelines and timetable for the distribution of the fund.

It has now been determined that funding will be distributed on a quarterly basis with the first allocation to be made in December this year. There will be various aspects to the fund and its distribution. For example, the fund will cater for one-off allocations with an upper limit of \$25 000 for organisations addressing social welfare needs including those organisations which have experienced increased demand as a result of pressure from gaming machines. A greater proportion of funds will be used for smaller allocations, especially for initiatives and minor capital items which support and enhance service provision. It will be used to sponsor one-off events and activities within the charitable and social welfare arena.

I am pleased to say that a special emphasis will be on helping organisations and programs that assist the most vulnerable families in the community, such as families who are experiencing poverty or hardship and who risk breakdown. The fund will also assist organisations to develop innovative alternative fundraising strategies to help them increase revenue when their income is affected by gaming machines in particular.

Applications for the first round of funding will be called in mid October, with the closing date being mid November. The advertisements will be placed so that the public are very much aware of the progress that has been made and the fact that applications may be called for funding.

In conclusion, I am delighted with the composition of that board and, more importantly, I am delighted with the progress that is being made by the board. It is a very important area. It was a very important initiative of this Government and I believe that the board and the funds that will be made available through the administration carried out by the board will assist many South Australians.

NASSAR, Mr A.

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): Has the Premier ever met Mr Abdo Nassar in the Premier’s home or Mr Nassar’s home?

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member has already asked that question and, therefore, the Chair has no alternative but to rule it out of order. Does the honourable member have a further question?

Mr ATKINSON: Has the Premier his own separate campaign fund and did he receive a donation to that fund

from a principal figure in the Libya trade scandal, Mr Abdo Nassar of the Central Arab Information Bureau?

The SPEAKER: Order! That is a comment and the honourable member knows it. Leave is withdrawn. The honourable Premier.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The answer is no, I do not have a separate campaign fund. I have never had a separate campaign fund. It is against Liberal Party rules to have a separate campaign fund. Any money that goes to the Liberal Party goes into the organisation. Therefore, as I do not have a campaign fund, I could not possibly have received money from anyone associated with any particular campaign, mission or anything else—full stop.

INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT BOARDS

Mr D.S. BAKER (MacKillop): Will the Minister for Primary Industries detail the timetable for the implementation of industry development boards, in particular the Wool Industry Development Board, for Primary Industries South Australia, and outline a brief summary of their roles?

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: I thank the member for MacKillop for his question. I know that he and all rural members are anxious for a lift in profitability for our rural industries. As I have previously stated in the House, South Australia’s primary industries sector is already worth \$3 billion and is responsible for more than half this State’s exports. What we now need to do is to create an atmosphere for long-term, stable and sustainable industries which will give investors confidence to commit capital. We also need to raise the profile of the sector to attract more investors.

In a bid to help promote our primary industries sector, we will be establishing a number of industry development boards, and these will be used to advise on how Government resources can best be used for the most effective outcome for industry development. The major challenge is to identify the right areas to support and the best way to maximise farmer incomes and economic development for South Australia.

Our vision for the future is based on recognising the need for Government, industry and the community to work in partnership to achieve improvements. Government should no longer continue to focus only on the production end of the primary industries value chain. We must be working at different levels along this ‘paddock to plate’ chain while concentrating on increasing the incomes of producers.

As the member for MacKillop said, we have already called for nominations for a wool industry development board, and we will follow up later this year with nominations for a horticulture board. In 1997 we will establish boards for meat, seafood and field crops, and we will be seeking to appoint to these boards people with vision and expertise in a range of areas with a view to creating greater opportunities. The ultimate aim is to see the primary industries contribution to South Australia grow even further and the primary producers of this State become more viable, increasing their incomes for themselves and their families.

NASSAR, Mr A.

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): Given the Premier’s answer to the previous question about his knowledge of campaign donations, can he explain why Mr Abdo Nassar claims that he wrote him a personal check for \$1 100, made out to the Dean Brown Campaign Fund and marked ‘Received’ by the Premier’s close friend and mentor, the Hon. Ted Chapman?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Let me make it quite clear: I have never ever set my eyes on any cheque whatsoever signed by Abdo Nassar or sent from Abdo Nassar. It is as simple as that. I have never set my eyes on or known of any such cheque.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

An honourable member interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I suggest to all members that they should just be a little cautious. The Chair's tolerance, which has been very elastic today, is now drawing to an end.

FLOODS

Mr BUCKBY (Light): Will the Minister for Emergency Services inform the House of the crucial role undertaken by South Australian emergency volunteers during the recent widespread flooding across the wider metropolitan area?

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: This is obviously a very important question to a number of members in this House, including the members for Light, Coles, Kurna and Heysen, as they have been concerned about events in their electorates in recent days as floodwaters have risen and emergency services personnel have responded. I would like to put on the record my appreciation as Minister for the strong way in which they and other members have supported emergency services volunteers, brigades and units during their time as members in this place.

Some of the worst affected areas were in the District of Light, as rivers in that region rose. Indeed, heavy rain over the weekend and into the week caused widespread flooding across the greater metropolitan area, primarily along the Torrens River, the Gawler River and the Onkaparinga River. Information collated by my emergency service agencies has revealed that more than 600 personnel were involved in those regions in combating floodwaters. The State Emergency Service utilised more than 15 000 sand bags during the emergency services operations.

The Gawler to Two Wells area was one of the worst affected areas with the Gawler River breaking its banks at several places, and at one point in that vicinity the river peaked at 8.2 metres in depth. In the Gawler area, about 70 SES volunteers from Enfield, Northern Districts, Prospect and Tea Tree Gully, and eastern suburbs units, with the support of CFS volunteers and local council employees, worked through the night of 30 September and 1 October sandbagging homes and roads and carrying out minor diversion works. Their efforts saved about 15 homes in the Gawler region from extensive flooding.

When the flood levels receded in the Gawler area, those same crews were then deployed to Two Wells to prepare for the river to peak in that area. It was only after the beginning of sandbagging operations in the area that SES crews who had been working overnight were relieved by fresh crews from Campbelltown, Metro South, Kapunda and Happy Valley. That widespread support indicates just how many crews across the State diverted their efforts to the area of need. Another major sandbagging operation was undertaken, 11 homes being sandbagged by SES and CFS volunteers to prevent possible flooding, while local council used heavy machinery to relieve water pressure in some areas. In all, some 200 SES and CFS volunteers were involved in the Two Wells operation, and police provided excellent support with traffic control and advice to local residents.

I would also like to put on record appreciation for the Salvation Army and Red Cross, which provided meals and refreshment to volunteers. Late last night water levels in the area had receded significantly and crews were able to return to their bases. The most life-threatening incident caused by rising waters occurred when a 15 year old youth was found clinging to a tree in floodwaters caused by the expansion of the River Torrens at about 4 p.m. on Monday. I know the member for Coles was particularly concerned about that incident. On this occasion, an MFS crew from Ridgehaven station was first on the scene and, with support from SES volunteers, a firefighter waded out to the stranded youth with a rope tied to his waist and, after securing the youth, dragged him back to safety. The youth was taken to hospital for precautionary measures and allowed to leave sometime later.

In the south, in the District of Kurna, along the Onkaparinga River, there was a serious threat on the night of Monday 30 September, after heavy rains saturated the catchment area. More than 300 personnel, including 100 SES personnel, 20 CFS personnel, 40 police officers and 150 Noarlunga council workers, were involved in this operation. In all, about 30 properties were affected by rising waters with just one house being flooded. The damage bill obviously would have been far more significant if those efforts had not been there. In the Adelaide Hills region, several towns, including Balhannah, Hahndorf, Langhorne Creek and Verdun, reported different levels of flood damage requiring assistance from emergency services personnel.

I know that I speak on behalf of all members in this House when I say to those emergency services workers, 'Thank you for a job well done.' It is impossible to pay tribute to them all individually, but South Australians certainly have received the benefit of their dedication, skills, expertise and unselfish volunteer endeavours through their efforts over the last few days.

HOUSING TRUST TENANTS

Ms HURLEY (Napier): Will the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations ensure that the outcome of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement will guarantee that no tenant in public housing in South Australia will pay any more than 25 per cent of their income in rent and that they will continue to have security of tenure?

The Hon. E.S. ASHENDEN: It is very easy to give an answer to that. The Federal Minister for Housing and the Prime Minister have both given an assurance that existing tenants in the South Australia Housing Trust will be disadvantaged in no way whatsoever by any changes that may be made by the Federal Government.

The SPEAKER: The member for Taylor.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The members for Kurna and Napier are being very rude to the member for Taylor.

CHILD CARE

Ms WHITE (Taylor): Is the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education concerned about the impact that the Federal Government budget cuts to child care will have on the ability of women in particular to access training employment programs in this State; and, if so, what does he intend to do about it?

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: I would be concerned if there was a negative impact on women accessing training and higher education generally. As the member for Taylor would know, TAFE runs more child-care facilities in this State than does any other organisation, and we will continue to be committed to providing, as cheaply as possible, child-care facilities to ensure that women are not disadvantaged. I will be pursuing the matter with Senator Vanstone when I meet with her later this week.

HOUSING TRUST TENANTS

Mr CONDOUS (Colton): Will the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations respond to allegations made in the House yesterday by the member for Napier in relation to the future of public housing?

The Hon. E.S. ASHENDEN: It is with pleasure that I do so, because, as my colleagues interjected when the honourable member asked her question a couple of minutes ago, the honourable member and the Leader of the Opposition have been involved in one of the most scurrilous campaigns I have ever seen of trying to scare tenants of the Housing Trust.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. E.S. ASHENDEN: Members can say 'Come on!' but it is absolutely true.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. E.S. ASHENDEN: Of course I am not surprised, because one thing about members of the Opposition is that they are consistent in that every time they open their mouths about the Housing Trust they bring out the scare tactics, especially around election time. I can tell them now that tenants of the Housing Trust are well aware of the Opposition's 'cry wolf' tactics. In fact, I am delighted that they are stepping up this campaign, because I am getting many telephone calls, in both my ministerial and electorate offices, defending the Housing Trust and criticising the Opposition for the unfair approach it is taking in this matter. Let us get some facts on the record. Yesterday, the shadow Minister talked of an outrage. The only outrage is her behaviour and that of the Opposition and the tactics they are trying to use.

As the Federal Government has already quite clearly stated, the funding this year will be the same as that for last year. It has made quite clear that existing Housing Trust tenants will not be disadvantaged in any way, shape or form. In other words, the rent payment of a maximum of 25 per cent of their income will continue, and all the other advantages that they already enjoy will remain. It behoves the Opposition, instead of trying to frighten tenants, at least to be honest. Of course, that would destroy the argument, because the last thing the Opposition is ever interested in is the truth. All it wants to do is get out there and frighten those people—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. E.S. ASHENDEN: As I have pointed out, there is no doubt whatsoever that the scare tactics being employed are not working. The honourable member talks about the fears of the tenants: if the tenants have any fears at all it is only because the Opposition has been telling complete untruths about what is going on in relation to housing. For the benefit of the honourable member, I will be only too happy to reiterate that point.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. E.S. ASHENDEN: I am delighted to respond to that, because another scare campaign introduced by the

Opposition is about market rent. Let us talk about market rent, because market rent will make absolutely no difference whatsoever to the 82 per cent of our tenants who are in receipt of a subsidy. Is the Opposition saying that the old system of paying rent was fair, where a person in, say, St Peters, would pay the same rent for exactly the same house in Smithfield? Is it saying that is fair? Members opposite would not have a clue, and it is about time they woke up to some of the real facts of life regarding the best way housing can be provided, because that is what this Government will do.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not know whether the Deputy Leader of the Opposition wants to participate in further activities of the House today—and a number of members to my right are not assisting the Speaker—but I suggest that he sit quiet or he will be named. That is not a warning but a promise.

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Mr CUMMINS (Norwood): I bring up the annual report of the committee for the year ended 30 June 1996 and move:

That it be received.

Motion carried.

Mr CUMMINS: I bring up the first report of the committee and move:

That it be received.

Motion carried.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

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

Mr BROKENSHIRE (Mawson): Today and yesterday in the House it was interesting to see, once again, the negative Leader of the Opposition fabricating and misleading the people of South Australia. Of course, we expect this to happen on an ongoing basis, because that is the only way that the Leader knows how to act. It is interesting to note how he took small pieces out of the complete Auditor-General's Report, from which I will quote some relevant information. With respect to the debt situation, the Auditor-General said (page 21):

As a very broad indication, the revenue forgone in 1996-97 from the sale of these businesses might be in the order of \$110 million—and I emphasise 'might'—

It seems, on the basis of this very limited analysis, that the sale of Government businesses has not contributed significantly to the State's underlying deficit outcome. This analysis, of course—

and this is what I would like to emphasise, which the Leader of the Opposition clearly would not do—

does not consider the achievement of other Government objectives and other advantages or disadvantages that may flow from these sales. In particular, as previously stated, there is a benefit arising from the reduced risk from commercial activities.

Of course, on top of that is the fact that new jobs have been created as a result of the initiative to outsource some areas of Government and to encourage new businesses to come into

this State and create new opportunities for us. We all know only too well under the previous Labor Government—of which the Leader of the Opposition was a senior Cabinet Minister during the whole debacle—that we lost 33 000 jobs just in the manufacturing sector. We lost many business headquarters from this State to the Eastern States, but all that has now been turned around. The fact that this Government is prepared to work on the long-term plan for South Australia and not the bandaids measures we saw time and again under the Bannon/Arnold Governments, when Mr Rann was a member of that Cabinet—

Mr FOLEY: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. I ask you to rule that members address other members by their electorate or title and not by their name, as the honourable member just did when he referred to the Leader of the Opposition as Mr Rann.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. The member for Hart is correct, and the member for Mawson will not continue in this manner.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: Of course, I note again that the member for Hart tries to take these points of order during the five minute grievance debate, because he does not want the real facts to come out. He is happy to sit there, and when we remember that he was a senior adviser—

Mr FOLEY: I rise on a further point of order, Mr Speaker. I ask the honourable member to refer to me as the member for Hart, by my proper title.

The SPEAKER: The Chair was not aware of the misdemeanour on that occasion. I understand that the member for Mawson may have referred to the honourable member as a senior adviser. The Chair is somewhat relaxed about that. The honourable member for Mawson.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: In conclusion, I point out that the member for Hart, who in all that debacle was the senior adviser to Premier Arnold in the Labor Government, and the present Leader of the Opposition—

The SPEAKER: Order! I suggest that the member for Mawson not labour the point.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: The Leader of the Opposition was also part of that debacle and, as a result, this State was absolutely vulnerable and was sitting on a knife edge, destined never to have an opportunity to recover. With regard to the State's current financial position, I quote from page 4 of the Auditor-General's Report. In summarising several important factors with respect to substantial changes, he states that we are now seeing:

a reduction in the balance of net indebtedness. At 30 June 1996 net debt is estimated to be \$7 782 million compared with \$8 440 million at 30 June 1994.

The debt is coming down but when we came into office that debt was horrendous and was increasing. It is now declining and getting under control. The report states that significant contributions have been made towards the long-term reduction of unfunded superannuation liabilities. However, there is still \$4.3 billion there. There was \$8.5 billion to \$9 billion of core debt. There was a recurrent budget deficit that was ballooning out and would have hit about \$850 million by the year 2000. That is the reason why this Government has had to be tough and get on with the job. The proof is now there. This State is turning the corner and the Opposition does not like it. They are fighting among themselves. The member for Playford is trying to get to Canberra. I have heard that, if he does not, he will roll the Leader of the Opposition within the next couple of months, and that will be a blessing for South Australia, because at least the member

for Playford, when he comes in and tips out the Leader of the Opposition, will start to support the Government in its good endeavours.

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

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): I want to draw to the attention of the House the detached amusement with which the Parliamentary Labor Party regards the current difficulties of the Adelaide City Council. We have heard two schools of argument about the Adelaide City Council. First, we have heard the argument from the trendy North Adelaide faction on the council that the Adelaide City Council ought to be structured on one person/one vote: that is, the only people who can vote for the Adelaide City Council should be residents who are on the House of Assembly electoral roll.

This faction says that no matter how much you pay in rates, no matter whether you are Myer and you pay rates on your Rundle Mall property or you are Harris Scarfe and you pay a massive amount in rates, you should not get a vote on council. So, despite the fact that the central business district generates the wealth which allows the Adelaide City Council to spend the money that it spends on all the good things, the trendy North Adelaide faction says that the people who raise the wealth and pay the taxes should not be allowed to vote for the City of Adelaide.

The business and commercial faction of the council says that there should be no taxation without representation. It takes the view that the commercial and business interests in the central business district should be represented on the council. Indeed, it aims to be the majority faction and to run the council as it does currently and has done usually throughout the history of the council.

The Labor Party views these arguments with amusement, because these two groups have never had good relations with the Labor Party: they hold us in contempt. I say that as one who has been a member of Parliament for almost seven years and has had a longstanding quarrel with the Adelaide City Council about its closure of Barton Road, North Adelaide. I must say that, with the exception of Alderman Sam Christodoulou and Councillor Jim Crawford, I have been treated with contempt by every other city councillor. Either they have had the discourtesy not to reply to my correspondence, even in cases where I have actively supported their campaign for election through my contacts in the City of Adelaide, or they have flagrantly lied to me about their position on the closure of Barton Road, North Adelaide.

So, it is with some amusement that I look at their current predicament. You would think that I would readily support the Government's plan to sack the Adelaide City Council and replace it with three commissioners. That plan has some attraction for me, because the Adelaide City Council is flawed in its boundaries and structure. It is a scandal that the influence of North Adelaide residents on the Adelaide City Council through the coincidence of that suburb happening to be part of the City of Adelaide leads to those residents receiving a 45 per cent rate rebate. That is robbery, and it should be stopped. It is a disappointment to me that the Premier, when he foreshadowed the plan to introduce three commissioners to take over the governance of the City of Adelaide, was at pains to tell the Minister for Health and the Minister for Transport that the 45 per cent rebate would stay because, of course, as members know, they are residents and ratepayers of North Adelaide.

However, it seems to me that the Liberal Party is equally as guilty as the City Council regarding the closure of Barton Road, North Adelaide. To put three Liberal Party commissioners into the City of Adelaide would just lead to the perpetuation of that iniquitous closure which keeps the residents of Bowden and Brompton from their legitimate business in western North Adelaide. I will watch this debate with interest, and I will be interested in anything that the Liberal Party or the Adelaide City Council has to say about the question of Barton Road, North Adelaide. It is the Labor Party's official policy to reopen Barton Road, North Adelaide, and it will do so sooner or later.

Mr BUCKBY (Light): I wish to add to the comments of the Minister for Emergency Services during Question Time regarding the work of the SES, the CFS, the local council and local police during the floods of the past couple of days. It has come to be a fact that we rely on these people in river catchment areas when heavy rain and the inevitable minor flooding occurs. We call on these volunteers to work through the night to protect homes and properties, and often their work is somewhat unsung. Quite a bit has been learnt since the 1992-93 Gawler River floods. The local council carried out diversion works under the culvert of the railway line at Two Wells. As a result of that work, the water was diverted in a westerly direction, so that this time many houses in the Two Wells area were not subject to the threat of flooding. Also, many home owners in the Lewiston and Two Wells area had constructed levee banks around their property following the 1992-93 floods, so that when the water rose this time their homes were not under great threat, and that was good to see.

I attended the command headquarters at the Two Wells CFS building on Monday at about 5 p.m. Plans were well under way to deal with any level of flooding that was to occur. I thought the preparations by the CFS and SES volunteers were excellent. Sandbagging was already under way at various properties which they knew would be at risk. The flood was estimated to peak at 6 o'clock on the following morning. It was also learnt while I was there that there would be a king tide of 2.71 metres, the highest tide for the month of October, also at 6 o'clock on the following morning. So, members of the CFS to whom I spoke hoped that the floods would not be as great as had been suggested.

The river peaked at 9 o'clock, and a number of roads were closed including: the old Port Wakefield Road, Williams Road, the Gawler River Road, the old Port Gawler Road, and other minor roads in the Two Wells and Lewiston area. As I said earlier, these floods were not of the magnitude of the 1992-93 floods. One of the reasons for that was that the South Para and North Para Rivers peaked at different times, whereas in 1992-93 both rivers peaked at the same time, as a result of which the massive amount of water that attempted to get down the Gawler River and out to sea caused severe flooding at that time. As a result of the different peak times of the South Para and North Para Rivers, Gawler and the lower reaches of the Gawler River were not under great threat.

Areas of Gawler that were flooded included Goose Island and the backyard of a home in Eighth Street. Sandbagging occurred in Eighth Street to protect other properties in that area, and the only other thing that occurred was that caravans were moved from the lower areas of the Gawler Caravan Park to reduce any risk of damage. Again, I would like to thank the CFS and SES volunteers, the police and local council workers who worked through the night on 30 September. As I have

said, often their services are unsung, and the community relies on them to ensure that residential and council property in this area is not threatened and is protected when floods occur from time to time.

Mr LEWIS (Ridley): As we head into this period of intense consultation between the Murray Mallee task force and the people who live in the rain fed areas of the Mallee of South Australia, extending from the foot of the escarpment of the Mount Lofty Ranges on the eastern side through to the Victorian border, there are some issues into which I and a few other people have done some research and to which I wish to draw attention along the way. One of the most significant and important issues not only relevant to people in the Murray Mallee—and I acknowledge the presence of the Minister in the House and the work that he has done to ensure that a task force can be set up to examine these problems—but right across the wider rural communities of South Australia, and Australia in general, is the horrific health problems, especially as they relate to men. Indeed, as an overlay on this subject, there is a great deal of indifference and ignorance on the part of Government agencies, in the main, to men's health, not only physical health but mental health as well.

Men's health is the forgotten issue. More men are being diagnosed and suffer from prostate cancer, for instance, than there are women suffering from all kinds of gender specific cancers in women. In consequence of that, the end result is death; and the death rate from gender specific cancers is higher in men than it is in women, yet 100 times more money is spent on research into women's health issues (that is, breast cancer, cervical cancer and the like) than is spent on men's health issues. How can that be? The feminist lobby has been far more effective in getting public interest in and concern for the problems of women. I do not berate what has occurred in that respect in the way in which women's health issues have been addressed, but I do berate the fact that bureaucrats, who know these statistics exist, have simply ignored the fact because no-one has raised their voice about them.

In the past, I have raised my voice willingly and frequently over the necessity to address the trauma which confronts women when they are diagnosed as having cancer too developed for it to be anything other than terminal. That is sad, but it is equally sad for a man and, since more men are so afflicted, it is about time we redressed the balance in that respect. Members only have to go through the newspaper and look not at pages 1, 2 or 3 but further on to find headlines such as the following: 'The suicide rise among youth linked to grief skills', 'National crisis over youth suicides', 'Rural youth suicides rise tenfold' (*Australian* 3 July 1995), 'Rural males top youth suicide rate' (*Advertiser* 7 October 1994) and 'Divorced males top the suicide list in general in the State's 20-24 age group.' A great tragedy is occurring before our eyes in our community, and it has been caused as a consequence of factors outside the control of the individual and for which the individual has been given no understanding or training in respect of how to deal with it. This is especially true of men, as I have said.

For the benefit of members, I refer to the cause of death amongst men in the age group 25-64: ischaemic heart disease, 253 per cent higher in the case of men over women; suicide is 252 per cent higher; lung cancer is 223 per cent higher; motor vehicle and traffic accidents are 170 per cent higher; stomach cancer is 130 per cent higher; and stroke is 34 per cent higher. Indeed, women can expect a life free of disability some six to seven years longer than men.

Ms WHITE (Taylor): I refer to an issue which has not been resolved and an issue about which members have heard me speak often. It is an indictment on this Government that the issue has not been resolved to this date. It is the issue of the funding of Paralowie House programs in respect of employment and training for young disadvantaged youth in the northern suburbs. In Estimates Committee hearings earlier this year I asked the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education why he would not fund Paralowie House. At least three other members of the House have visited Paralowie House and I know that they agree that its work is certainly worthwhile and worth supporting.

At the time I asked the question in Estimates Committees, the Minister replied, 'Well, they have never applied for funding.' I sent the Minister copies of correspondence which proved that it had applied for funding. I sent a letter which the Minister had signed in response to a request for money and also another letter requesting funding on a second occasion but which was rejected by the department. On 10 September this year (two months later) I received a response from the Minister who said:

I have a keen interest in the future of young people in this State and the Government will continue to ensure that not only are opportunities available but that innovative ideas continue to be encouraged and supported for the benefit of youth and the State.

However, I find that, while the Minister finally has visited Paralowie House, seen what it does and agreed that it is very important work and should be supported and given a commitment to fund its programs for \$20 000, it seems that the Minister has reneged on that commitment. I put on the record a letter which I received from Paralowie House and which is a copy of the letter to the Minister expressing disappointment at the reneging on his commitment for funding. In part, the letter states:

You will recall your recent visit to Paralowie House. . . where we discussed at great length the programs we are running to assist disadvantaged youth establish an enterprise ethos. During the conversation we discussed the relevance of alternative, modified business plan development for young people who might display excellent business acumen but might not have the necessary skills, as yet, to articulate their ideas to the rigours of NEIS standards. Everyone present agreed that a preparatory course to the NEIS program, furnishing the required skills and motivation to disadvantaged youth, would be invaluable. To this effect we tabled our draft copy of the 'Youth in Business' Enterprise Course.

The letter continues:

There was a clear demarcation, made by yourself, between the 'Kickstart' funding and your \$20 000 offer of support to provide infrastructure funding as well as venture capital for fledgling youth operated businesses. You compared the funding to that of the cost of a Tarago car, and commented that it was a cheap method of funding disadvantaged youth programs.

You did emphasise that it would be 'outside the normal DETAFE processes' and that we should fax through the request directly to your personal secretary, with the comment that all moneys should be expended as stated in the request.

It goes on to state:

I am somewhat perplexed at the apparent 'backflip' on your commitment to support 'Youth in Business' programs, which encourage our client group (the disadvantaged, 'hard end' of the unemployed youth market) to create their own opportunities by generating small business enterprises.

Your personal commitment, on behalf of your department, to \$20 000 financial support to 'Youth in Business', outside and above the confines of the 'Kickstart' parameters, is obviously not to be considered as a 'core commitment', but rather a 'politically expedient commitment' to be negated by DETAFE bureaucrats back in the cloistered isolation of the Flinders Street office.

I conclude by referring to another paragraph from the letter which states:

We did make you aware we had done so by requesting a sum of \$15 000 from 'Kickstart' to fund a complete Enterprise Course. . . Given that a typical 'Jobtrain' program for DEETYA of a similar 26 weeks duration normally costs between \$60 000 and \$65 000 for the sponsor/trainer to deliver, we assumed this resubmission was cost effective and economical.

Ms GREIG (Reynell): Today, I would like to announce to the House another fantastic achievement in sport and an even bigger achievement in basketball. On Thursday last week the Noarlunga Tigers provided us with two outstanding teams for the action packed 1996 Bank SA League Basketball Grand Final. Both the men's and the women's senior teams have had a highly successful season. Unfortunately, our men's team was robbed of victory in the last seconds of its final game and, notwithstanding this error in judgment, we were provided with a brilliant display of skill and determination and a truly exhilarating game that saw Darren Carroll awarded the grand final's MVP award. However, the women's team did conclude with a victory and what a finish it was—size, power and determination were all on side with the Noarlunga women. The win is the club's sixth women's championship but the first since 1986, which has broken its run of three successive grand final defeats.

The Noarlunga Tigers women last Thursday opened up a match winning lead straight after half time to power home over North to win 63-47. The effort was a whole of team approach, and I must acknowledge that it was a fitting way for Michelle Brogan to finish her career with Noarlunga. Michelle, playing her last game for the club with which she began as a junior, had a finale worthy of her status as a brilliant sportswoman. She will be sadly missed from South Australia and, even though some at Noarlunga suspect Mr Kennett has wooed her to Victoria, I can assure the House that that is untrue. I wish her well in her move to Melbourne to marry her fiancée Steve Griffith.

The Tigers women's team has been fortunate in having two Olympians on board: Michelle and, of course, Carla Boyd. Both of these women are a credit to their club, to basketball and more so to women's sport. Whilst we are all proud of their achievements, I think we should also acknowledge the people who worked with these women and who encouraged and supported them, and they are of course their fellow team members in the Noarlunga women's team, their coach and manager and the strong and dedicated group of behind the scenes people who make it possible for the team to play and the club to function as a truly professional body.

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge Mrs Sue Redden, another member of the senior women's team and, I should add, the member for Peake's daughter. Sue has just completed her final season as a player and hopefully she will put her boots back on and use her skills to coach some of our younger hopeful players.

Noarlunga City Tigers Basketball Club has existed under that name for only the past 11 years, making it a relatively young club in the BASA competition. While the club may be relatively young in name, it had its origins in the late 1950s. The club grew in competitive strength during the 1970s, and by 1975 those guiding its destiny had the foresight to see that its future growth and development lay in the expanding southern suburbs. Thus the most significant move occurred in 1976 with the building of the Morphett Vale stadium as the new home of the Tigers. In fact, 1976 proved to be momen-

tous in the club's history, with both the senior men's and women's teams winning their first premierships.

The club became involved in mini basketball in the Morphett Vale area during 1975, and thus the advent of the stadium provided further impetus for Glenelg to develop into the top club in South Australia and eventually Australia. By 1980 it had become obvious that the club's destiny was integrally tied with the growth and development of the City of Noarlunga. At a meeting of the club on 26 October 1980 it was decided to change the name to 'Noarlunga City Tigers Basketball Club Incorporated'. The name change became official on 7 January 1981. The club grew during the 1980s to become the largest basketball club in South Australia, and this is evident through the subsequent building extension at Morphett Vale by two courts to form the present four court complex.

The men's team competed in the fledging National Basketball League competition in 1979 and in the South-East Conference in 1981-82 before supporting the composite City of Adelaide Eagles, the forerunner to the West End 36ers. Currently, Brett Wheeler is a member of the NBL team whilst Ben Osborne and Travis Leaver are members of the Adelaide Buffaloes. We have had many successes and many Olympians have been selected from our team, including Julie Nykiel, Brendan Flynn, Donna Quinn and Mark Bradtke. The Tigers have a strong junior program, with teams competing in all age groups and divisions for both girls and boys. Current senior players Michelle Brogan, Karen Chapman, Joanne Bryans, Tanya Kiley, Grant Yates, Brett Wheeler, Craig Douglass and Mark Thompson have all come from this club's junior program. I wish the club many more successes. It has proved that Noarlunga has strong status in basketball and I am sure it will have a long history ahead of it.

SESSIONAL COMMITTEES

The Legislative Council notified its appointment of sessional committees.

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

A quorum having been formed:

SITTINGS AND BUSINESS

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

That the House at its rising adjourn until tomorrow at 10.30 a.m.

Motion carried.

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

That Standing Orders be so far suspended as to provide that, when any division or quorum is called, the division bell will be rung for three minutes with the Clerk determining the three minutes by using the debate time clock.

Motion carried.

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

That Standing Orders be and remain so far suspended as to enable the introduction of Government Bills before the Address in Reply is completed.

Motion carried.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (CITY OF ADELAIDE) BILL

The Hon. E.S. ASHENDEN (Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to provide for the appointment of commissioners to undertake responsibility for the operations of the Corporation of the City of Adelaide during a period of administration and for other purposes. Read a first time.

The Hon. E.S. ASHENDEN: I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

I seek leave to have the second reading explanation inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

This Bill introduces arrangements for the governance of the City of Adelaide, to give effect to recommendations of the Adelaide 21 Report.

That report reflected concerns which have been expressed by successive State Governments for some years over the operations of the Adelaide City Council.

The concerns can be divided into two classes; those arising in the past and present and those which cause anxiety for the future.

The principal concerns in the past and present have been the emergence of factions and personal clashes within Council, rendering the proper exercise of its functions difficult. These concerns are not occasioned by malpractice of the Council or its administration, but arise from the electoral structure and the limiting franchise of the Councillors.

The Local Government Act contains suitable provisions for dealing with malpractice but is powerless to deal with the Government's present concerns.

These concerns were strongly voiced by contributors to the consultation on city centre issues conducted as part of the Adelaide 21 study. However, Adelaide 21 also sets out a vision for the future—a future that the current governance of the City of Adelaide cannot deliver.

Adelaide 21 stressed the need for changes to the governance of the city which is critical to the future of the City of Adelaide and to ensure it is in a stronger position to meet the challenges of the next century. To achieve that, it is vital to put in place a new form of governance to give effective representation in the affairs of the City to a broader cross-section of South Australians.

The changes of governance were part of a package of proposals. It also included the establishment of the Adelaide Partnership, a joint private-public sector organisation to coordinate and oversee development projects in the city centre, and to establish an Adelaide Marketing Authority.

The Report and its proposals have received widespread support within the community. The Premier has previously announced the establishment of the Adelaide Partnership and foreshadowed on several occasions his intention to introduce legislation this session to deal with governance.

In formulating our proposed strategy, the Government has examined the strategies used in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth to install Commissioners, when those cities faced problems similar to those described above.

The current electoral franchise in the City of Adelaide is basically the same as for all other councils in the State which use a ward and aldermanic system.

The electoral franchise includes only electors with a specific interest in the City of Adelaide and, therefore, does not represent the interests of the wider population of the State, for whom the City is the cultural and commercial centre.

A natural result of this franchise is that the Council tends to concentrate on local interests and, where they conflict with wider interests, gives them precedence.

This effect is clearly outlined in the Adelaide 21 study and elsewhere as contributing to the relative stagnation of city centre activity and building development when compared to other metropolitan centres. There is no capacity under the existing governance to represent and project Adelaide and South Australia into the regional and global markets of the future.

The Government believes there should be a broader representation in the future governance of the city centre.

The form of representation raises a large number of issues including effectiveness, accountability, equity and voting methodology. These questions require an extensive study and political process to resolve. The form of that study and its objectives make it incompatible with the continuation of the currently elected Council.

To ensure the satisfactory functioning of the City while the consideration of the best form of future Government ensues, and to instil a sense of wider responsibility for the Council in the meantime, it is proposed to replace the elected Council with Commissioners appointed by the Government.

These proposals cannot be achieved within existing legislation. Accordingly, this Bill has the following features, which are expanded in the Explanation of Clauses:

- (i) Replacement of the elected City of Adelaide Council with three Commissioners appointed by the Government from the date of proclamation until 30 June 1999 or the first meeting of a newly elected Council, whichever is the earlier. One of the key tasks of the Commissioners will be to recommend to the Government the future form of governance for the City.
- (ii) Establishment of rules of conduct for the Commissioners closely similar to those for Boards of Statutory Corporations.
- (iii) Vesting all of the powers, rights, responsibilities, assets and liabilities of the Adelaide City Council in the Commissioners.
- (iv) Placing the Commissioners under Ministerial direction, including reporting requirements.
- (v) Placing a duty of care and specific performance on the Commissioners.

The Bill also provides that:

- (vi) The Commissioners are to investigate and recommend to the Minister a proposed new electoral franchise and process to achieve a wider representation in the newly elected Council.
- (vii) On a day no later than the first Saturday in May 1999, elections are to be held for a new Council, under the then existing Local Government Act provisions, which would include the legislative change introduced to give effect to the outcome of the Commissioners' report. The Commissioners will require guiding principles, and these are set out in a Schedule to the Bill.

It is possible that the currently elected Council may seek to set in place projects to benefit the existing narrow franchise of the City before the Commissioners take office.

The Bill guards against this eventuality by requiring the Council to seek approval from the Minister for specified new projects (being essentially projects with a value exceeding \$100 000) in the period between public announcement of the proposals and proclamation of the new legislation. This approach requires the relevant parts of the new Bill to be effective before its passage through Parliament, and the Bill sets today, 2nd October, 1996, as the operative date in this regard.

Section 197 of the Local Government Act already allows the Government to prescribe by regulation projects which can only be carried out with the agreement of the Minister. It provides for an onerous process to achieve such agreement including public notice.

Any action of a Council contrary to these provisions would constitute a breach of the Act and liable to being declared null and void.

Possible changes to boundaries, such as the inclusion of North Adelaide with other Councils, will not be allowed under this Bill. Neither the Commissioners be able to change the residential rate structure. Either of these matters would add a range of peripheral issues to the debate. If any such proposals do arise, they will be dealt with by either the new Council or under other legislative provisions.

The three Commissioners, whose appointment is to be at the pleasure of the Governor, will be for a limited period (of about 2½ years). In this regard, the Bill contains a 'sunset' clause that would cause the Act to expire on 30 June 1999 or earlier by proclamation.

It is not expected that any significant extra resources would be required to operate the Council under the proposed arrangements. Whatever is needed could be drawn from the existing Council budget allocations.

The proposed change in electoral franchise is expected to strongly benefit the State Government's economic objectives.

Clause 1: Short title

This clause is formal.

Clause 2: Commencement

The measure will come into operation on a day to be fixed by proclamation. However, schedule 1 will be taken to have come into operation on 2 October 1996.

Clause 3: Interpretation

This clause sets out the definitions required for the purposes of the measure. The 'City of Adelaide' is the council of that name incorporated under the *Local Government Act 1934*. The measure also uses the term 'period of administration', being the period commencing on the day on which section 5 of the Act comes into operation and ending at the conclusion of the elections to be held under section 17.

Clause 4: Interaction with Local Government Act

This Act and the *Local Government Act 1934* are to be read together and construed as a single Act. However, in the event of an inconsistency between the two Acts, this Act will prevail.

Clause 5: Commissioners to constitute City of Adelaide

The composition of the City of Adelaide is, from the commencement of this section, to be altered so as to be constituted by three Commissioners to be appointed under this Act. The members of the City of Adelaide holding office immediately before the commencement of the section will cease to hold office. The City of Adelaide will continue as a council under the *Local Government Act 1934* (and, in particular, the body corporate continues); the difference is that it will now be constituted by the three Commissioners rather than elected members.

Clause 6: Appointment of Commissioners

The Governor will appoint the Commissioners. A Commissioner will require particular qualities, expertise and knowledge. One Commissioner will be appointed as the Chief Commissioner. Provision is made for the appointment of deputies. On the office of a Commissioner becoming vacant, a person must be appointed to the vacant office.

Clause 7: Conditions of appointment

A Commissioner will be appointed on conditions determined by the Governor, and for a term determined by the Governor. The Governor will be able to remove a Commissioner from office at any time. The office of a Commissioner will become vacant at the end of the period of administration.

Clause 8: Validity of acts and immunity of Commissioners

A vacancy in the office of a Commissioner will not affect an act or proceeding of the City of Adelaide or of the Commissioners. A Commissioner will not incur personal liability for an honest act or omission in acting in his or her office. Any liability will attach instead to the City of Adelaide.

Clause 9: Commissioners' duties of honesty, care and diligence

A Commissioner will be required to act honestly in the performance of official functions. A Commissioner will also be required to exercise a reasonable degree of care and diligence in the performance of official functions. A Commissioner must not make improper use of information acquired in office, or of the position of Commissioner.

Clause 10: Transactions with Commissioner or associates of Commissioner

Neither a Commissioner, nor an associate of a Commissioner, will be able to be involved in a transaction with the City of Adelaide, unless the Minister grants an approval. The regulations will also be able to exempt prescribed classes of transactions.

Clause 11: Disclosure of interest

A Commissioner will not be able to act in a matter in which the Commissioner, or an associate, has an interest.

Clause 12: Proceedings

This clause sets out the proceedings for meetings of the City of Adelaide for the period during which the Commissioners hold office. A quorum of the City of Adelaide consists of two Commissioners. A decision carried by two votes cast at a meeting of Commissioners is a decision of the City of Adelaide. Other provisions are included to ensure that meetings can be held effectively. Subject to the Act, the Commissioners will be able to determine their own procedures.

Clause 13: Functions and powers of Commissioners

The Commissioners will be responsible for the administration of the affairs of the City of Adelaide during the period of administration. In particular, they will, during the period of administration, have, exercise and discharge the responsibilities, powers and functions of members of the City of Adelaide under any Act (for example, the *Local Government Act 1934*), other law, or instrument.

The Chief Commissioner will act in the office of Lord Mayor. A Commissioner will be able to assume any office, position or membership that a member of the City of Adelaide could assume.

Clause 14: Reports to Minister

The Commissioners will report to the Minister, as required by the Minister.

Clause 15: Ministerial direction

The Commissioners will be subject to the control and direction of the Minister (other than with respect to recommendations contained in a report under clause 16).

Clause 16: Report on options for City of Adelaide

The Commissioners will be required to prepare a report on options for the future governance, powers and functions of the City of Adelaide. The report must be presented to the Minister by 31 March 1998. The Commissioners will be required to take into account the matters set out in schedule 2 when preparing the report.

Clause 17: Restoration of elected council

The first elections for members of the City of Adelaide after the commencement of this measure will be held on the first Saturday of May 1999, or on an earlier date to be fixed by proclamation.

If the election is held on or after 1 July 1998, the Governor will be able by proclamation to cancel the periodical elections that are next due to be held for the City of Adelaide (so that the term of office of members elected at the first elections will be for a longer period of time than would otherwise be the case (and to avoid the situation where they would only hold office for a relatively short period of time)).

Clause 18: Ministerial approval for rates

The City of Adelaide will be required to obtain the approval of the Minister before it declares a general or separate rate under Part X of the *Local Government Act 1934*. Differential rating for residential properties will continue.

Clause 19: Regulations

The Governor will be empowered to make certain regulations.

Clause 20: Expiry of Act

The Act will expire on a day to be fixed by proclamation. The Act will automatically come to an end on 30 June 1999 if a proclamation has not been made by that date.

Schedule 1

This clause establishes a period, commencing on 2 October 1996 and ending on the appointment of the Commissioners under clause 5 of the measure, during which the City of Adelaide will be required to obtain Ministerial approval to certain contracts and leases, or risk that the contract or lease will be avoided by the Minister. If the Minister does avoid a contract or lease and, as a result, the Minister or the City of Adelaide incurs a liability, the amount of the liability, will be recoverable (jointly and severally) from the persons who were members of the City of Adelaide at the time of the contract or lease.

Schedule 2

This schedule sets out the objectives for the new governance of the City of Adelaide (to be taken into account when the Commissioners prepare their report under this measure).

Schedule 3

This schedule makes specific provision for the non-application of certain provisions of the *Local Government Act 1934* during the period of administration. The schedule will not derogate from general principle set out in clause 4(2) of the Bill.

Mr CLARKE secured the adjournment of the debate.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

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

That Standing Orders be and remain so far suspended as to enable:

(a) The report of the Auditor-General on the budget results 1995-96 to be referred to a Committee of the whole House and for Ministers to be examined on matters contained in the papers in accordance with the following timetable:

Premier and Deputy Premier, 30 minutes; Minister for Health, 15 minutes; Minister for Tourism and Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources, 30 minutes; Minister for Emergency Services and Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations, 30 minutes; Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education and Minister for Primary Industries, 30 minutes; Minister for Industry, Manufacturing, Small Business and Regional Development, 15 minutes.

(b) A motion to be moved that the report of the Auditor-General and budget results 1995-96 be noted and that the time for speeches

be as follows: one Minister and the Leader of the Opposition or member deputed by him, 20 minutes; any other member, 10 minutes.

Mr CLARKE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): The Opposition very reluctantly agrees to the suspension. This is not because we do not want the examination of the Auditor-General's Report to take place as soon as possible; indeed, we are quite happy that that be done today. However, I point out to the House that, in negotiations with the Government, the Opposition sought to have more extensive time set aside for questioning the relevant Ministers.

This House ought to remember that, in all previous years, including the 11 years under the former Labor Administration, the Auditor-General's Report was available at the time of the Estimates Committee hearings. Individual Ministers were therefore available for examination from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., and we could use the whole of that time if necessary to examine Ministers with respect to the Auditor-General's Report. Because of the Government's decision to change the timing of the handing down of the budget, the Auditor-General's Report cannot be done in time for the Estimates Committee hearings. As a consequence, in negotiations with the Government we have sought to ensure that the Auditor-General's Report receives the type of scrutiny that we believe it deserves.

In negotiations with the Government, we stated that the Premier and Deputy Premier should be examined for at least an hour each; the Minister for Health for at least an hour; the Minister for Infrastructure for at least an hour; and the remaining Ministers paired at 30 minutes between them. We thought that was a very reasonable compromise, particularly given that, when in Opposition for 11 years, members of the current Government had the ability to examine Labor Ministers in an Estimates Committee from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. and that they had the Auditor-General's Report for a long period of time to ensure adequate scrutiny. There has been some advance on the scandalous situation last year, when the Auditor-General's Report was just a gum flapping exercise after 7.30 p.m. when members spoke for 20 minutes, no Minister was in the House and no questions could be asked of Ministers during that session. What has been provided by the Government on this occasion is an improvement, but—

Mr BRINDAL: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. I thought we were discussing a motion for the suspension of Standing Orders, but the Deputy Leader seems to be straying into the substance of what will be discussed after Standing Orders are suspended.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not want any discussion across the Chamber. The motion before the Chair is for the suspension of Standing Orders to allow a process to take place. A person wishing to speak to that motion has to relate their comments entirely to the motion to suspend Standing Orders. For the benefit of the Deputy Leader, it is a matter which over many years has often attracted the attention of the Chair. On this occasion, the Chair has been exceptionally tolerant of the honourable member. He was not here when we have debated some of these other matters. I suggest that he link his remarks very cautiously.

Mr CLARKE: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I certainly do intend to conclude so that we can get on with the examination of the Ministers concerned. Again, I would ask that in future negotiations the Government pay greater attention to the needs of the Opposition so that the Auditor-General's Report can be given the scrutiny that it thoroughly deserves.

Motion carried.

In Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: This is an opportunity to ask questions of Ministers on matters raised by the Auditor-General in his report. I ask members to refrain from making personal comment. This is not a broad ranging debate: questions must be on lines in the Auditor-General's Report relevant to the portfolio of the Minister under question at the time. Standing Orders apply, and I remind members that questions not put may still be asked during the normal Question Time in the House in the ensuing days or placed on the Notice Paper. Questions will be asked first of the Premier and Deputy Premier. I invite the Leader of the Opposition to commence questioning.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: We certainly support the opportunity to question Ministers in this way. We appreciate the opportunity to ask questions following the Auditor-General's Report but we reinforce the point that 15 minutes each for the Premier and the Treasurer is a token effort and some might say a joke. The Auditor-General clearly wants some debate on his report. Last year neither the Premier nor any other Minister (except the Deputy Premier very briefly) turned up for debate on the Auditor-General's Report. Previously, the Auditor-General's Report was made available to the Opposition. In fact, when the Premier was Leader of the Opposition it was made available prior to the estimates series. Indeed, it was very much the fodder and bullets for the Opposition during the estimates process. The very fact that it has been confined to 15 minutes rather than eight or nine hours per Minister shows that the Government does not regard itself as being accountable and, from what we have heard today, does not take the Auditor-General seriously.

My first question relates to page 35 (Part A—Audit Overview) and private sector provision of infrastructure. Does the Premier agree with the audit that, in matters of contracting out and private provision of infrastructure, Treasury should 'move from an advisory role to a mandatory role of assessing private sector participation arrangements'.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Basically, that is exactly how it works now. Treasury is required to be involved in the process. We have changed the process, refined it, as you would appreciate. We have been doing it now for 2½ years. As a result of that, we have a Cabinet subcommittee which deals with contracting out. We also have a prudential management committee which must approve any contracting out on a significant scale. We are putting aside routine contracting out of highways works and the like. We are talking about the one-off contracting out that you go through. Treasury is a member of that prudential management group, together with the Crown Solicitor and the head of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. There is now a mandatory role for Treasury in that process.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I have a supplementary question. Is the Auditor-General again wrong? Today, among other things, you described him as simplistic. He is saying that Treasury should change its role from an advisory role to a mandatory role in assessing these private sector arrangements? You are now saying it is involved. Is the Auditor-General right or wrong?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I can indicate that there is a prudential management group which was set up earlier this year as a result of a specific recommendation of the Auditor-General last year. As a result of that, there is now a mandatory role for Treasury. I am sure that the Under Treasurer or Mr Kowalick will acknowledge that they sit on the prudential

management committee and they must sign off on every major outsourcing contract.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Does the Premier agree with his own Government's guidelines on private sector funding of infrastructure projects which state that, where the choice is between Government funding and structured partnerships with the private sector (and I quote from the Auditor-General's Report at page 33, Part A), 'in by far the majority of cases . . . Government provision of funds, sourced from traditional borrowings, will be cheaper than the structured arrangements'?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The Auditor-General is saying that, if you try to run a project using private funds—and we talked about this earlier this afternoon in relation to the Port Augusta and Mount Gambier hospitals—invariably the cost will be slightly higher than otherwise will be the case. That is the case with both those examples. Even though the cost is slightly higher, that does not mean that you will not proceed. If you use Government funds, it might be that there is no money available within the budget constraints and, therefore, the project would not proceed at all.

The Berri bridge is a classic example of a project where private funds have allowed the project to go ahead. In that case, there is a significant economic return to the community. Money is saved in operating the ferries; and money is saved in terms of people not losing time sitting in trucks waiting for ferries. The calculations indicate the many thousands of person hours lost in operating the ferry system versus a bridge. Therefore, although the cost of funds might be slightly higher through the private sector—and you would expect that, because the private sector's borrowing costs are invariably marginally higher than those of the Government—that does not mean that you would not go ahead with the project. In the case of Mount Gambier and Port Augusta hospitals, unless we used private funds those projects would not have proceeded within the constraints of the budget.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: The Auditor-General is saying that we are not talking about a tiny amount of funds in terms of both those hospital projects that the Premier has just mentioned: we are talking about a total of \$6.5 million in funds—\$4 million for Mount Gambier and \$2.5 million for Port Augusta—that the Auditor-General quite strenuously points out is lost to the Government in terms of money that could have been spent on patient care and so on.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: First, the cost as highlighted by the Auditor-General is a cost over many years, perhaps 20 years or something like that. It depends on the discount rate that you use. If a lower discount rate is used, the cost of the private funds becomes less and the economics of using private funds is better. We have used a discount rate of about 6 per cent on this. I might add that most economists are now arguing that for the next 10 to 20 years they believe the discount rate will be substantially less than that during the past 10 years. Upon that basis, there may be no additional cost if the discount rate drops. I know that Dr Don Stammers, who is a highly regarded national economist, has been arguing that the discount rate will drop quite substantially, and in fact has already dropped substantially. Whilst those figures of \$4 million and \$2.5 million are used, you must be careful, because they are costs over a 20 year period. If the discount rate is less, those costs might prove to be quite false.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: It is interesting that Professor Stammers has become the Premier's latest guru. It was previously Professor Cliff Walsh before he turned Queen's

evidence. I understand that that centre wants a bail-out: it is in the red.

In terms of Crown immunity and liability in contracting out, on page 81 of the Audit Overview the Auditor-General raises real concerns about the exposure of the Crown to legal liability for work carried out by private contractors on core Government activities. The Auditor-General gives the example of a private contractor who supplies medical services to public patients. I quote from page 82:

Where that hospital is the Government's agent and it fails to comply with statutory provisions relating to public health services, the Government may be liable as the principal.

The Auditor-General goes on to recommend on page 82 that, as a pre-condition to contracting out of Government services, a liability impact assessment must be carried out. Do you agree with the Auditor-General that a liability impact assessment must be carried out in future? Given the Auditor-General's warnings on this matter and the Premier's statements that the Government's privatisation and outsourcing policies are reducing the risks and exposure of the public, what consideration has the Government given to the question of legal liability exposure with its privatisation contracts to date?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I can indicate that this public risk analysis is done as part of prudential management, so the point raised by the Auditor-General is now covered. Members need to appreciate that, and not suddenly become concerned. The Auditor-General has been raising these issues with the Government and we have been gradually implementing them as he has raised them. He has raised the point earlier in the piece, we have now covered that point and it is already put into effect.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: There seems to be some confusion, because the Auditor-General has drawn particular attention to this in a part of the report which has only just been written and tabled yesterday. He has highlighted his concerns and also that, as a precondition to contracting out of Government services, a liability impact assessment be carried out. Is the Auditor-General wrong again? Are you saying he has got it wrong?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: We have set up a prudential management group headed up by the head of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, and two key members of that group happen to be the Under Treasurer and the Crown Solicitor. They and the head of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, who is Chair of that group, have indicated they are now carrying out that public risk analysis. I think the Leader needs to appreciate that private companies are required under this process to make sure they carry their own insurance, so that, if any suing has to be done, there is something there for the Government to sue. You would expect that. If I were any company taking on a private consultant—I am not talking about Government, but it is the same with Government—I would want to make sure that that consultancy had some form of professional indemnity, so that, if they made a blue in terms of their recommendations, you could turn around and sue them. That is not new at all, so the Government in fact goes through that analysis and makes sure that that private insurance is there to reduce the public risk.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: It is interesting that in all the Premier's remarks, in both the media and the Parliament, it seems that either the Auditor-General is out of date or he is not being properly briefed, or whatever. He has made a very clear recommendation. Will the Treasurer report to

Parliament on the extent of our legal exposure in these major outsourcing contracts? In terms of what the Auditor-General has warned, a very serious warning that has been highlighted, given that you say you have taken on board already his warnings and advice, will the Treasurer in the future report to Parliament on the extent of the State's legal exposure in these major outsourcing contracts?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I have had a discussion with the Auditor-General already in terms of risk analysis and, as I said, the Government already has started a risk analysis, looking at where risks exist. In doing this, you should also look at the risk of doing nothing. It is often something that Governments and organisations do not look at, namely, the risk of taking no action at all, so you have to understand what your risks are. In fact, the Auditor-General's comment to me was whether I, as Premier, because of my private commercial experience, understood risk analysis, because basically commercial life is all about understanding what the risks are and managing those risks. I am not saying that the Government is perfect. The Government will continue to improve its performance in that area, but I stress the fact that on major outsourcing contracts that is part of the rule of the prudential management group.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Again in terms of that Audit Overview (pages 81 and 82), referring to liability in contracting out and Crown immunity, is the Premier concerned that the Auditor-General found that several agencies, including SA Water, which has outsourced management and operations of Adelaide's water system to a French and UK-backed consortium—

The Hon. Dean Brown interjecting:

The Hon. M.D. RANN: You will have to check and have a look yourself. I am not going to do your work for you. The Auditor-General found that several agencies did not understand some of their obligations under national competition policy. Presumably the Premier has read the Auditor-General's Report. He says that—

The CHAIRMAN: I point out to the Leader that there is a requirement in the Committee stage and budget estimates to be more specific than simply advising which page.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: It is pages 81 and 82, referring to Crown immunity and liability in contracting out. He says that, even with the outsourcing of SA Water, there was a lack of understanding of their obligations under national competition policy. What is the Government doing about that?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I cannot see that exact quote that the Leader is referring to.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Perhaps he could take it on notice and give a considered reply.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Whereabouts is it? Which paragraph down the page?

The Hon. M.D. RANN: What I am referring to is Crown immunity and liability in contracting out.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Which paragraph?

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I am saying that the Auditor-General talks about agencies, including SA Water, which has outsourced management operations of Adelaide's water systems to a French and UK company which did not understand some of its obligations under national competition policy. You have just said that you have spoken to the Auditor-General about this, so what will you do about it?

The CHAIRMAN: Questions should be asked through the Chair.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The Leader has said he is referring to pages 81 and 82. I am asking the Leader where

that statement is made on page 81 or 82, because I cannot see it there. The Leader himself said it was on pages 81 and 82. Where on page 81 or 82? I have the report in front of me.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: If you turn to page 81 of the Audit Overview, you will see concerns about Crown immunity and liability. You can play ducks and drakes or smart alec around the place. You say that you have talked about these matters to the Auditor-General. Answer the question or take it on notice.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I am just highlighting the fact that the Leader said a moment ago that the Auditor-General referred specifically to SA Water on page 81. I cannot see any reference to SA Water on page 81.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: The Premier, who seems confused, might also want to turn to pages 66 and 67. There it has the comments by SA Water which not only suggest a degree of confusion as to where responsibility for the implementation of the NCP rests—that means national competition policy, just to assist the Premier some more—but also in my opinion misconstrue the intention and effects of the CPA. He goes on to say that the fact that SA Water may currently operate as a monopoly is not an answer to whether the South Australian Government has adequately assessed the implementation of those clauses in the CPA in the context of that agency. It goes on to say—and I am happy to read out the comments on page 66—

The Hon. S.J. Baker interjecting:

The Hon. M.D. RANN: You are obviously unaware of the Auditor-General's concerns on this matter. Is that correct? If so, now that you are aware, what action will you take to redress it?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The Leader himself admitted his own mistake, because he was referring to page 81 and claimed the Auditor-General had stated certain things on that page. The traditional style of the Leader of the Opposition is to fudge the issue. He does it every time. In terms of the national competition policy, I highlight the fact that this is a policy that is developing. Some of the obligations under national competition policy had occurred by the end of June this year, and South Australia complied with those. I think we were the only State that complied fully by the end of June. It is an emerging scene which will be implemented over the next 10 years. Certainly there are implications for SA Water under competition policy: I acknowledge that. I acknowledge the fact that we need to be very aware of what those implications are for SA Water and we will need to carry out a pricing review, I think by the end of next year—

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: That is right. There is a schedule of all the Acts of Parliament that have to be carried out, and they all have a different time frame. There are probably 40 or 50 different Acts under that schedule, so the Government is aware of the points raised by the Auditor-General, and we are working through them.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: On page 118 of the Audit Overview the Auditor-General says, in relation to maladministration of the South Australian public sector:

It is important for agency management to be mindful that concerns are being raised under the Whistleblowers Protection Act of 1993 and directly with audit regarding maladministration.

How many complaints of maladministration have been made under the Act? To which agencies do they relate? How many are currently under investigation, and by whom? What are the nature of these complaints, and how serious are they?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: In my area of administration, only one whistleblower's complaint has been formally lodged. It related to a person in the Office of Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs, and that person now happens to be a member of the Labor Party. You asked the question, you got the answer. The only whistleblower's complaint that has been lodged to me as Premier for my agencies has been in relation to a person who has now formally joined the Labor Party as a member of Parliament. You asked the question, you got a blunt answer.

Mr FOLEY: On pages 94-95, the Audit Overview talks about unresolved matters between agencies and EDS still outstanding at the date of transfer of operations of EDS. At the bottom of the page, it states:

- some service levels require confirmation or verification;
- software, leases, and maintenance contracts are yet to be finalised;
- recent asset acquisition values are not determined, final reconciliation of assets are not completed, and differences exist between agencies' and EDS's assets list;
- IT security specifications for document agencies' information applications are not finalised.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I am only too happy to comment on that. You are dealing with a contract that is being implemented, and you are dealing with software and equipment that is changing from day to day. They are valid points, and they will always be valid points because you are always buying new equipment and implementing new software. It should be noted that the transfer information, including matters identified in the agency outstanding items list and service levels, is subject to verification and subsequent adjustment during an agreed post contract verification period and service level adjustment period. So there are requirements under the contract. There is nothing unusual about this. In fact, the contract is set up specifically to deal with these issues on an ongoing basis.

Mr FOLEY: On page 95, the Audit Overview states:

Audit considers it unsatisfactory that problems continue to be experienced with finalisation of 'wave one' agency service level agreements.

Does the Premier share this concern? How many agencies have now concluded service level agreements with EDS? I am happy to take that on notice, if that helps.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: There are one or two agencies where there are minor points in terms of the service level agreement. Mr Dundon has assured me that they are small matters that have been cleaned up as part of wave one transfers, and that is the normal process.

Mr FOLEY: Part B, Volume I, of the Auditor-General's Report (page 439) deals with the remuneration of executives. Somebody has been very fortunate. Who was that officer?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: That officer was Mike Schilling, the former head of the department.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: You need to appreciate that untaken leave, both annual and long service leave, is included in that. I have already given to the House the details of the actual settlement. Those figures are before the House.

Mr FOLEY: I am in absolute shock. Is the Premier saying that Mike Schilling, his chief of department whom he sacked, picked up \$321 000 in termination and accrued leave? The Premier earlier told the Parliament that he received a sum amounting to one-third that amount. The Premier might want to reconcile those figures.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: A specific payment was made in terms of the termination, and I have already given the figures on that to the House.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I think you will find that that actually accrued to Mr Schilling as long service leave before he was even appointed to that position. I will check on that, but I understand that at least some of that leave was accrued leave under the former Labor Government. In fact, most of it would have been under the former Labor Government, as he had served a period of only two years or less under the present Government.

Mr FOLEY: I will pursue that matter with great interest. I might be wrong—he may have taken leave without pay, and perhaps the Commissioner for Public Employment, Mr Foreman, could advise us on this: Mr Schilling went to work for Jeffrey; he was poached by Jeffrey Kennett. He left the employ of the former Labor Government as deputy head of former Premier Arnold's department and went to work for Kennett as Commissioner for Public Employment. At that point, I would have thought that his entitlements accrued under Labor would be extinguished, but I may be wrong. I would like that point commented on. More importantly, how much of that \$321 000 was accrued leave, and how much was termination payment?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I would have thought that the honourable member should be able to remember this, because he was the chief adviser to the Premier at the time. What happened—and it is a bit of an embarrassment for the former Labor Government or to the honourable member who has asked the question—is that the former Labor Government gave him leave without pay. So, his accrued leave remained due—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: No, I didn't. I highlighted to the Parliament the separation payment that was made. I pointed out then the normal other entitlements due to him. It turns out that it was the former Labor Government that gave him that leave without pay and, therefore, allowed him to maintain those leave entitlements.

Mr FOLEY: Absolute bunkum! This Premier is just the perfect example of somebody who has to blame somebody else.

Mr BASS: I rise on a point of order, Mr Chairman. I understand that members are supposed to be questioning the Ministers, not making statements.

The CHAIRMAN: A degree of flexibility is involved.

Mr FOLEY: If Mr Schilling took leave without pay, that is fine—I said that might have been the case—and the accrued leave would remain until he returned to the Government. If he had left the Government then, that accrued leave would have been paid then. It was always a liability. There is no embarrassment to a former Labor Government. The embarrassment is to you.

Members interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: It didn't matter whether or not it was accrued. You thought he was so good you brought him back to work for you.

The CHAIRMAN: The time for questions has expired.

Mr FOLEY: My question is—

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, the member for Hart.

Mr FOLEY:—how much of that money is termination and how much of it is leave?

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, the member for Hart.

Mr FOLEY: You're very embarrassed, Premier.

The CHAIRMAN: And the member for Hart is very rude, and he knows jolly well he is. The time has expired for examination of the Premier and Deputy Premier. I thank the two Ministers for their attendance. I now call on the Minister for Health. I remind members that questions should be asked on the lines of the Auditor-General's Report relevant to the Minister currently appearing before the Committee. I invite the member for Elizabeth to commence questions.

Ms STEVENS: My first question relates to page 590 of volume II of part B of the Auditor-General's Report regarding compliance with the Modbury Hospital contract. Why did the Minister fail to establish a strategy to monitor the performance of Healthscope from the time that company took over the management of Modbury Hospital? The Auditor-General's Report states that in December 1995, 11 months after Healthscope took over Modbury Hospital, the Auditor-General advised the hospital of the importance of identifying and formally documenting the provisions of compliance in a management strategy document. He went on to say that it was considered that this would assist the hospital in reviewing and actioning matters of non-compliance by Healthscope. Why did the Minister fail to establish that strategy at the beginning?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: This goes to the nub of all the arguments that we have had in this Chamber almost *ad nauseam* about the control or otherwise of units. The member for Elizabeth and I sparred verbally for several days about who has control of these particular matters in relation to the health services Bill that was before Parliament. It was absolutely clear that one of the reasons the member for Elizabeth, in particular, and the Labor Party, in general, fought tooth and nail to prevent the passage of that Bill was that they did not want me as the Minister for Health or any subsequent Minister for Health to have central control. This is a perfect example of where I do not have control. Modbury Hospital has an incorporated board, which runs the hospital, and that is part of its function.

The member for Elizabeth cannot have it both ways. On the one hand, she cannot argue six or 12 months ago that I ought not be given control over the health system—and that is allegedly what she was saying about our Bill—and, on the other hand, criticise me later if a control which ought to be exerted somewhere else is implemented. The simple fact is that Modbury Hospital has an incorporated board, and it is its function to do that. I draw the attention of the member for Elizabeth to the final sentence which was not quoted by her. It states:

The hospital—

that is, the incorporated board—

has advised Audit that it has prepared a 'monitoring checklist' which has identified certain issues that the hospital is addressing with Healthscope (for example, patient statistics, assets, minor works).

My opinion is that that is a function of the incorporated board, and it appears from the Auditor-General's Report that he has been advised that the hospital has now developed that monitoring checklist.

Ms STEVENS: I understand that the Health Commission and the Minister as its head approved the contract that was to be signed between the Modbury Hospital board and Healthscope and that the Health Commission and members of the private development unit played an integral role in establishing that contract between the hospital and Healthscope. Why when that contract was drawn up and why before it was given approval by the Minister were not these

benchmarks and criteria established? I do not believe that the Minister can have it both ways, and he cannot duck the responsibility for this.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: If the member for Elizabeth had been present at the signing of the contract—

Ms Stevens: I was not invited.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: Weren't you? I wonder why. If she had been present, she would know that I am not even a signatory to the contract. I am advised that the signatories are two people from Healthscope and two people from the board, so they have that responsibility. The preliminary cost benefit analysis for 1995-96 indicates a very satisfactory level of performance, and the Auditor-General has indicated that he will work with the Health Commission and Modbury on the post-implementation review. The Health Commission welcomes this. We have been very open about this, and we are only too pleased to have the Auditor-General look at these matters.

Ms STEVENS: I gather from what the Minister has just said that as the Minister for Health he is prepared to allow millions of dollars of public money to be involved in contracts with private sector organisations. The Minister is handing over complete responsibility for that to the boards of hospitals, and he is trying to absolve himself from any responsibility in relation to those moneys.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: As usual, the member for Elizabeth has drawn far too long a bow. I am sure that, if she spoke with the former member for Elizabeth who was the Minister for Health not long ago, he would indicate that, ultimately, Ministers for Health have always been in control of the purse. However, as I have indicated on endless occasions, that is an incredibly blunt instrument when it comes to public hospitals. Obviously, we were involved in dealing with matters to do with the contract, but the ultimate responsibility for the contract rests with the Modbury Hospital board. Clearly, no Minister for Health on either this side of the Chamber or the other would be interested in anything like that that would put at risk public funds.

I repeat: the responsibility rests with the signatories to the contract, for example, the Modbury Public Hospital Board. I make the observation that, in that circumstance, the risk also attaches to the board members rather than a public company, hospital or whatever. The risk comes back to the Government. However, the bottom line is that we always have the power of the purse.

Ms STEVENS: My next question relates to page 591, Volume II and concerns the Mount Gambier Health Service. Mount Gambier Health Service private sector funding will cost an extra \$4 million. What advice did the Minister receive on cost benefits, who prepared that advice, will he table the advice and why did the Government choose private financing at an increased cost? Finally, will the Minister tell the Committee what are the financial arrangements with the developer and what commitments have been entered into by the Government?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I am only too pleased to talk about this, and I particularly recognise your overwhelming interest in this matter, Mr Chairman, because you would be the first person to acknowledge that Mount Gambier has needed this for many years—in fact, for at least four elections. Over that 13 to 15 years, the Labor Party continually promised but failed to deliver.

Ms Stevens: Give us the answers.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I am providing the answers. The Labor Party promised but failed to deliver.

When we were elected we inherited a number of problems, but we looked to deal with them. One of the major problems in the health area was a very badly needed upgrade of the infrastructure. The metropolitan Adelaide strategic health facilities plan had identified huge commitments with a total indicative estimated cost for the Royal Adelaide, the QEH and the Lyell McEwin of \$425 million up to the year 2006-7. However, the capital funds available amounted to only \$330 million, so there was a shortfall of about \$100 million. I would love to be the Minister for Health if we had that \$3.1 billion to spend rather than as a debt. I am very open about that. I do not like having to repay a debt. I would much rather be a Minister—

Ms Stevens interjecting:

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I am coming to that. I would much rather be the Minister for Health at a time when we were not in a financial straitjacket. I would much rather be able to spend. The simple fact is that the health facilities plan indicated that there was an increasing need and a shortfall of funding. The residents, the staff and the hospital board at Mount Gambier had been clamouring for a new hospital and we were simply not prepared to make them wait for another 10 years. We immediately went to the private sector seeking funding for the new hospital facilities by entering—

Ms STEVENS: Mr Chairman, I rise on a point of order. There is three minutes left. I have asked concise questions and I would like the answers. There is three minutes to go on the second separate question.

The CHAIRMAN: The manner in which the Minister responds is not within the Chair's control.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: We decided to go to the private sector. The whole deal within Government circles was completely open. We knew there would be an increased cost to lease the facilities, but we knew they were not up-front costs as they are spread over 25 years. There were months of discussion concerning whether this was a way of providing the finances. It was agreed with the Health Commission, Treasury, Prudential Management and so on that this was an appropriate way to spend the taxpayers' dollars. The people in Treasury and the finance area of the Health Commission are not dolts. They knew that there was an increased cost but we also knew that, if we were going to do something about it, we would have to pay that funding, so we did.

Ms STEVENS: I will attempt to get a precise answer to the next question. I refer to Volume II, page 591, relating to the Port Augusta Hospital, which will also cost an extra \$2.5 million. What advice did the Minister receive on cost benefits, the pros and cons, and what commitments have been entered into by the Government?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I am sorry but the answer is exactly the same. The question was: should we provide a hospital for the people in the country now or should we do it in 10 years? We made a decision to do it now. All the financing was open and clear within Government circles; that is, Treasury, the South Australian Health Commission and the Prudential Management Group. Everyone was involved and everyone knew about these up-front costs. We decided to do it because we thought that the people of Mount Gambier and Port Augusta deserved better than they had received over the past 13 years.

Ms STEVENS: Am I to assume that, when the Health Commission does a cost benefit analysis of a financial commitment, it is expressed in the terms in which the

Minister has expressed it to the Committee? Because, if that is the case, we are in dire straits.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I am sure the people of Port Augusta and Mount Gambier would disagree with the honourable member. They think this is a wonderful decision because they did not have an appropriate hospital for all the time the Labor Government was in power. We have given it to them.

The CHAIRMAN: The time has expired for examination of the Minister for Health. I now call upon the Minister for Tourism and the Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources and invite the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to commence questioning.

Mr BRINDAL: Mr Chairman, I rise on a point of order. Is it correct that under Standing Orders members are required to rise when they ask questions in the Committee of the whole House?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, it is. Members should stand.

Mr CLARKE: I keep thinking it is Estimates Committees. I am glad the member for Unley has so much time on his hands. My question is directed to the Minister for Industrial Affairs. I refer to Part B, Volume I, page 277. Under the heading 'Remuneration of employees', there are two subheadings: 'Remuneration paid under Special Acts' and 'Remuneration paid under the Public Sector Management Act 1995'. I draw the Minister's attention to the subheading 'Remuneration paid under the Public Sector Management Act 1995' under which there are 10 employees who earn over \$100 000—five of whom receive less than \$130 000 and five of whom are on greater than \$130 000—compared with last year when 10 employees earned in excess of \$100 000—nine of whom earned less than \$130 000 and only one earned greater than \$130 000. What is the reason for that substantial increase in salaries and will the Minister identify them? I am happy to take it on notice if the Minister does not have the information readily available.

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: I do not have that information with me at the moment but I will take it on notice and supply it. I suspect it occurred as a result of the setting up of extra commissioners, one being the Deputy President in the Industrial Commission and the other one being the new executive director of the Department for Industrial Affairs. I think that is where the variation arises.

Mr CLARKE: As a supplementary question, I take it that the subheading 'Remuneration paid under special Acts' includes those persons covered under the Remuneration Tribunal over which the Government has no direct authority. Will the Minister confirm that? With respect to the Public Sector Management Act employees, will the Minister identify the basis on which those employees gained salary increases over the previous 12 months?

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: Yes, the special Acts do include them. I misled the House earlier when I said it might have been the Commissioner for the Industrial Commission; he would be picked up under the special Acts. I think one of those in that special Acts area is also the Minister. I will obtain that information for the Deputy Leader and provide it to the House.

Mr CLARKE: I refer to the overview in Part A at the bottom third of page 179, under the heading 'Regular reporting to the Minister for Industrial Affairs'. This deals with Government workers' compensation claims. The report recommends that 'formal reporting requirements on the monitoring and performance of public sector agencies with respect to workers' compensation management and adminis-

tration be reintroduced'. It states that until September 1993 a report was prepared and forwarded on a quarterly basis to the Minister for Industrial Affairs. On the current status it would seem that that has been discontinued since January 1996. Is the Minister prepared through Cabinet to enforce the recommendation that there be quarterly reports to the Minister for Industrial Affairs, as was previously provided for?

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: With respect to these reports, there have been some amendments to the reporting procedures in relation to changes in monitoring occupational health and safety. Those reporting matters were approved by Cabinet, but I will obtain a more detailed answer for the honourable member and provide it to the House.

Mr CLARKE: I refer to workers' compensation fraud policy (page 181 of the same booklet). The Auditor-General recommends that all agencies formalise a policy in relation to workers' compensation fraud. The report, regarding the Minister's own department, states that, 'whilst agencies have been provided with a generic fraud prevention policy and most departmental executives appraised of the importance of formalising their own policy, it is suspected few agencies have implemented a formal fraud control plan'. Does the Minister have the support of Cabinet, or has there been a Cabinet directive to enforce a requirement that all Government agencies have such a plan in place, as recommended by the Auditor-General? If so, when?

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: In the devolution of the responsibility for occupational health and safety and workers' compensation to the agencies, the proposal included the setting up of all requirements similar to those applying to general workers' compensation in the private sector. That obviously includes fraud control. It is my intention to take up this comment of the Auditor-General and ensure that it is implemented.

Ms WHITE: I refer to page 83, Part B, Volume I, with respect to the Australian Formula 1 Grand Prix board: it is indicated that \$1.7 million in termination payments were made to employees. Are any of those people who received termination payments now on the public payroll? If so, how much was paid to them on their termination and in what capacity are they now employed?

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: As part of the loss of the Grand Prix as a result of the previous Government's mismanagement, we had to make sure that we could keep our staff. As you would all remember, part of that fiasco at the time was the setting up of the Melbourne Grand Prix, and there was a rash of encouragement from the Melbourne organising group for all our staff to go there. As part of keeping all our senior staff here, along with all the junior staff who were able to manage the race, we entered into a contract which guaranteed that they would get a year's salary at the end of the event. It was part of the contract of employment that we had with them as staff of the Grand Prix.

None of the staff of the Grand Prix were public servants: they were all employed under the Grand Prix Act. As a consequence, we were able to enter into a formal contract with them that set up a termination payment, which was really at the end of the contract, and also any bonuses which were agreed for the senior management if the Grand Prix achieved a certain level of income. I think there are two, but I will have to check that, and I will provide that information to the House.

Ms STEVENS: I ask the Minister for Family and Community Services questions relating to pages 210 and 211

of Volume I, Part B. My first question relates to general financial controls. The Auditor-General's comments on general accounting controls in FACS are some of the most critical in this year's report. I note that this is the second year in a row that the Auditor-General has raised serious concerns. Indeed, he has indicated that these have been ongoing for a number of years. Both the disbursement account and the advance account have not been reconciled; there is a lack of departmental procedures and a lack of review of reconciliations; there are record deficiencies within payroll; and there is a lack of control over concessional payments for water accounts.

The Auditor-General paints a grim picture of financial management in this department. What are the reasons for this situation; has the department been hampered by cuts to resources; has the Minister called for a full report on this apparent lack of management; will he undertake to provide the department with the resources to correct the situation and maintain procedures in the future; or does he have another solution?

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I will refer to a couple of issues. The department has allocated significant staff and resources to performing the reconciliation of the department's disbursement account No.9 and advance account No.1. They are the two accounts we are talking about. Progress is being made. As at 30 June 1996, reconciliations have not been achieved, and I am quite happy to provide the honourable member with all the detail; there is quite a lot here. The issue was first raised in 1994-95. The reconciliation of the disbursement account No.9 and advance account have not been finalised. The audit has recognised that resources have been allocated to this task, so it is not a matter of resources not being available for that function.

Progress is being made; that has been recognised by the Auditor-General. A solution is being pursued. The reconciliation of the disbursement account has not been completed since 1988 (so it is going back some time) and the advance account No.1 since 1992, so we are looking at a situation that has been of concern over that time. The revised procedures and a process to separate users are in the process of being introduced. I am keen to ensure that that happens as quickly as possible, and there have been discussions with the Auditor-General as to how that can be achieved.

With disbursement account No.9, the aim is to establish a consistent variation as a starting point for future reconciliations. While this has not been achieved at this stage, I am informed that the variation has been reduced significantly to about \$1 000. Previously it was \$100 000, and we have been able to reduce it to \$1 000. That is a significant improvement, although the Auditor-General recognises that we still have that little way to go. As far as advance account No.1 is concerned, the variation has also been significantly reduced to about \$2 000. So, while acknowledging the Auditor-General's statement, if we look at the overall funding of the agency we see that there has been a significant improvement in that situation. The main thing to recognise is that there is no suggestion of fraud in all this, but the Auditor-General has made it clear that we need to finalise this matter, and I am absolutely determined that we will finalise it in the next 12 months. If we can do that in the next six months, it will be even better.

Ms STEVENS: My next question concerns the Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund. The Auditor-General states that in 1994-95 \$404 000 was paid out of the GRF and that in 1995-96 \$695 000 was paid out. These figures are significantly

different from the so-called reconciliation of the fund provided by the Minister in answer to an earlier question. That reconciliation indicated expenditure and commitments totalling \$1 114 915 in 1994-95 compared with the Auditor-General's figure of \$404 000 and \$1 384 960 in 1995-96 compared with the Auditor-General's figure of \$695 000. Will the Minister explain this? When will he provide a genuine reconciliation of this account showing the opening and closing balances and details of all receipts and payments?

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: The member for Elizabeth mentioned a previous question to which I provided an answer. The difference is that the Auditor-General is talking about expenditure and the answer to the question which I provided to the member for Elizabeth (and I have a copy here) referred to commitment. I am happy to have another look at the points that the honourable member has raised and provide more detail if that is possible, but that is the answer and I am not concerned about the Auditor-General's comments in this regard as it relates to the question which was asked by the member for Elizabeth and which I answered earlier.

Ms STEVENS: I would appreciate the more detailed response which was offered. The Auditor-General's Report shows that the Independent Gaming Corporation and the Adelaide Casino have paid a total of \$3.5 million into the Consolidated Account for the rehabilitation of gamblers in 1994-95 and 1995-96. Of the \$3.5 million, \$500 000 was paid into the Community Development Fund last year. Of the balance of \$3 million, only \$1.917 million (that is, \$1.374 million plus \$543 000) has been paid into the Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund. This does not balance with figures provided by the Minister that the fund had committed approximately \$2.399 million over the same period. Will the Minister explain that? Further, if the Auditor-General is correct and \$1.917 million has been paid into the Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund, that leaves \$1.083 million in the Consolidated Account. Is this money available in addition to funds to be paid in this year for distribution or will it again be carried over?

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: The first point is that the money is available from the Consolidated Account. I thought I had made the honourable member aware of that previously. I am happy to provide any of the other detail that the honourable member has requested. The money is all committed and that is the main issue at this stage. The issue of the Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund has been raised publicly on a number of occasions, mainly because of the slow start we had in making the fund available.

As I have said in this House on a number of occasions, the administration of the fund has been applauded by people such as Professor Dickerson. Further, the review which was carried out after the first 12 months confirmed that the way in which we have gone about administering the fund was appropriate. Rather than racing in when we did not know all the answers, it was totally appropriate to take time to work through a number of those issues. That is exactly what we did. Any criticism in regard to the Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund about the time taken to provide those funds can be easily answered. I will provide further information to the honourable member if there is a need to do so, but members need to realise that the funds which are there are totally committed.

Mr CLARKE: My question is directed to the Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources concerning the Environment Protection Authority. Do you agree with the Auditor-General that it would be advisable for the EPA to be

provided with a periodic progress report on how the authority is performing its responsibilities under the Act for monitoring, inspecting and enforcing the Act? What action will be taken on this recommendation? There have been recent allegations involving the Borrelli dump and what has or has not been done by the EPA. Therefore, it is timely that the Auditor-General's Report should come down with this recommendation.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: The Deputy Leader would realise that under the Act there is a requirement for the EPA to produce an annual report to the House, and that happens. I have regular meetings with the Chairman of the authority and I am kept informed of specific issues that relate to the authority itself. Regarding the office of the Environment Protection Authority, I have regular meetings with the Chief Executive Officer and with the Director of the EPA to discuss matters, and that usually happens bi-monthly.

Mr CLARKE: Are you saying that you are not picking up the recommendations?

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I am picking up the recommendations. The recommendations state that there needs to be monitoring of the activities of the EPA. I believe that is totally appropriate. An annual report is produced; I meet on a regular basis with the Chair; and I meet bi-monthly with the Director. If other issues arise between those meetings, I have the opportunity to meet with them at very short notice. It is essential that the legislation and the responsibilities of the EPA be monitored. As the honourable member would realise, it is new and extremely complex legislation. As we work through the legislation, we are still working our way through a number of those responsibilities. I do not have any problems with the monitoring of the EPA and I believe that is happening. I will be discussing that matter with the Chairman of the authority to determine whether it is appropriate that a greater extent of monitoring occur.

Mr CLARKE: I have a supplementary question. Are adequate resources available within the department itself to ensure that this monitoring does occur and occurs on a regular basis to provide a sustained monitoring program rather than these meetings between the Minister and the Director or the Chairman of the EPA?

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: With the EPA, and the responsibilities that the EPA has, there will always be a need for increased resources. I doubt very much, if the EPA were to accept the responsibilities that it has under the legislation alone, that we would ever be able to have enough resources. The only way we will be able to work that legislation effectively, with the responsibilities that we have, is to seek assistance, and that assistance is now being provided by local government, for example, in some of the responsibilities that are being carried out.

I would remind the honourable member and the House that the resources that are in place, whether it be funding or the staffing of the EPA, are identical to those that were foreshadowed by the Minister of the previous Government who indicated very clearly when she launched the EPA that certain resources would be required, and we are meeting those resources. Obviously we need to continue to monitor that in a number of areas because of the complex responsibilities that the EPA has under its authority.

Ms HURLEY: My question refers to page 85 of the overview. The report says that delays have required the time for completion of service level agreements and cost settlement statements between EDS and the department to be extended from April to October. Has the Department for

Environment and Natural Resources completed these agreements and statements and, if so, how much will DENR pay for EDS services in 1996-97?

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: We have completed the signing of the agreement with EDS. There are some agreed matters that still need to be sorted out. I would be happy to make further information on those matters available to the honourable member. I certainly do not have the figures with me in relation to the cost, but I would be happy to provide the other information to the honourable member.

Ms HURLEY: Referring to Volume I, Part B, at page 170, the report outlines very serious deficiencies in the human resources management system, a lack of procedures for processing payrolls, a lack of adequate segregation of payroll and personnel details, a lack of integrity of input data, a lack of testing and back-up recovery systems, etc. Why has this situation developed and what action has the Minister taken to address these issues?

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I would hardly regard them—and I do not think the Auditor-General sees them—as being particularly serious. The human resources system is, after all, a new system. We are working through a number of issues in that regard. To indicate to the House that these are recognised by the Auditor-General as being serious I think is overstepping the situation. It is something about which I will be seeking further information from the department: it is important that that should happen. It is a new system. The human resources system is one that we need to work through. I will be doing that as a matter of urgency.

Mr CLARKE: My question is directed to the Minister for Industrial Affairs and relates to the Overview, Part A, at page 177, referring to the assessment of Crown agencies, automatic exempt status. The Auditor-General recommends that Crown agencies failing to meet these standards (that is, level three standards entitling them to remain exempt)—although Crown agencies, as the Minister is aware, are automatically exempt—after a period of grace of 12 to 18 months, should be the subject of a report to the Minister for Industrial Affairs and the relevant, responsible Minister. The department's response is that, if the agencies do not reach audit level three of the WorkCover standards by 31 December 1998, they risk losing their exempt status. I wonder why the Government is giving the agencies that much leeway compared to the Auditor-General's response, and instead of the stipulating 'risk losing their exempt status', why should not the Government just say, 'You will lose your exempt status unless you conform'?

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: When we came to Government, workers compensation management and occupational health and safety management were an absolute mess. It has taken us a long time to establish what the real problems were and get some decent records. We have set a goal of two years because we believe that that is a reasonable period for the agencies to get to level three. I hope that the majority of them, now that we have devolved the power to the managers, will be much quicker than that. It is my personal view that, if they are not at that level, the Government will have to make some very serious decisions involving management and the way that workers compensation and occupational health and safety are managed in those departments, and it will do so.

Mr CLARKE: The Minister may wish to take this on notice.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The time has expired. There is an opportunity to place a question on the Notice Paper or, alternatively, ask it by way of question without notice

tomorrow. The examination of the two Ministers is concluded. I call on the Minister for Emergency Services and the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations.

Ms HURLEY: I refer to Part B, Volume I, pages 247 and 248, where it states that retailers have failed to comply with HomeStart lending guidelines, policies and procedures, introducing a risk to the loan portfolio. Written-off loans increased from \$1 million to \$3.8 million, and the provision for doubtful debts increased by \$3.6 million. This largely reflects a response to the increasing level of arrears (because people are hurting) and to increased numbers of loans where the value of the property has fallen below the value of the loan outstanding. Will the Minister comment on this? Does he see it as a serious problem within the HomeStart system?

The Hon. E.S. ASHENDEN: Two points have been raised by the honourable member, the first of which involved a concern about retailers. In his report, the Auditor-General has picked a number of operational areas in which he felt improvements could be made. I want to assure the honourable member that in every one of those areas the steps taken have been agreed by the auditors as the correct steps. In other words, concerns were raised in all areas of my portfolio, and the steps which have been taken are now recognised by the auditors as being satisfactory. I can assure the honourable member that steps have been put in place to meet the requirements outlined by the Auditor-General. Even before the Auditor had drawn this to our attention, HomeStart had itself, through its lending quality review process, identified this problem and had already started to take steps to rectify it. Not only had it started but, with the Auditor-General pointing this out again, we have been able to reassure him that those steps were in place and have been taken to rectify that problem.

On the honourable member's second point, let me assure her that HomeStart is no orphan to increasing debt. This reflects what all lenders of money to home purchasers are experiencing. Also, the honourable member would agree that one of the prime aims of HomeStart is to assist those people who are least able to afford home ownership. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that HomeStart does expose itself to perhaps greater risks than an ordinary lender. I know that I am looking to HomeStart to provide a very valuable resource to me in ensuring that people on low and middle incomes are provided with every opportunity to own their own home. In the report to which the honourable member has referred, the Auditor-General is positive about the internal lending quality review that HomeStart utilises. As well as the honourable member's point, there is a positive comment about their own internal procedures. As I said, steps certainly have been taken to address the point raised by the Auditor-General.

Ms HURLEY: The Minister said that the increase in written-off loans and doubtful debts was in line with other housing lending institutions. What sort of increases have other lending institutions had? Is HomeStart consistent with those?

The Hon. E.S. ASHENDEN: I am happy to get that information for the honourable member. Certainly, my officers have assured me that what I said is correct, and I will take that as a question on notice and obtain the necessary detail. I am sure the honourable member would not expect me to know off the top of my head the exact details relating to the Commonwealth Bank, Westpac and so on, but we will certainly obtain that information for her.

Ms HURLEY: I again refer to Part B, Volume II, regarding the South Australian Urban Projects Authority. On page 744, the Auditor-General points out that land sales have dropped from \$15.8 million to \$6.1 million last year, and profitability dropped commensurately. Is this yet another indicator of what most independent commentators are saying, that the South Australian economy is in dire straits, or are there other reasons for it?

The Hon. E.S. ASHENDEN: It is unfortunate that the honourable member is now trying to score some political points. As the honourable member well knows, the problem we are now facing was well and truly set up by the previous Labor Government. A number of things occurred. The South Australian Housing Trust, because of pressure from the Government, over borrowed and over extended itself in its own building program, which has put this Government in a situation where it is finding it extremely difficult to be able to continue with a building program. I remind the honourable member that the debt I inherited was \$1.3 billion, and I thank the previous Government very much for that! I have to pay \$77 million a year in interest, and I thank it very much for that as well! At the same time it borrowed a whole heap of money but, instead of getting it at concessional rates, it got it at full market rates. I thank the previous Government for the mess it has left us in!

Ms Hurley: What's that got to do with land sales?

The Hon. E.S. ASHENDEN: If the Housing Trust was in a half decent position, it would be able to continue with a building program. Because of the mess left by the honourable member's lot, unfortunately my main concern is having to repay that debt. The Housing Trust itself will not be able to be in the market to the extent it was because of the bankrupt mentality of the previous Government. As the honourable member should be aware, some years ago there was an over-supply of houses in this State, as builders put up house after house. The number of houses that were going up far exceeded the population increase.

We have a glut in housing which means that the developers will say, 'Hang on, until we have sold the houses that are here already, there is no real point in our building new ones.' I do not wish to disappoint the honourable member, but if she would like to talk to the Housing Industry Association, the Master Builders Association, and so on, she will be told that at the moment the housing market at the upper levels is going very well indeed. It is at the first home buyer level that the problem exists. Why do we have a problem there? As I have pointed out so clearly and succinctly, it is because of the mess created by the previous Labor Government.

Ms HURLEY: I refer to the Audit Overview (page 94). Transfer of assets to EDS still has not taken place, and the Auditor-General says that its resolution is important to the achievement of the aims of the Government's contractual arrangements with EDS. Will the Minister comment on this and say why that transfer of assets has not taken place from the Department of Housing and Urban Development?

The Hon. E.S. ASHENDEN: I will make two points. First, if the honourable member had read the rest of that paragraph, she would have seen that the answer is given as to why the transfer has not occurred. I suggest that she just read the next few lines. Secondly, if the honourable member has any questions on EDS, they should be addressed to the Premier.

Ms HURLEY: I refer to Part B, Volume I. With regard to the Local Government Financing Authority, will the Minister explain why, given that that organisation is signifi-

cantly downsizing its assets and liabilities, the remuneration of the Chief Executive Officer of the authority has risen to between \$130 000 and \$140 000?

The Hon. E.S. ASHENDEN: I will need to take that question on notice. The authority must have believed that the remuneration being offered to that executive was fair and in keeping with the performance of that person. However, I will ascertain why that salary determination has been made.

Ms HURLEY: Given the quite extensive use of financial derivatives made by the authority—and my understanding is that there is no uniform Australian standard for the accounting for liabilities that arise from these sorts of derivatives—can the Minister assure us that the risk is being well managed by the authority?

The Hon. E.S. ASHENDEN: Again, I will have to take that matter up directly with the authority. The past performance of the authority has indicated that it is certainly aware of its responsibilities, its duty of care, and so on. I will need to take that as a question of notice and get specific details for the honourable member.

Mr CLARKE: On page 103 of volume I of part B of the Auditor-General's Report, the Auditor-General raises concerns that in relation to the people who control Group 4 there needs to be periodical reviews of the control structures to ensure that they remain constant, and he says that there needs to be a clause in the contract specifying that if there is any change the Minister shall be informed of that change within a specified time. I understand that the Minister's department will make sure that if changes take place the Minister will be advised. Why was this not included in the original contract? I remember the Minister waxing lyrical in the Parliament about this contract and how wonderful he was to negotiate this type of contract. Why did the contract not contain this safety provision at the very beginning?

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I am pleased that the honourable member has raised the topic of Group 4, because its management of the Mount Gambier Prison over the past 12 months has been nothing short of an outstanding success. Through that successful management Group 4 has now entrenched its operations in Australia. Recently it won a further contract in Victoria for the design, building, management and finance of a new 600 bed prison. As I announced in Parliament this week, it has also been successful in winning what is Australia's first—and, if our advice from private operators is correct, the world's first—contract for all prisoner transport and in-court management.

The controls that have been placed on the contract are very tight, as the honourable member acknowledges. As I indicated to the Parliament at that time, and as I am prepared to reiterate, it was a well-documented and tightly controlled contract. The Auditor-General was involved throughout the process of the assessment of tenders and also had the opportunity prior to the signing of the contract to input a number of mechanisms for inclusion. However, with all the best will in the world, after the event often further controls are identified that can be added. The Auditor-General identified those further controls, they were acknowledged by the department as being of benefit, and they have been incorporated in the control and management process of the contract. They are worthwhile suggestions, and we were pleased to incorporate them into the procedure, in fact, before the report was tabled in the House.

Mr CLARKE: I refer to page 110—the justice information system. What implications does the qualification that was put on the independent audit report—in particular,

the criticism contained therein that the JIS has not been able to provide appropriate documentation to support values of plant and equipment—have for the transfer of assets to EDS?

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: The audit qualifications consisted of what was presented last year, and I think it explains the situation clearly. It relates mainly to application development costs which were not documented sufficiently over the years from when the JIS began in the early 1980s to satisfy audited evaluations such as amortisation of applications. By the time data was being collected accrual accounting did not exist, and while the records maintained at that time were comprehensive for the needs of that time they were not adequate in terms of the accrual accounting requirements that are now in place to satisfy the Auditor last year when they were first presented.

So, I believe that the audit report reasonably presents the situation in that it states:

This does not imply any inadequacy of the financial records of that time but reflects differing information requirements that exist in the preparation of accrual accounting statements as opposed to cash statements.

So, it has absolutely no effect on the EDS contract or on the transfer of assets to EDS.

Mr CLARKE: I refer to the tables shown on page 105 with respect to costs per prisoner. My question relates to the Group 4 operation at Mount Gambier Prison. The tables show that the net cost per prisoner is higher than at three other prisons and substantially lower than only Yatala which caters for high security prisoners. So, where is the advantage in outsourcing?

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I am very grateful to the Deputy Leader for asking this question. I would have thought that the Deputy Leader would have carefully examined the figures before asking that question. I would have thought that the Deputy Leader, having sat in this House and heard me announce the contract for the operation of the Mount Gambier Prison, having heard me detail to the House in a ministerial statement and in answer to the numerous questions that were asked by his colleagues at that time about the phase in operation, would think, 'Why would there be an average of 96 prisoners in a prison with a capacity of 110 beds?' If he had thought about it, the reason for that is that the numbers were phased into the prison. As of today, the prison has 106 occupants, on some days it has 110 and on others about 105. So, its occupancy level is between 105 and 110 on any one day.

Also, the Deputy Leader may have looked at those costs and wondered who paid for the prisoners to be transferred there in the first place and what establishment costs may have been involved. The figure in the Auditor-General's Report is an inflated figure for the costs of the Mount Gambier Prison. What I can reveal to the honourable member is that the cost per prisoner at Mount Gambier is less than \$30 000. The honourable member wants to know what benefit that presents through outsourcing. A good example—under normal circumstances I would say perhaps not a fair example for Group 4—would be the Mobilong Prison, because Mobilong, like Mount Gambier, is a medium and low security institution. It would not normally be fair because the Mobilong Prison has a capacity of 157 and Mount Gambier has a capacity of 110. Therefore, it could reasonably be expected that Mobilong Prison, if it was absolutely efficient, would have the opportunity to be cheaper per prisoner than Mount Gambier.

In fact, that is not so. The Auditor-General's Report reveals that the costs at Mobilong are sitting on \$36 000 and at Mount Gambier it is less than \$30 000. In a nutshell, the benefits of outsourcing can be seen in the cost. There is, however, an impediment to that cost. That impediment has been presented by the political actions of the Labor Party together with its close associates the Democrats in another place. Of those funds for the running of Mount Gambier Prison, \$247 000 are for Department of Correctional Services staff and associated expenses. Those staff have been necessary as a result of the Labor Party and its mates the Democrats refusing to facilitate the legislation for the private management of Mount Gambier.

As I advised members before, while we could still go ahead and privately manage Mount Gambier, there would be a cost impost which has been forced upon it by the Labor Party and the Democrats. It is still a great saving and a great result. However, if the Labor Party wants to assist in reducing prison costs further, all it need do is join with its mates the Democrats, or indeed the Government for a change, and facilitate that legislation. If the Deputy Leader would like to assist in the reduction of prison costs, I would be only too happy to introduce that legislation to the House and test his desire to further save costs to the community.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: There you go, the honourable member says, 'If you bring it in, it will be knocked back again.' They are the guys who ran the prison system into the ground last time.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, members. Are there any further questions?

Ms HURLEY: I refer the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations to Part B, Volume I, page 265, and the increase in consultants' costs from \$576 000 to \$1.1 million. Will the Minister explain why the cost of consultants doubled in this period, what they were used for, whether the firms engaged were South Australian firms and what firms were from interstate?

The Hon. E.S. ASHENDEN: My officer has advised me that we provided that information in the Estimates Committees. However, the specific detail in relation to the exact figures which we have now we will take on notice and provide an answer to the honourable member.

Ms HURLEY: I have some information that interstate firms, for example, have been used to conduct surveys and so on of Housing Trust residents. Will the Minister include information on what firms did what sort of work in that reply?

The Hon. E.S. ASHENDEN: Yes, I can assure the honourable member I will do that.

Ms HURLEY: Volume II, page 611, refers to the delegated authority in the Housing Trust for writing off debt and queries that it may not have been done by the appropriately delegated persons within the Housing Trust. Will the Minister say to whom this is referring and in what way the problem has been resolved or is about to be resolved?

The Hon. E.S. ASHENDEN: I will answer the second part of the question first because when I became Minister I was concerned at the level of delegation in relation to a number of areas not only within the Housing Trust but within my entire portfolio. I therefore reviewed those levels of delegation and I assure the honourable member that I now exercise very close control, if you like, and a very close eye on those areas. My chief executive is required to provide me with information in relation to the matters which the honour-

able member has raised. As I said yesterday, I was concerned at the level of delegated authority which existed throughout my portfolio area and, as Minister, I have taken steps to tighten that control.

Ms HURLEY: On page 610 of the same document, regarding the maintenance program, the Auditor-General says that some areas of management of the maintenance functions were satisfactory and other areas, particularly the performance of clerical procedures, were assessed as less than satisfactory. Is the problem with the clerical procedures due to the separation of maintenance into the new property management section or is it in the regional offices?

The Hon. E.S. ASHENDEN: I want to make two points. First, in relation to the specific detail the honourable member is seeking, again I will take that question on notice. I stress a point I made early in the piece; that is, I acknowledge that some operational areas which needed improvement were drawn to our attention by the Auditor-General, and this is certainly one of those operational areas to which the honourable member is now referring. I repeat: we have been assured by the auditors that the steps we have taken based on the advice we have been given is satisfactory to them. I acknowledge there was a problem but, at the same time, I stress that it has now been rectified to the satisfaction of the auditors.

Ms HURLEY: In relation to this problem concerning the performance of clerical procedures, a number of people have complained to me about delays and problems with getting their maintenance work done. Has the nature of this problem resulted in disadvantages to people waiting for maintenance to be done or was it simply an internal management problem?

The Hon. E.S. ASHENDEN: It is interesting to hear the member state that she has had constituents contact her with complaints about maintenance because I have been on talkback radio on at least two occasions when matters of maintenance on Housing Trust residences have been addressed and every person who has called in has been complimentary of the trust for the speed with which their problems have been resolved. All I can say is that, if the honourable member has some specific problems, she should draw them to my attention and I will ensure that they are handled. As I said, the feedback which I have received through talkback radio programs has been absolutely 100 per cent positive regarding how happy people are with the trust.

As I said, in each instance when I have gone on talkback radio, concerns have been raised but the people ringing in have been saying how happy they are with the service. I have also been given advice by trust officers who have indicated to me that there are very firm guidelines which must be met, particularly in terms of urgent maintenance such as a blocked drain or something such as that where the response time is measured in hours not in days. But, if the honourable member has specific problems, she should draw them to my attention. I am aware of at least one or two problems which the honourable member has drawn to my attention in the past, and I am sure the honourable member would acknowledge that in each instance they were thoroughly investigated and a response provided to her. So, if there are problems and they are drawn to my attention, I assure the honourable member that they will be handled expeditiously. I repeat: I can only go on the feedback I have received, and that is that the vast majority of our tenants are more than happy with the service they receive.

Ms HURLEY: I repeat my question: did the clerical procedure with which there was a problem relate directly to

any delays in maintenance being done or what was the nature of the problem encountered?

The Hon. E.S. ASHENDEN: Again, I will have to take that specific question on notice. As I said, I will take that part on notice and get back to the honourable member. I again repeat that this is an operational problem. Some were drawn to our attention. As I said, the auditors are happy with the steps being taken to rectify them. I will find out for the honourable member whether that was the cause then, but that problem has been addressed to the satisfaction of the auditors.

Ms HURLEY: There was a drop in the maintenance allowance available for Housing Trust tenants. In addition to fixing up some of the problems, did the Minister also streamline procedures so that there was not a commensurate drop in the amount of maintenance work being done?

The Hon. E.S. ASHENDEN: As the honourable member would know, maintenance is undertaken by contractors. We have found that those contractors have been extremely competitive in the tendering process. We have been delighted with the levels of the quotations which have been forwarded to us. I know that before the tender process is set in place officers have put down a figure which they anticipate is the level at which the contracts will come back and, in many instances, the contracts have been at figures below those levels. Certainly, on the advice I have been given, the honourable member cannot draw any conclusion that, because we have been more efficient in the way in which we have utilised our money, that has reflected adversely on the maintenance program.

The CHAIRMAN: The time for the consideration of the ministerial lines Emergency Services, Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations has expired.

[Sitting suspended from 6.5 to 7.30 p.m.]

Ms WHITE: I have questions of the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education. I will start with reference to Part B of Volume I of the report where on page 161 the Auditor-General specifically refers to the Department of Employment, Training and Further Education and expresses a fair bit of concern over the management of major plant and equipment through the fixed asset system. For example, the Auditor-General talks about undertakings given for stocktakes of plant and equipment but states that reviews had not occurred at some of the institutes and central office. The audit also refers to stocktake results, where only two out of 10 institutes had provided central office with information, and it goes on in that vein. What steps has the Minister taken to rectify that situation?

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: As the honourable member indicated, this issue has been raised by the Auditor-General over a period of time. Members should appreciate that TAFE is a huge organisation in terms of assets: we are a training organisation that is continually updating equipment. We have 10 institutes, 57 campuses, in excess of 90 000 students and more than 4 000 staff, so it is not surprising that an organisation of that size will face some challenge in making sure that asset management is absolutely up to the minute. Nevertheless, the Chief Executive, Mr Brian Stanford, has assured me as recently as today that all the matters raised by the Auditor-General are being and will be addressed. I understand that since this report was compiled further action has been taken by the department to ensure that there is

adequate recording of assets and management of plant and equipment.

Ms WHITE: The report (page 107) deals with the security and control of Government computer information systems and states that DETAFE had not implemented the prescribed South Australian Government information technology standards on outsourcing of information technology in respect of an IT security policy at the time of that security review into the student management system. The student management system maintains important personal information of students, information that should not be misused. Is the Minister satisfied with the arrangements for that system within the department? If not, what is being done to address this matter?

The Minister would remember that there has been at least one incident where a student has infiltrated the system to the point of changing results. It is a considerable concern. What has the Minister done or what is he doing to ensure that the integrity of the information stored by the department on that system is maintained?

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: It is an important issue. Once again, not detracting from the responsibility to maintain systems and their integrity, I point out that the Adelaide Institute of TAFE has over 1 500 computers on-line, which is a fraction of what exists within the TAFE system. When you also teach computing—and many of our students are very talented in that area—there will be the challenge for the occasional student to breach the system.

We did have a situation, as the honourable member outlined, where someone was able to get into the system through the Torrens Valley Institute at a local level. I point out now, as I did at the time, that strict instructions were given to ensure that wherever humanly possibly we prevent that happening. It is an illegal activity to hack into a system and we have no hesitation in handing over to the police people who illegally seek to access the TAFE system. We have a comprehensive monitoring system in terms of access to the Internet. Where people have used the Internet for non-official purposes, they have been disciplined and action taken against them.

Members must realise that despite a student body of that size we have few problems with our students and/or staff doing the wrong thing. It is to their credit that we have so few examples of people doing the wrong thing. The lad involved in the case to which the honourable member referred was a juvenile from a non-English speaking background (which complicated the matter) and obviously talented in computing skills, but the instruction was issued immediately after that incident to ensure that people could not illegally access our system. I do not profess to be a computer expert but I understand that there is no absolutely foolproof system to prevent someone getting in. We have all the state-of-the-art checks in place to ensure that people who have no right to do so do not access the system.

Ms WHITE: That response did not instil in me a great deal of confidence. The incident to which the Minister referred occurred at the beginning of last year and a considerable time has elapsed since then. However, the Auditor-General talks about DETAFE not having implemented the Government's own IT standards and security policy and its not having prepared security specifications for the data maintained. He also states that weaknesses were found in security integrity control.

There is a list there of weaknesses that were found to exist in the system. The Minister talked about the incident I

referred to, and I felt almost as if he were justifying why the student did what he did. That student was detected, but others may not be, and I still maintain that, according to audit report, there seem to be still a lot of issues that have not been addressed by the Government. At the risk of repeating myself, I would like to know whether, by the time we have this report next year, we will be reading a different story. A number of those issues have just not been addressed, according to this report.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: I can assure the honourable member that every safeguard that we are aware of is in place to ensure that people do not illegally access the system. You have to realise in terms of governmental computer operation that in TAFE it is somewhat different, given that we are a training and educational establishment, and therefore our use of computers in a whole range of ways is different from most agencies. Not only because of that earlier incident that was isolated at one institute and was a localised breach, I am assured we have in place the most modern and sophisticated mechanism to ensure that people do not access the system. Clearly, for security reasons, I will not go into all the provisions that we have, but it also relates to other aspects of TAFE. We monitor very closely and can detect quickly any breaches of our systems, whether into the internet or any other.

Ms WHITE: I refer to the Auditor-General's comments in Part A of the Audit Overview. With respect to contracting out, the Auditor-General talks about Crown immunity, contracting out and issues such as that. Contracting out, according to audit, of core Government functions is both complex and unsettled, to use the terms of the Auditor-General. He talks about legal risks and liability impact assessments, etc. The Department of Employment, Training and Further Education (DETAFFE) involves a number of contracting out arrangements, for example, the IT infrastructure, the applications development and support for computerised business systems, and the physical resources functions. How does the Minister see the comments of the Auditor-General relating to the contracting out functions within his department, and does he see the need for any steps to be taken to address the concerns of the Auditor-General?

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: I do not believe it is accurate to suggest that the Auditor-General has any significant concerns specifically with my department. Indeed, on page 162, he says, 'The department has been involved in a number of contracting out arrangements', and then details some of them, but I do not think it is fair to say that the Auditor-General expressed any significant concern in respect of the contracting out functions that we have engaged in.

Ms WHITE: With respect, that really was not the question I asked. I was not implying that the Auditor-General had found anything specifically wrong with the Minister, but he does raise a concern in an overview, a concern right across Government, of the contracting out process and what it might mean for legal risks and liability. Does the Minister concede that the department could be contracting out functions, such as the IT infrastructure, that deal with vast amounts of information, and sometimes quite personal information relevant to students and staff, etc., and that the risks and liability to Government of a contractor's falling down in its responsibilities might impact, or does the Minister reject the possibility of any legal risks or liability to Government? In other words, has the Minister read the Auditor-General's comments in respect of his own department and the potential

for infringements along those lines and, if so, how does he envisage handling those risks?

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: There are risks. Life is full of risks, as I indicated earlier, particularly in a department that is dealing with so many people's futures, their careers, career pathways, training, and those sorts of areas. We do have a lot of information that necessarily we must keep in relation to results and details about students, so we are very mindful of that, and that is an overriding requirement in terms of any information that is held by us. In any contracting out arrangement we ensure that there will be no breach in relation to that sort of information. The short answer is that, unlike some other agencies, we are not extensively into contracting out, but where we have been and where we may go we will ensure that we have adequate and proper safeguards in place.

Certainly, as a department, we have not been fully extended, if you like, in terms of contracting out. It has been accepted by my colleagues that we have a particular situation in relation to training and educational responsibilities. We must ensure that we provide absolute safeguards in relation to any contracting out but, at this stage, our contracting out in relation to information technology has been rather minimal.

Ms WHITE: I refer to the Auditor-General's Report, Part B, Volume I, at pages 160 and 161, which talks about implementation of accrual accounting. Mention is made of the review by audit in April 1996 and the implementation of accrual accounting. A number of shortcomings were revealed in that review, for example, the project management committee's not approving the implementation plan and insufficient information to enable proper assessments. It talks also of a delay until June 1997 when the system will be fully operational. The review makes those types of criticism. Will the Minister comment on the current status within the department with respect to addressing those criticisms?

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: Once again we are talking about a department that operates very much on a collegiate system in terms of decision making and implementation. In other words, we do not run it as an authoritarian organisation, and that is why major decisions are made involving senior staff, the directors of the various institutes and staff within those institutes.

It is not surprising that sometimes the implementation of these arrangements, including accrual accounting, takes a bit longer. As I mentioned, the sheer volume of material with which we have to deal is also not surprising. I am assured now that the implementation relating to accrual accounting is proceeding rapidly, and the majority of the Masterpiece systems are being implemented progressively during 1996 and next year and will provide the basis for most of the accrual information for 1996-97, with a small part to be provided from any remaining existing systems not replaced as at 30 June 1997. We are well down the track to having accrual accounting fully implemented through the department. The sheer size and historical existence of different systems means that it has taken a little longer than it should have to bring about full implementation.

Mr CLARKE: I refer to part A of the Audit Overview (page 128) relating to the Crown Solicitor's investigation into conflicts of interest which arose during the abandoned sale process for SAMCOR. Given that the Crown Solicitor provided his report to the Government in his capacity as an independent investigator rather than as the Government's legal adviser, will the Government table a copy of his report

into this matter so that the Parliament can be sure that there has been no cover-up?

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: As the Deputy Leader knows, the Treasurer was actually handling the sale process, and he is the one to whom the Crown Solicitor reported. That question would have to be asked of the Treasurer, not of me.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: Well, I do not have it. It was obviously an issue that had much publicity at the time. Basically, a lot of that publicity was brutally unfair. It was unhelpful to the sale process, which makes it unhelpful to the meat industry. Because of the publicity at the time, it made saving those jobs at SAMCOR that much harder, but we are still working on trying to fix that. The assurance I can give is that Des Lilley was at no time involved in the assessment of bids or in the decision making. If he had been involved in either the assessment of the bids or the decision to be made by the Asset Management Task Force, certainly it would be a different matter.

I have been assured by both parties that no information whatsoever was given that could be seen as being improper or giving anyone an unfair edge. The basis of the visit was actually as a potential employee. If the Better Beef operation is looking at setting up on the other side of the world, it is only fair that it have a good look at the man who may well have been heading it up here. I am quite comfortable with what happened in that regard. The Deputy Leader will have to ask the Treasurer his question.

Mr CLARKE: Referring to Part B, Volume I (page 452), I note that the dividend provided to Government by PISA's forestry division decreased by \$16.1 million to only \$1 million in 1995-96. Why did this occur, what is the projected dividend for 1996-97, and how will it be achieved?

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: There are relevant points to be made regarding the dividend. A large part of that is due to the operating costs increasing by \$15 million to \$64.1 million, for the following reasons. The harvesting costs increased due to the lowering of the overall rotation age, which meant that there was actually more harvesting of additional growing stock. There were increases in export chip prices which resulted in a higher payment to Forwood Products for the purchase of those chips. There were significant additional premium costs for the insurance cover of the forest assets and also payments to private forest owners reflecting additional volumes of log harvested from that source. It is important to note that retained profits increased by \$17 million—which more than makes up for the \$16 million—during the year, which was to provide for changes in timing of the tax equivalent regime and other payments, and it has definitely impacted on that dividend paid and covers the difference.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: In 1996-97 hopefully it will be up again. Forestry has gone through hard times because of the building situation. Because of that timing, with the retained profits we will be back to a better level. I do not have a crystal ball, but hopefully we will be getting back up to where we were.

Mr CLARKE: I refer to page 707, Part B, Volume II. When Forwood Products was sold it was announced that the purchaser Carter Holt Harvey was a New Zealand owned company. Is the Minister aware of any US involvement with Carter Holt Harvey, and can he advise what percentage of the company is New Zealand owned?

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: I will take that question on notice. Again, the sale process was handled outside the department. I will obtain an answer for the Deputy Leader.

Mr CLARKE: I refer to page 707. What are the exact allocations of timber from PISA Forestry to Carter Holt Harvey over the next 10 years as a result of the sale of Forwood Products, and how far out does this allocation extend with rights of renewal contracts?

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: That is quite a complicated list, and I will take the question on notice. Various contracts were in that parcel for varying amounts and for varying lengths of time. The maximum length of time is 15 years with 15 years right of renewal, but I will get the details for the Deputy Leader.

Mr CLARKE: I refer to Part A of the Audit Overview, at page 128. The Asset Management Task Force provides exit reports following the sale of State assets. Has an exit report been prepared or is it in the process of preparation following the sale of Forwood Products, and will the Minister table a copy in this House?

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: Again, that falls within the area of responsibility of the Treasurer because of the asset sales involved. I will refer that question to the Treasurer as I could not make any commitment on his behalf.

Mr CLARKE: I refer to page 128 of the Audit Overview. As the Minister responsible for the day-to-day operations of SAMCOR, is he keeping those employees fully informed of the latest developments in the sale process?

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: My area of responsibility at the moment involves the day-to-day operations of SAMCOR. We are having weekly meetings to keep on top of that. The Deputy Leader understands the sale process, namely, through the Asset Management—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: I have talked to the employees, but I am not privy to what is going on within the Asset Management Task Force. That is part of the sale process that has been set up. Not knowing what the day-to-day progress is, there is absolutely no way that I can relay it on to the work force.

Mr CLARKE: At page 442, Part B, Volume I, the Auditor-General again points to a lack of appropriate procedures for the payment of accounts and refers to inadequate checking of authorities for payment, weaknesses in procedures for checking that charges were for goods and services received and instances where appropriate procurement practices were not followed. Similar concerns were raised by the Auditor-General in last year's report. What does the Minister propose to do to remedy the situation this year?

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: I have spoken with the relevant officers about it and, if the Deputy Leader refers to page 442 under the heading 'Audit Findings And Comments', the second paragraph states:

The response received from the department regarding these issues indicated that appropriate action would be taken to address the matters raised.

The Auditor-General has had that assurance. In the next paragraph it is also interesting to note that, because of his concerns, the Auditor-General did extra checking. He said:

The results of this substantive testing did not reveal any material errors.

I have taken on board what the Auditor-General has had to say. We will try to avoid this matter appearing in the report next year.

Mr CLARKE: We will be reading the report with interest. At page 444, Part B, Volume I, I note that no payments of outstanding loans under the Gulf St Vincent prawn fishery rationalisation plan were received in 1995-96. What is the Government's intention in relation to the recovery of these outstanding debts and will the Minister indicate the costs associated with the management of this fishery and the cost of consultants' reports over the past year?

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: Certainly, in relation to the first part, the Deputy Leader—and I must admit that it is not clear from the way in which it is written—has misread what payments have been made. The interest was paid and it will show up in the chart on page 449. Payments were made, and the receipts for 1996 were \$400 000. The reason why it has not been paid to Treasury as such is that there was a change in the arrangements for that loan and, at the moment, the money is sitting in a deposit account. At the start of the year we had a balance of \$299 000 in a deposit account with Treasury; with the \$400 000 paid by the fishermen added to it, there is now a deposit account of \$699 000 sitting with Treasury. Discussions are taking place at the moment regarding how to formalise the movement of that money from the deposit account into repayment of loan with Treasury.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The time has expired for consideration of the lines Employment, Training and Further Education and Primary Industries.

Progress reported.

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

That the report of the Auditor-General and budget results 1995-96 be noted.

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): I want to say something very emphatic to start:

The role of State Parliament should be enhanced to improve representation of the people and to make the Government more accountable to the people through Parliament.

All of us should believe those words uttered by the Premier of South Australia when he was Leader of the Opposition during his policy speech before the last election. That was one of his central pledges: open Government, honesty and accountability through the Parliament. From what we have seen, that was obviously just another broken promise. We have seen it illustrated here today with the measly, pathetic Question Time this Parliament has been given to question Ministers in relation to the Auditor-General's Report. Less than three hours has been made available to question Ministers in relation to a 1 000 page report that was tabled yesterday afternoon. The Auditor-General's Report runs to 1 000 pages, yet only three hours has been allowed for questions.

Previously Parliament has received the Auditor-General's Report before the Estimate Committees were held. Those Committees provide 13 days to question Ministers. As a Minister for four years in seven different portfolios, I faced hour after hour of questions from the then Liberal Opposition, which drew its questions from the Auditor-General's Report. In other words, 13 days of questioning is today shoehorned into three hours. That is the Premier's version of accountability.

This Premier runs from scrutiny. We know it, and his colleagues know it because they constantly talk about it. When the Premier was present for his 30 minutes of questioning today he made sure that he was not alone. He made sure

that the Treasurer was with him to prop him up just in case he needed someone else to blame, someone else to pass the buck to. Yesterday we had the disgraceful sight of the Premier of South Australia refusing to answer any Opposition questions about issues vital to the future of services relied upon by thousands of South Australians. He handballed each of those questions to his Ministers. There was a brief flurry each time with them trying to work out who was going to get the Premier off the hook: it was as simple as that.

We keep hearing that the Premier is anxious to look tough. In a recent poll people said that he is a weak Premier, that the State is wallowing, that there is a lack of direction. He has been told that he has to look tougher, to look like a real leader, to look a bit like a South Australian version of Jeff Kennett. Well, let me just say this: Jeff Kennett would not have handballed yesterday's questions on the opening day of Parliament to Ministers who were not ready, who had to be dragooned into answering questions to get the Premier off the hook.

The Premier wants to look like Jeff Kennett, but I guess there is one essential difference: Jeff Kennett tries to win for his State whilst our Premier likes to lose and likes to run away. When the heat is on, Dean is gone and he wheels out someone else to blame the former Government, the Keating Government, the Howard Government or the city council, and now he has found someone new to blame.

Yesterday we asked questions about Federal/State economic relations, about massive Liberal cuts to child-care funding, to aged-care funding and to our hospitals. But the Premier did not want to know about that, and he did not want to answer those questions. He has not done anything to fight for South Australia against the Liberal cuts from Canberra. It is clear that the Premier has run up the white flag for South Australia against the Liberal's cuts. It is clear that the Premier does not want to know that John Howard has ripped up his budget, and he does not want to know about the Auditor-General's Report, and I can understand why: because, once again, the Auditor-General's Report is a systematic indictment of the Premier's whole economic and financial agenda.

The Auditor-General, Ken MacPherson, has punched holes in every plank of the Premier's economic plan. Let us look at them. Privatisation will cost the taxpayer more money, not less, and it will expose the taxpayers of South Australia to real risk. He says that the asset sales have not helped the deficit at all. He says the \$300 million savings centrepiece of the last Brown budget cannot be supported using the Premier's own budget figures. He also says that the EDS deal, the Premier's shining example of economic development, has a series of question marks placed beside it.

This report has clearly got under the Premier's skin. It has hit a raw nerve, so this Government did what it does best, that is, shoot the messenger and find someone else to blame. This time it was not the former Government, the Howard Government, the Keating Government or the city council: now he has the Auditor-General to blame for his current problems. On radio this morning he was calling the Auditor-General short-sighted. He was calling the Auditor-General simplistic. He accused him of attempting to rewrite history. His Treasurer has said that the budget is too complex for the Auditor-General to understand. I find that extraordinary.

We have had different Auditors-General over the years. We had Tom Sheridan, regarded as a tough Auditor-General who questioned Ministers and questioned Government finances, but I never saw Ministers in the Estimates Committee stand up and bucket the Auditor-General—not once. He

is an independent officer of this Parliament. He is responsible to this Parliament: not to the Government, not to the Opposition but to the Parliament. That is why he gave his first copies of the report to the Speaker and to the President of this Parliament. It is absolutely essential for the running of this State that we have confidence in our Auditor-General and that the Auditor-General has the confidence of all members of this Parliament.

What we have seen today and yesterday is a Premier and a Treasurer who are trying to undermine confidence in the Auditor-General of this State—trying to pull the rug from under him, in terms of public credibility. It is like attacking a judge who has cast judgment on you. And we remember the judge, Trevor Olsson, when he cast judgment on the Premier's veracity and credibility as an unreliable witness in a court case last year. So, we have been told that this budget is too hard for the Auditor-General to cope with and understand. Unfortunately for the Premier and the Treasurer, the Auditor-General does seem to see through the bodge figures and bodge budget papers, and what does he see?

On privatisation, the Auditor-General has blown away the whole economic rationale for the Brown Government's obsession with flogging off this State's assets and operations to foreigners. Let us look at what the Auditor-General says about privatisation, about outsourcing and about all these private sector-public sector deals. The Premier has told this House that privatisation is all about saving the taxpayers money and reducing risk to the taxpayer. But let us look at the evidence uncovered by the Auditor-General.

The Auditor-General found that getting the private sector to build public hospitals and then lease them back to Government is not cheaper for taxpayers. In fact, it costs us more. He came up with the hard evidence in two case studies, the Mount Gambier and Port Augusta hospital proposals, which cost taxpayers \$6.5 million more than if the Government had built those projects directly.

That is \$6.5 million being wasted, going into the pockets of private sector developers, which could be going towards treating patients in our struggling public hospitals. That \$6.5 million is the annual salary of more than 120 nurses. We know that this Government has got rid of 500 nurses. It is half the budget shortfall at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, a shortfall created by Brown Government cuts. That \$6.5 million would solve the South-East obstetrics crisis several times over. I wonder whether the people of Mount Gambier will thank the Premier for this bungle over the construction of the Mount Gambier hospital.

But the whole outsourcing mania that infects this Government may have placed tens of millions of dollars at risk, and I want to quote the Auditor-General directly. I do not want to bad-mouth the Auditor-General. I do not want to try to undermine his confidence. I do not want to undermine the confidence of the public or the Parliament in this Auditor-General. I want to quote from him directly, and it is a quote that the Premier should read. The Auditor-General states:

It may be that in certain circumstances the privileges of the Crown, including immunity from criminal liability, may be unintentionally invested in private contracting parties. Similarly, the South Australian Government may incur liabilities through the contracting out of 'core Government' services which it would not have otherwise had.

Far from removing risk, the Auditor-General says that this outsourcing has opened entire new areas of risk for taxpayers. The Labor Party is totally opposed to the outsourcing and privatisation of core Government activities—what we call the

fundamentals—such as hospitals, schools, water and power. We have always been opposed to this on an ideological, economic, strategic and public interest basis. The Auditor-General has further highlighted the economic justification for that position. With respect to asset sales, he says:

It seems... that the sale of Government businesses has not contributed significantly to the State's underlying deficit outcome.

For the Premier, who seems to have got lost in his Auditor-General's Report today, that is at page 21 of Part A. Asset sales have reduced the debt—and that is important—but the Auditor says we have forgone income of \$110 million for interest savings of \$114 million, and it has made no dent on the deficit. Yesterday, the Treasurer said we would be all right if interest rates were up. Well, they are not. And there is speculation that they may go down again—you have only to listen to Mr Costello. That would reduce the Government's public debt interest bill, but it would further reduce savings to the budget deficit as a result of asset sales.

Let us clear up a few things that were raised in this Parliament today. The Labor Opposition supported the sale of BankSA, the Pipelines Authority and SGIC. We voted in this Parliament. If the Premier had turned up he would not have embarrassed himself today when he accused Labor of voting against or opposing these asset sales. The Auditor-General has now found that the prices obtained by the Government in these and other privatisations were collectively well below what would have reflected the earnings potential of those assets. That is what the Auditor-General said. The Government's own recurrent savings figures on budget outlays have also come under scrutiny from the Auditor-General.

The Premier has boasted about the \$300 million recurrent savings in this year's budget. Unfortunately, the Auditor-General cannot substantiate these savings using the Premier's own budget figures. The Auditor-General said:

I would observe that the discussion of \$300 million recurrent savings in the 1996-97 financial statement cannot be readily reconciled to the trends in the preceding data (Part A, p.13).

What a damning assessment! The State's top budget watchdog says the figures are such that he cannot see how a \$300 million saving can be explained. Of course, the Treasurer has said that the Auditor-General cannot understand his budget figures, but Labor has said for some time that the budget documentation requires major reform to bring it up to best practice. It should be brought in line with the practice of the previous Commonwealth Government. After all, we are still waiting for details of the Howard budget in relation to the States and special purpose payments in the budget brought down in August. In the budget debate Labor called for the provision in the budget documents of these key points:

1. Three year forward estimates of outlays by function, portfolio and program.
2. Three year forward estimates of revenue type.
3. An outlays measure table, including expected costs of each measure in all three out years.
4. A revenue measures table including expected receipts from each measure in the three out years.
5. A reconciliation table showing variations between the last forward estimates and the budget estimate for the budget year as a result of parameter variations, other estimates variations and policy decisions by portfolio or function.

Of course, the EDS deal, the Premier's shining example of economic development, also copped some criticism. The

Auditor-General finds that there are still important, unresolved matters between agencies and EDS. These strike at the very claim of this Premier that he struck a good deal, a great bargain, for South Australia. Nearly six months after the transfer of operations to EDS, there is still a lack of verification of levels of service from EDS to Government agencies, there is no finalisation of software leases and maintenance contracts, there are differences in the asset listings of EDS and the Government departments, and there are inadequate security arrangements. If the Premier does not believe that, he should turn to the Auditor General's Report (Part A, page 94-95). The Auditor-General says that it is 'unsatisfactory that problems continue to be experienced with finalisation of 'wave one' agency Service Level Agreements.'

The Auditor-General has uncovered plenty of other nasties. Earlier I spoke about health suffering, thanks to the Government's privatisation plans wasting money, but that is not the only reason that our public health system is sick. Not only has the Brown Government slashed the health budget, but it has not been spending the money it allocated for health. It has been a con, it has been a trick, it has been a Dean special. The Auditor-General's Report says that during 1995-96 the Health Commission's deposit account increased by \$38 million to a total of \$78 million. Of this, the Auditor-General says that \$11 million is committed to enterprise bargaining and \$20 million is committed to capital works. That leaves \$47 million in the Health Commission's bank account, waiting for the Premier to call an election.

While the Brown Government has been saving money in the Health Commission's hollow log, hospitals have been cutting jobs, closing beds and turning patients away. In February, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital announced that it had a \$13.5 million shortfall that would require a cut of 200 staff, the closure of 50 beds and that patient numbers would be cut by 4 000 to 5 000. Yet the Government is packing the pork barrel with money that could alleviate the crisis.

There are many true stories about how the Brown Government's budget cuts are hurting real people. There are stories of ambulances driving from one hospital to another trying to find beds, of a patient dying on a trolley in reception, of dirty and soiled linen not changed, of services for urgent dental cases described as being in chaos, of mental patients being booked into a Hindley Street hotel and of the Government being unable to contact possible Legionnaire's victims because it was not cost effective. We used to have Governments that were committed in health because of the needs of people and patients. Today, we are not doing those things, not addressing public health concerns, because they are not cost effective.

While hospitals have finished the year in debt, the Health Commission has increased its bank balance to \$78 million. Every time there is a new hospitals crisis, every time a patient is dealt with badly, let us remind them that \$78 million has been spirited away by this Premier to help his election rather than to help the health of this State, and that is a disgrace. I have certainly not exhausted the concerns raised by the Auditor-General in my contribution tonight. Twenty minutes is not enough for that, and neither is a measly three hour debate with a Premier who does not even bother to show up.

Mr BECKER (Peake): This is another attempt by the Leader of the Opposition to denigrate anything and everything that is good about the current Government. The Auditor-General's Report is simply what it is: an overview of the operations of the Government during the past

12 months. Whilst the Auditor-General made comments in hindsight on some of the actions and activities undertaken by the Government—and that is very easy to do—you have to give credit to the Government for trying and for carrying out one of the most difficult tasks ever placed before any Government in this State. This State had to face the horrendous effort of cleaning up the mess of the previous Labor Government, of which the Leader of the Opposition was a member and to which he was a quite significant contributor: if we believe what he put out periodically during his ministerial term, he was one of the highlights of that Government.

The current Treasurer is now faced with having to clean up a \$3.5 million-plus deficit, to try to rein in what he can get for wasted assets. Take the Remm building: it cost nearly \$900 million, and all we can get for it is \$150 million. Everybody knows what the rorts were on that property and what the unions did to the Government in the construction of that property. Everybody knows what happened to keep it going. Look at the number of people who went on workers' compensation and how many of them are still on workers' compensation today. That is the real story; they are the real facts; that is the real issue that went on in the construction of the Remm building. It was typical builders labourers in Victoria who were kicked out of Victoria by Labor Premier Cain and who came across here—

Mr CLARKE: I rise to take a point of order on relevance. We are debating the Auditor-General's Report.

The SPEAKER: If the honourable member would like the Chair to enforce that Standing Order rigorously, I would suggest to him that his colleagues will have a great deal of difficulty in making a contribution. The Leader of the Opposition would have been told to sit down after two minutes. Therefore, in the interests of free debate, the Chair does not uphold the point of order.

Mr BECKER: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BECKER: The relevance to the report is that the Opposition is claiming that the Auditor-General's Report is a condemnation and a critique of the operations of the State Government in the past 12 months, of the various Government departments, public trading enterprises, authorities and all the operations of the Treasurer. That may be the Opposition's point of view, but we must look at what caused some of the problems that have made for a very difficult management period for the Government. I think the Treasurer has done a pretty good job under the circumstances. It is very easy to criticise somebody in hindsight, because you are not faced with the problem of having to raise the money at that time instead of 12 months later, when interest rates have been forced down.

Let us not forget that Paul Keating deliberately kept interest rates high during his last 18 months or so, when the rest of the world was dropping them. Keating mismanaged the economy of this country, and each State in turn is now paying the price for it. Let us look at what Paul Keating wanted to do when he was Treasurer. He wanted all the State Governments to get out of State banking systems. Then when he was Prime Minister he still wanted the State Governments to get out of the banking system. He got the Commonwealth Bank to take over the Victorian bank to help Victoria out of the mire, but in South Australia we had to hang on. Do not tell me anything about the operations of the old Savings Bank of South Australia which belonged to the people and which

was stolen from the people by this Parliament and taken over by the Government, because it was the people's bank.

Ms Stevens: You supported it.

Mr BECKER: At that stage we had no option but to support you, because you would have been out there in the streets. We know what Bannon and the Labor Party would have done: they would have been out in the streets screaming blue murder that we were criticising the State Bank. That was the whole threat of all the criticism through all the issues and doubts that we raised. Go back through the *Hansard*. I asked about 230 questions. Within months of Marcus Clark taking over, I was critical of our money going out of South Australia. South Australian savings were going into shopping centres in other States when they should have been invested in South Australia in low cost housing. But the Labor Party was not interested in low cost housing; Marcus Clark was not interested in low cost housing. They were not interested in helping the little people; they were not interested in helping the battlers. They were not interested in carrying on the initial traditions of the South Australian Housing Trust. They were not interested in that. They were not interested in giving people cheap land at the price of the cost of the subdivision.

Members opposite were not interested in giving people houses that were built at cost by good builders. They initially pumped \$50 million into a shopping centre across the border in Geelong. A lot of good that did South Australia. Many jobs and a lot of other business went with that. That is the difficulty that the State Government has had to face over the years in building the recovery of and the confidence in South Australia. We have also heard the bleatings about the health system. Who ran down the health system? Back in 1979 it was obvious what was happening with the health system. It was absolutely scandalous.

Ms Stevens interjecting:

Mr BECKER: The member for Elizabeth said that it was nothing like it is today. Let me remind her that when she was still going to school I was in the House looking into the hospitals and the health department.

Members interjecting:

Mr BECKER: Pensioners were being tipped out of our Government hospitals and sent home with bags full of medication which was costing many hundreds of dollars and which they never needed. The poor people did not need all this medication: they wanted care and attention and they wanted to be treated, but the system was so poor in those days. It was starved of finances back in those days by the various Labor Governments. We found that people were passing away and leaving behind many hundreds of dollars worth of medication which could not be used and which had to be tipped down the sink. Millions of dollars were wasted.

I remind members about the role of the public hospital system in South Australia and the way in which it has been operated. Look at what the Minister for Health has had to do in the past 18 months. First, an audit had to be done of the whole system to find out what was happening. We looked at the capital structure. Let us take the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Nothing has been done there. The way the buildings have been allowed to deteriorate is an absolute disgrace. It is full credit to the staff given the conditions under which they have worked during the past six or seven years. It is full credit to the staff for the standards of excellence and the awards that the hospital has won in the past 18 months. It is absolutely amazing that the staff are so determined and dedicated to preserve the good name and the good understanding of the principal role of that hospital.

It has been a hard battle and it is a hard battle when an Opposition stands up in the State Parliament (as the Labor Party did for many years when in government) and does not encourage people to be members of a health system and pay health insurance. It was said, 'No: let us all use the hospital system.' That situation cost us big sums of money. We must educate people to take out health insurance within their means so that they have a better choice within the health system.

Mrs Geraghty interjecting:

Mr BECKER: The member for Torrens says it might be too late now. It was her mentor who started all this rot in the late 1970s and early 1980s discouraging people from taking out health insurance. It can be traced back to those early years. Now we must face all those things. It is all very well for Dapper Don to stand up and ask, 'What are they doing to my State?' I made speech after speech saying, 'Dunstan, we will pay for generations for what you are doing to South Australia.' And I was right.

We now have a Treasurer who is trying to rectify that situation. Give him a fair go and let him get on with the job. Let us get South Australia back to where it should be, in the role it deserves, and restore the confidence that people are looking for.

The SPEAKER: The member for Hart. I point out to the member for Hart the concern of the Deputy Leader, who wants him to relate his remarks to the Auditor-General's Report.

Mr FOLEY (Hart): Thank you, Sir. It is quite interesting to listen to the member for Peake talk about giving the Treasurer, the Deputy Premier, a real go in this Parliament. Not many weeks ago the only people supporting the Deputy Premier on the gun debate were members on this side of the House: all Liberal MPs, the member for Coles included, particularly the member for Florey, were less than supportive of the Deputy Premier. So do not give us that nonsense about who should be supporting the Deputy Premier.

I must say that to hear the member for Peake, who is Chairman of the Economic and Finance Committee, talk such irrelevant drivel for 10 minutes is a concern. I would have thought that a man who holds a position as important as his, and somebody who quite frankly I hold in fairly high esteem as Chair of that committee, could have given us a better insight into the work of the Auditor-General. It really was an irrelevant contribution and, unfortunately, an opportunity missed.

It is important to note that this has been an extremely comprehensive Auditor-General's Report, one of which the Auditor-General and his staff can be proud. I think it is the most detailed and thorough assessment of the State's finances done by an Auditor-General that I have had the opportunity to look at. He is looking at the State's finances in a way that is different from the experience of the past. The Auditor-General and his office have acknowledged and obviously realised the massive changes in the way this Government sets about operating the State's finances, and they are adopting their practices and their way of scrutinising those accounts accordingly.

That is very important, because one of the things that concerns me and all members of the Opposition, as we have moved into this new style of Government—a style of outsourcing, where we see the very nature of Government changing from one of doing things to one of administering contracts—it has been a great concern of ours that the

prudential controls and mechanism be put in place to ensure proper scrutiny, proper openness, proper accountability and, most importantly, the appropriate and proper delivery of the services in question. The Auditor-General's Report is moving to address those issues. He is flagging, as he did in his earlier report last year, a number of concerns he has about that. He is being quite fair in the way he is looking at the contracts relating to water and EDS. He is flagging areas that may cause trouble without pre-empting or putting forward a predetermined view as to the outcome of some of those issues. He is flagging a number of very important concerns that we as a Parliament need to be aware of.

It is simply not good enough for the Premier to make the public comments he has made today in the very dismissive and extremely aggressive attitude with which he publicly addressed the Auditor-General and his report. It is not a case of an Auditor-General, to quote the Premier, 'rewriting history'. If anyone understood the full details, ramifications and errors of the former State Bank issue, it was the Auditor-General. We all know the work he did in reviewing that case as part of the fallout from the State Bank affair.

To suggest, as the Premier has done today, that the Auditor-General is wanting to re-write history, that he has not learned from history, that he is almost dismissing history and is somehow advocating in his report that we should recreate the State Bank and SGIC, is not just offensive: it is downright stupid. I do not think it behoves the Premier to make ridiculous comments such as that. Very few people, if any, would have painstakingly gone through every single issue and transaction involved in the State Bank affair than the Auditor-General, and it is quite insulting for the Premier to suggest that the Auditor-General would be in some way advocating the return of these sorts of assets. He is doing what he is required to do by statute and this Parliament, and that is to give us a constructive analysis of the State's finances—a warts and all analysis.

If the Government does not like it, it is too bad and, obviously, if the Opposition does not like it, it is too bad; he must call it as he and his officers see it and we must accept that. The Leader has gone into great detail, or in more detail than I have, in terms of some of the critical issues contained within the report. Clearly, from the perspective of my portfolio responsibilities, the Auditor-General's comments on the EDS contract are extremely useful and extremely important guides to the sorts of issues we need to be looking at. He has expressed concerns that some of the agency agreements have not yet been finalised, and he has provided, as he did last year, a check list for me, as shadow Minister, and indeed for this Parliament, to ensure that critical issues are addressed.

Likewise, he has expressed a number of concerns and issues relating to the water contract and how it should be monitored. The issue of the Crown immunity question is a very good one and, quite frankly, I admit that I have not given that enough attention, and clearly neither has the Government, and that is something we will need to address a little more closely as time goes on. Another area I will be looking at closely relates to the Auditor-General's comments about the Government's financial assistance package to industry. The Auditor-General was critical in last year's report about the lack of proper tracking of those assistance packages, the lack of accountability, and probably, most importantly, the lack of public disclosure.

Again, in this report, he has raised a number of issues he believes need to be better addressed by the Government,

particularly now that we have two Government agencies responsible for industry assistance in both the Department of Manufacturing Industry, Small Business and Regional Development, as well as the Premier's own portfolio of Information Industries, and from my perspective that is very important. The private sector provision of infrastructure is another area that interests me and, not wanting to cross too far into portfolio areas that are not my responsibility, it was certainly interesting to note that in relation to the Mount Gambier and Port Augusta hospitals the Auditor-General has raised the issue that by not using the borrowing power of the Government we may well have paid about \$6.5 million more over the life of those projects than we need to have paid.

It is also important for us to look at the issue of the cost effectiveness of the private sector infrastructure, and that it is only worth doing if it is going to save us money. It is not worth doing for any philosophical aim or any particular bent of the Government in terms of providing work packages to industry. It really must be decided whether or not it is cost effective for the Government and therefore cost effective to the taxpayer. Certainly in my role as shadow Infrastructure Minister I will be looking at cost effectiveness when those projects are assessed in the future and not some ideological bent that everything must be done by the private sector.

The Leader put it so well earlier today when he said that the Government has not allowed this report to get the attention it deserves; the Government is not allowing this Parliament to adequately scrutinise the work of the Auditor-General. The half an hour sessions today, two Ministers at a time, was nothing more than a farce. Nothing more can be said about it other than it was a farce. Even during the debate tonight, I notice that there is but a handful of speakers from the Government present—quite possibly there will be no more than a couple of speakers from the Government. I do not know whether other members intend to speak on the Auditor-General's Report.

It would be interesting to hear other comments from Government members but it would be more interesting to hear the Treasurer and, more importantly, the Premier make a contribution but, as we well know, we cannot really anticipate that that will occur. Finally, as I said, it has been a very good report; it is a very good oversight of our State's finances. I am certainly comforted, in my role as shadow Minister for a number of economic portfolios, to know that we have in place an Auditor-General and his staff who are ensuring that our State's finances and accounts are properly scrutinised. I simply wish that the Premier would consider this report as he should and not resort to his habit of simply shooting the messenger.

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): The over-arching examination of the Auditor-General's Report was given by our Leader, so I will confine my comments primarily to the health and safety portfolios. Before I do, I want to comment about the process we went through earlier today. As other members have indicated, quite simply it was a farce. In terms of the health portfolio, which was one quarter of the State's budget, I had 15 minutes with the Minister. I was able to cover three topics. During this time the Minister—and if members read his remarks they will see what I am saying—was not on top of the subject matter. He had to take long periods of time while he was given the answer by his public servants and while we waited as precious minutes ticked by. This was just a farce. I needed at least an hour to deal adequately with a portfolio of this size and importance.

I would like now to refer to some of the issues I raised with the Minister and draw attention to the inadequacies of his answers. The first issue involved the Modbury Hospital. The Auditor-General made a point of actually noting that no strategy had been established to monitor the performance of Healthscope from the time that the contract began. This is part of the Auditor-General's criticism of this Government's privatisation strategy. We have had the first privatisation of the management of a hospital, and we find out that they have failed to establish a strategy to monitor performance against the contract—a basic error. I asked the Minister why this has been omitted. If members read his answer, they will see what he came up with.

First, he wanted to say that it was not his fault, that it was not his responsibility to do such a thing, that that responsibility belonged to the people who signed the contract, two members from Healthscope and two members of the board of Modbury Hospital. Eventually, after a bit of pressing, he had to admit that he, as Minister for Health, had some responsibility and accountability for what happens to the \$1.4 billion of public money expended in the health sector. I would dearly love to see the Auditor-General's comments on the Minister's answer in terms of his responsibility as Minister for Health in his governing of the health portfolio and the management of all that money.

The second issue involves my second question on the Mount Gambier Hospital. As we know, as it has been mentioned and was clearly drawn out by the Auditor-General, the Mount Gambier Hospital was to have been a great new experiment by this Government in private sector involvement with public infrastructure. The Auditor-General has criticised this process and said that, as it turns out, the Mount Gambier Hospital has cost us \$4 million more by doing it in this way. I want to take issue with some of the things the Minister said in his reply to me when I asked him to present to me the cost benefit analysis, the advice which he was given and which he used in order to go down that track. In response to my question, the Minister went into the history of the development of the Mount Gambier Hospital. He said:

The residential staff and hospital board at Mount Gambier had been clamouring for a new hospital, and we were simply not prepared to make them wait for another 10 years. We immediately went to the private sector, seeking funding for the new hospital facilities.

I will quote from the Public Works Committee's first report on the Mount Gambier Hospital, which says something different, as follows:

Options for both public and private hospital operations were examined at length. As the public hospital option would result in operational savings of \$2.2 million per annum, which could be used to service a loan for part of the construction cost of the new hospital, this option was preferred over operational savings to the State Government of \$2.1 million per annum from the private option.

So, right back in October 1994, in the first year of this new Government, the Minister's answer was incorrect: the Government did not go straight to a private sector option but in fact had chosen the public sector option, which is what the Public Works Committee reported on. The private sector option did not arrive on the scene until the budget speech in 1995-96. I will quote from the Premier's budget speech in relation to this new way of providing infrastructure:

To do this we will establish a building better future program. Under this program there will be up to \$300 million of private funds to develop major public projects. This is a very significant boost to the capital works program. This program will be applied where it can

be demonstrated that projects and services will be provided more cost effectively than by the public sector.

That is what the Treasurer said when he announced this new way of providing infrastructure. Unfortunately, the Minister for Health was not able to provide that correct information, so I will provide it so that the House has an accurate record of what happened in relation to the Mount Gambier Hospital. The issue that comes through and the issue that the Auditor-General pointed out is that the private sector option cost more. That is the issue that the Auditor-General was making in terms of the Government's racing down an ideological path without knowing the full story and without doing its sums and getting it right. This is certainly what happened in relation to Mount Gambier.

I attempted also to get an answer from the Minister in relation to Port Augusta Hospital because, as we know, Port Augusta now turns out to have been \$2.5 million more expensive with the private sector option. Instead of the Minister's answering the question and giving me the cost benefit analysis, he went into a rave, waving his arms around, making expansive statements but coming up with no procedure, no positives and negatives, and no firm evidence of any cost benefit analysis that his department undertook.

I am very concerned because, unfortunately, the Minister for Health is the only person in this Parliament who answers questions on health. The Premier is not able to deal with these issues, and every time we put an issue to him on health he handballs it to the Minister and, quite clearly, this Minister is incapable of managing a portfolio of the complexity of the health portfolio. That has been demonstrated time and again in this Parliament and it was again demonstrated today when I questioned him in relation to the Auditor-General's Report.

I will make one final observation in relation to the Minister's comments, because they are so unbelievable that they deserve a final observation. When asking him questions about the cost benefit analysis that did not appear to have happened I said:

Am I to assume that when the Health Commission does a cost benefit analysis of a financial commitment it is expressed in terms in which the Minister has expressed it to the committee because, if that is the case, we are in dire straits.

The Minister said:

I am sure the people of Port Augusta and Mount Gambier would disagree with the honourable member. They think this is a wonderful decision because they did not have an appropriate hospital for all the time the Labor Government was in power.

Both communities still do not have their hospitals. These two communities will be aghast when they know that \$6.5 million that could have been spent on services in rural communities—on doctors, specialists and mental health—to alleviate a whole lot of concerns rural communities have in relation to health has been wasted because the Government went the wrong way.

Ms WHITE (Taylor): The Government will have heard the complaint of members of the Opposition regarding the lack of time we have had to debate this very important document and the lack of opportunity we have had to question Ministers thoroughly concerning the issues raised by the Auditor-General. I will not repeat any of the points made by my colleagues and our Leader but will concentrate on two issues which cut to the core of the important messages the Auditor-General sends in his report. The first and very important issue the Auditor-General raises concerns the management of risk and the audit underlines the need for

reviewing the risk management strategies of all Government departments and agencies.

As a member of the Public Works Committee, I see many of the public infrastructure projects which come before the committee and, as the Government moves into a phase of increasing public sector involvement in infrastructure, many important issues are raised that I believe have not adequately been addressed and, obviously from Auditor-General's Report, neither does he. The Auditor-General often talks about the 'blind acceptance of risk' by the Government in such projects. Alarming for me, too often public servants who appear before the Public Works Committee do not recognise that any risk exists to Government regarding aspects of the projects and proposals which they present. When public servants see that the private sector is putting money into infrastructure they believe that there is no risk to Government. In fact, a recent article in the *Advertiser* quoted the Minister for Emergency Services in relation to one public work who was inferring that, because the public sector was putting in half the money, the Government's exposure was only half that cost and there was, therefore, only a limited liability.

It seems that there is a common view among Government officials who appear before the committee that, because the private sector may be building a hospital or a water filtration plant and the public sector is not putting in all the capital even though it is buying or leasing the service, there is no public exposure. As members of Parliament we need to recognise that no matter how much money the private sector puts into a project, if the Government enters into a contract for private delivery of a core Government function there is always risk involved. No matter how much one might want the Government of South Australia to look like a private business, the Government can never become a business, because it has one overriding responsibility which is all encompassing and which no private operation mirrors; that is, its responsibility to provide core services to all South Australians now and in the future.

The Auditor-General says of this that blind acceptance of risk amounts to misfeasance in public office or negligence. This year private sector funding of infrastructure projects will total approximately \$150 million. Private sector involvement may make the balance sheet look good, but we have to ask the question: what is the true cost to the people of South Australia? The Auditor-General highlighted the monetary aspects of the Government's course of action with regard to the private building of the Mount Gambier Hospital and the Port Augusta Hospital. But what is the cost to a community whose level of services is degraded when a private operator folds and the Government is left with the liability?

The Auditor-General also raises as a matter of importance the issue of the contracting out of Government services. He raises in particular the issue of Crown immunity. Legal questions, audit says, raise in turn issues of financial risks and liabilities. He draws these risks to the attention of Parliament. Yet, earlier this evening when I asked the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education whether he saw any relevance in the Auditor-General's comments on the contracting out of operations in his own department, he merely said that his department's contracting out operations were not as extensive as in other departments; and, anyway, the Auditor-General did not make specific reference to breaches in that area by DETAFE.

That is just not good enough. This is exactly the attitude which the Auditor-General warns against. As responsible

members who represent the people of South Australia, we must be concerned about the dangers of the Government's course and its apparent lack of understanding and lack of care, according to audit, in the way its privatisation agenda is implemented.

Mr BRINDAL (Unley): I have listened with increasing horror to the level of debate that has taken place on the other side of the Chamber.

Mr Foley: Comb your hair!

Mr BRINDAL: If the member for Hart was more worried about substance and less about appearance, this Parliament might not have the dilemma that it has, and that dilemma is exemplified by this debate. There is no credible Opposition. I have heard members opposite bleating that they have not had enough time to ask the questions and they have not had enough time for debate. In the limited time that members opposite have had, they have made complete fools of themselves. I am only sorry that members opposite were not given three times as long, because the longer this debate goes on the more stupid the Opposition looks. Members opposite come in here bleating about their lack of time, but have they prepared? Have they read the Auditor-General's Report? Do they even understand some of the rudimentary fundamentals of the report? The answer is 'No.'

An honourable member interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Bass): Order! I remind the member for Hart that he and other Opposition members were heard in relative silence. That will also be the case for the member for Unley.

Mr BRINDAL: The member for Hart quite rudely and wrongly asked for a bit of substance. I will give him a bit of substance. When debating the Auditor-General's Report the member for Taylor at least tried to draw her remarks around the report. Unlike the member for Elizabeth, she did not make scurrilous attacks on the Minister for Health. She did not suggest that the Minister for Health is incompetent for some sort of spurious reasons, the logic of which was lost on most members on this side. The member for Taylor asked whether we measured the true cost to the people of South Australia in terms of risk management, which the Auditor-General raises in his report.

The Auditor-General is responsible to this place as a public officer of the Parliament. He is, quite rightly, a watchdog and a voice of caution and responsibility in the economic affairs of this State, and he rightly comments in his report on those issues which the Executive Government should bear in mind when making its decisions. The member for Taylor asked whether we measured the true cost to the people of South Australia of some of the ways in which we are now forced to operate. I would say that we have, and so have the people of South Australia, because all the—

Mr Foley interjecting:

Mr BRINDAL: No, the Auditor-General is not wrong. The Auditor-General is making comments of which the Government should be aware. But, as the member for Whyalla as a previous Minister well knows, the responsibility of this Parliament and of Executive Government is to the people of South Australia and to the good governance of the people. And the economy of this State is not the be all and end all. The be all and end all of this State is the people of South Australia, and the Auditor-General—

Mr Foley interjecting:

Mr BRINDAL: The member for Hart asks me to say something about the report. Why is it that I must say

something about the report when I have heard nothing about the report from the people opposite? We have heard not one word of sense about the report from members opposite. Members on this side know what the true cost is, and the true cost is about \$7 billion, which the irresponsibility, the arrogance and the complete indifference of the previous Government cost South Australia. That is the cost.

If we had the money, perhaps the Minister would have built the hospitals in Port Augusta and Mount Gambier out of public funds. But the fact is that the former Government left a \$7 billion hole that we have to fill in. Members opposite can bluster and say what they like, but one thing that the people of South Australia understand is that the Labor Party in this State mucked up, and it did so because of arrogance, because of indifference and because it basically did not care. It did not even care to the point—

Ms White interjecting:

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

Mr BRINDAL: The member for Taylor is more than out of order, because if she likes to leave this Chamber and check with her colleagues she will find that they did not even care that their whole backbench was worried. They did not consult them, did not talk to them and completely ignored them. If the member for Taylor doubts that, I suggest that she go out and talk with some honourable people on that side, and there are many who were here at that time, and they will inform her that I am telling the exact truth. We will not make the same mistake. The Auditor-General is quite right to preach caution, because as a Government we are forced—

Mr Foley interjecting:

Mr BRINDAL: I think I will suggest to the Premier that he try to entice the member for Hart away from his comfortable seat on the green leather benches and put him back where he belongs as an adviser to princes. He mucked up on that side: perhaps on this side he will do better, because obviously he can read the mind of the Premier. If he knew the mind of our Premier so well, why did he muck up so much as an adviser to Ministers on his side of the House?

Mr Foley interjecting:

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

Mr BRINDAL: As I said, the Auditor-General has a perfect right to comment on prudential management and on his responsibilities as an auditor watching the finances of this State. The Executive Government has and will exercise the responsibility of listening carefully to what the Auditor-General says. But it must then govern in the best interests and welfare of the people of South Australia. That does not mean a necessary blind adherence to every word that the Auditor-General utters. It means looking carefully at what he says and taking it on board.

The member for Hart would do well to listen. It means an Executive Government listening to what the Auditor-General says, taking it on board and then acting in the best interests of the people of South Australia. If the Auditor-General were the font of all knowledge and if the Auditor-General were absolutely and by definition correct on every single point, we would not need this Parliament, we would not need the Executive Government or any Minister; we could leave it to the all-seeing eye of the Auditor-General to run South Australia.

Mr Foley: Are you saying he's wrong?

Mr BRINDAL: I am saying that the Auditor-General, for the member for Hart's benefit, is a very important and

fundamental part of the system. But, like the member for Hart and like all his Ministers before him, the Auditor-General does not have a claim to infallibility, unlike—

Mr Foley: Are you saying he's wrong?

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

Mr BRINDAL: I am not saying he is wrong. However, unlike the Ministers who sat on these benches in the last Government, I know well enough of the Auditor-General to know that he would not claim infallibility. That is a profound difference—

Mr Foley interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Hart.

Mr BRINDAL: I challenge anyone in this House to produce a transcript where the Premier said he is wrong.

Mr Foley: He said it today.

Mr BRINDAL: The Premier may well have disagreed with some of the conclusions reached by the Auditor-General, but I do not think that it is fair to misrepresent the Premier by putting him in a conflict situation with the Auditor-General that does not exist. It is typical of this Government to build up an intellectual disagreement. It is the Premier's right to say, 'Look, I accept that the Auditor-General said this, but this is what my Government will do.' The Auditor-General was not elected to govern South Australia: the Premier was. The Auditor-General has a right to comment and he has commented. The Premier, while he is Premier, has a perfect right—

Mr Foley: Can we read something into that?

Mr BRINDAL: No, you can't read anything into that because the Premier—

Members interjecting:

Mr BRINDAL: The Premier is not elected by me. I remind the member for Hart that the Premier was elected overwhelmingly by the people of this State. So long as the Premier remains the Premier—and I can assure the member for Hart—

Mr Foley interjecting:

Mr BRINDAL: No, it will for a very long time. We will continue to govern in the best interests of this State.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's time has expired. I remind the member for Hart that he was heard in relative silence and that I expect the same type of behaviour. The honourable member has been warned once.

Mr CLARKE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): It is always a pleasure to follow the member for Unley in a parliamentary debate, because one can then try to put some sense and perspective around his comments. I am particularly interested, as I am sure the member for Coles has noted, in the honourable member's comments concerning the Premier's future. I look forward to seeing what happens to the member for Unley.

I want to do what no other Government member has done in the contribution to the debate so far, that is, refer to the Auditor-General's Report. The member for Peake spoke half-cocked about the history of State Bank, SGIC and various other matters when, of course, we are dealing with the Auditor-General's Report and his comments concerning the financial affairs of this State. Similarly, the member for Unley did not comment at all with respect to the Auditor-General other than to say that the Auditor-General can make comments and that the Premier was not bagging the Auditor-

General's public statements when, in fact, everyone in and outside this Chamber knows that the Premier dumped on the Auditor-General from a great height.

Those in this Chamber who watched the Premier's reaction in Question Time today with respect to certain questions that were directed to him by the Opposition on the Auditor-General's Report would have noted the howls of outrage both from the Premier and the Deputy Premier because of the headlines in the *Advertiser* this morning. I know that this Government usually gets very good front page coverage from the *Advertiser*. Obviously, something slipped up last night. Perhaps Rex was on leave and the Premier and the Treasurer could not get hold of him to arrange what the front page headlines would be this morning. There was real hurt in the eyes of the Premier and the Deputy Premier that the *Advertiser* actually had a bad headline for them. I must admit that I, too, was very surprised when I read the *Advertiser* this morning, because it did not seem to live up to the *Advertiser's* usual reputation with respect to political coverage in this State. However, with respect to the treatment of the Auditor-General's Report, this Government never accepts responsibility for anything that goes wrong: it is always someone else's problem.

In his report last year, the Auditor-General was quite trenchant in his criticism of the Treasurer and the conduct of his portfolio and, also on this occasion, in his criticism of the Government, the Auditor-General is dealing with their term in Government, the decisions that this Government has taken during the preceding 12 months and how those decisions have impacted on the finances of this State, whether or not those decisions prove to the benefit of South Australia.

The Auditor-General was not doing a snapshot of the State Bank or the last 10 years: he was doing a financial report on the financial stewardship of this State for the last 12 months. His criticisms are directed at the decisions of this Government—not about the State Bank, the debt and all the rest. That is history, they are facts, they are known, and they are repeated *ad nauseam* by the Premier and the Deputy Premier. The Auditor-General has commented this year, as he did last year, on this Government's stewardship. That is what he directed his attention to, and the Deputy Premier and Premier cannot escape from that fundamental point—that he was looking at this Government's decisions and its accountability, and they have to accept that responsibility.

They cannot continue to do what the Premier has done since yesterday, namely, handball the problem. Yesterday, the Premier played pass the parcel with any issue related to health, the cost overruns in that area and a whole variety of other issues. As soon as it looked tough, as soon as he realised that a little bit of odium surrounded an issue, just like a former President of the United States, the teflon President, Ronald Reagan, the Premier wanted to handball it or pass the parcel to a hapless Minister to handle. I grew out of playing pass the parcel at age five, and I know that my daughter has grown out of playing pass the parcel, but this Premier has not done so and he will not accept responsibility.

As soon as someone in a position like that of the Auditor-General, who as I said directed his comments at this Government's actions and decisions, decisions for which the Government must be accountable, the Premier insults him publicly by saying that it is oversimplification and that the Auditor-General does not understand the true picture. Yesterday in answer to a question, the Deputy Premier said that the Auditor-General had a mass of material that he could not understand. The Auditor-General worked on the State

Bank issue seven days a week for many months, and for many hours of every one of those seven days, yet apparently he could not understand the mass of material that was put before him by the Deputy Premier. That is absolute rubbish.

I would not mind if the Ministers were honest and said that the Auditor-General has made criticisms of their stewardship and the State's financial affairs, that there is validity in those points and that they are going to deal with it, but there has been none of that. They have just totally dumped on the Auditor-General. Last year, the Auditor-General made a very sound point, which was picked up by the Opposition and the media, concerning the responsibility for Governments to be accountable to Parliament for their actions. The Auditor-General referred particularly to the need for oversighting by Parliament of the outsourcing contracts, which involve millions and, in the case of water, billions of dollars. The people of South Australia have been locked into contractual arrangements for a minimum of 15 years in that case.

In response to the Auditor-General's report on that matter, we have had more secrecy from the Government. The Opposition and the public cannot even find out the results of the polling that was commissioned by Cabinet with respect to whether or not the public of South Australia approved of the privatisation of their water supply. That was deemed to be a Cabinet document and, therefore, exempt from FOI application. Of course, that will have to be resolved elsewhere.

The important point I want to make is that, rather than respond to the Auditor-General's call for greater transparency and greater accountability with respect to such issues as outsourcing and contracts and the importance they have for every citizen of this State, this Government has got more and more secretive with respect to the handling of public affairs. Again, when private financing of public projects has been found to be more expensive than if public funding had been used, do we find the Government getting up and being strong enough to say, 'Yes, we were wrong on that issue'? No: they bag the Auditor-General again. Clearly, those hospitals could have been built by public financing through extra borrowings. It was going to cost South Australia \$6 million more from borrowing the money through the private sector. We still have to pay for it, but we now have to pay \$6 million more for the privilege because we went through the private sector rather than raising the moneys through the public sector. But no, we do not find any Minister getting up and saying, 'We thought it was a good idea at the time, but we were wrong.'

One thing Australians and South Australians in particular do not mind is if their politicians get up and admit they are wrong from time to time. They do recognise that we are human beings, that we are fallible and that we do make mistakes. They hope that we take notice of the lessons of history, that we act diligently and honestly and that we try to say that, knowing all the circumstances, this is the best outcome or the best decision we could make. If it turns foul, people do not mind our getting up and saying, 'We were wrong about it; we are sorry, but we will learn from it.' No South Australian will be critical of a Government that accepts that it is not infallible.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Treasurer): I was hoping that, at the end of this time that the Opposition had to scrutinise the Auditor-General's Report, I would congratulate it for its diligence, but unfortunately I cannot go even one step along that track, because I would be telling an untruth to the House.

Everybody knows that I do not do those sorts of things. I would like to reflect on the contributions made and the questions asked here today. I said to the Opposition and it was graciously received by the Deputy Leader—although he wanted a little more, which I can understand—that we would try an experiment to allow time for scrutiny of the Auditor-General's Report. Starting with the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Hart in the saddle, what we heard here today was that they wanted a strident criticism of the Government—nothing to do with the Auditor-General. That was not what this session was designed for: this session was designed for asking questions; the next session of the debate was for them to draw the conclusions. It was a waste of time.

People are complaining about not having enough time to read the Auditor-General's Report. I went through the whole damn thing last night, for goodness sake. If you with all your time on your hands—because you do not do anything else—do not have enough wit or will to apply yourselves to the Auditor-General's Report you should not be in the Parliament. I thought we would be generous for 2½ hours and allow everybody the opportunity to question the Auditor-General's Report, and I say it has been a failure. We will have to revisit this and see whether we can get Opposition members tuned up to do the job they are supposed to do, and if they need some help perhaps they can come over here for some advice.

In terms of some of the conclusions drawn in the Auditor-General's Report, if I believe I have to contest with the Opposition or particular individuals about particular issues I have always quite openly contested on those issues. If the dividends on the entities that have been sold over the past five years add up to \$3.17 billion, I could hardly draw the conclusion that the asset sales have been a failure. In fact, I could say they have been a wonderful success. Members of the Opposition have been carping about these asset sales, but their Leader said in the House, 'We approve of them.' We got a fantastic price for them. Everyone has said that we got a fantastic price. Every financial commentator has said that we got a good price for them. Yet they are saying, 'Perhaps we did not do it properly.'

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: Just hold on a second: you cannot have it both ways. You agreed on the process. We needed it to restructure our finances after you had blown this State apart and bankrupted it. You know that we got good prices for everything. All the financial commentators have said that we did a fantastic job in that area. Yet members opposite are suddenly saying, 'We could have had all these dividends. If these enterprises had not failed, if we had not lost another \$3.1 billion in the process, we would have had dividends of \$110 million, when we never had dividends of \$110 million.' If I cannot debate those issues, there is something wrong with this Parliament.

In relation to the Mount Gambier and Port Augusta hospitals, when will members of the Opposition get it through their thick heads that the Mount Gambier and Port Augusta hospitals were not on the list of priorities. To give the people a decent deal, which had been rejected by the former Labor Government despite many promises to win elections, the only way we could get the projects up the priority list was through priority funding through the private sector. One criterion was that the recurrent cost of that exercise had to offset the increased cost of the building. We have had those figures done, so everyone gets to win out of the process.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: The Auditor-General should reflect on these issues and should bring those issues to our attention. The Auditor-General has made some very—

Mr Clarke: Is he thick headed?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I suggest to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that I was quiet during his contribution.

Mr Clarke: You were not here.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I was here for part of it—

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Bass): The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is out of order.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: While I was working I did tune into it and I really concentrated to see whether I could get anything out of it. Of course, the answer was no. The Auditor-General raised some very serious issues about governance and governance in a far more competitive marketplace. He raised the issue of competition and the extent to which it will impose restraints and restrictions on this State and for which we have no power of control. They are important issues.

On the issue of liability, the Auditor-General has said that we do not want the mistakes of the past. We do not want \$3.5 billion out of State Bank and SGIC. An enormous effort was spent looking at those liabilities. I hope that we get it right: we have put a lot of effort into it. I do not say that on all occasions we will, but we have made every effort to do so.

In relation to the outsourcing activities, there are comments in the report. There are savings from the EDS contract, there are efficiencies from the water contract. None of those are denied in the Auditor-General's Report. He has said, 'During these processes you must ensure that you get it right.' We are putting an enormous amount of effort into getting it right. We might not get it 100 per cent right but we will get fairly close.

In terms of the gratuitous comments about what happens when interest rates change, I have said that if we had the situation where all these organisations performed at peak capacity—which they have never done, not in the past 30 or 40 or 50 years have they all come together and given the dividends that the Auditor-General suggests will be forgone—how long do members think that they would be sustained in the marketplace? How long do you think they would be sustained in the marketplace when you have an international economy? We are bit players when it comes to the finance areas—banking and insurance companies. Unless you have that critical mass you cannot compete in that marketplace. Someone is suggesting that we should have held onto them to obtain the dividends. Can I say that we would be heading for another disaster.

As interest rates go up, the risk goes up and the profit goes down. We saw a few fake profits during the 1980s right through the corporate sector. Most of them were built on capital gains, not on productive activity. Risks go up, the actual profit margins are squeezed, the profit is at risk, and the whole element of risk in terms of future viability is put under test. That is why we had the State Bank and SGIC—not only because of the marketplace where many corporate ventures failed but also because we had a Government that did not care. I can tell members that we did care about that process.

The Leader of the Opposition talked about best practice. I would like to refer back to when he was a Minister in the former Government and what he did to this State. I know he was not the total architect of the disaster, but goodness gracious me, as a former mentor and chief adviser of the Premier of the day, he really did make a big contribution to

the disasters we have had to fix up. Today, I have just listed three or four, and we still have legals coming out of that system with which we are having to grapple. The member for Hart would know about some of those that we are still having to sort out. The liabilities continue simply because of the bad practice of the former Government. In regard to best practice, members of the Opposition should not preach to this Government, because we are doing our damndest to get it right. I can assure members—

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: Well, I think it is absolutely appropriate that the Auditor-General bring these things to our attention. I have never denied him that responsibility, and it is important that we continue to address ourselves to those issues. Without an Auditor-General to keep us up to the mark, without that sort of scrutiny and that sort of intensity, without going back over it and looking at how the business of government is operating, we could become just like the former Government. I respect the Auditor-General's right to review every operation of Government. I have, and I always will, irrespective of who does the job. I believe it is right that he contests. I also have the right to contest if I do not believe that an observation is correct.

Everybody has made a few gratuitous statements about Ministers. I point out that, with respect to headlines, when the Auditor-General came out with his report, the Leader of the Opposition said, 'Bodgie budget; \$300 million hole.' Next day, across the *Advertiser*, we see 'Asset sales, no net gain.' Two headlines. Did I get one question during this process on anything in the Auditor-General's Report—and I have more responsibility than does any other Minister in this Parliament? Did I get one question on the result, on the underlying—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: Not one question.

Members interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER : Order!

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: Members could have managed at least one or two questions to the Treasurer. They could have at least managed that.

Mr Venning interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: The member for Culance is also out of order.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I will now wrap up my contribution. I will jump all the members to the last speaker, because I do not think there was much in between that was any better than the first contribution. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition spent the first few minutes expounding the virtues of the *Advertiser*, which was a unique experience for this Parliament. He talked about pass the parcel. If ever we saw pass the parcel and lack of responsibility, it was with the former Government. In this Parliament, every Minister is responsible for his or her portfolio, and it is right and proper that the Minister should answer those questions and not say, 'We will put them all up this end.' Every Minister has a right to be questioned, and should be questioned, on their portfolio areas. As to the issue of transparency, it is almost like history being recreated and rewritten. It is a bit like saying the holocaust never happened. Who is that guy?

Mr Clarke: Irving.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: Yes, that is the one. He wants to re-write history to say that the holocaust never happened. I am saying that the Opposition wants to re-write history to say that we did not have a disaster on our hands as a result of its management as the former Government. In terms of budget

practice, we have the most transparent budget in Australia, and that has been admitted by every member of the national press who came to this town. The transparency is the best of that anywhere in this country.

If members want transparency, they should look at what we have done with the budget process. If members want transparency, they should look at how much detail relates to contracts. We do not say that every contract is commercially confidential, as did the former Government. When the State was going down the tubes, we would not have done what the former Government did and put out a disclaimer or say, 'It is commercially confidential.' We have not done any of that. We have provided as much information as possible. In terms of the budget, the Estimates Committees and contracts, this Government has done more than any Government before it and any other Government in Australia to explain its budget position and its contracts, and to be accountable.

The last gratuitous comment from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition related to diligence and honesty. I would ask the Deputy Leader to reflect on his contribution to this Parliament in that regard, and those of his other colleagues. Can I say—

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: No; I am simply reflecting on what the former Government did, and perhaps the lessons learnt from that process might bring it up to the mark. Do not talk to us about diligence and honesty, given the history of the Labor Government in this State and federally. I said at the beginning that I was not in a position to thank members for their contributions. I reflect upon—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: No, there were some very fine contributions from our side but, since I did not fill in the gaps on the Opposition side, I will not fill in the gaps on my side. I simply say that it has been an interesting process, but I believe it can be improved. We have Estimates Committees that operate for two weeks at a time. They tie up an enormous amount of effort on behalf of the Government, and I accept that no process is perfect. We have tried to improve the process this year; there will be further improvements next year. But if I reflected on the performance of the Opposition this year, I would think we are all wasting our time.

Motion carried.

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

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

Motion carried.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Mr BECKER (Peake): I move:

That the following Address in Reply to His Excellency's opening speech be adopted:

May it please Your Excellency—

1. We, the members of the House of Assembly, express our thanks for the speech with which Your Excellency was pleased to open Parliament.
2. We assure Your Excellency that we will give our best attention to the matters placed before us.
3. We earnestly join in Your Excellency's prayers for the divine blessing on the proceedings of the session.

This will be the greatest 60 minutes this Parliament has ever heard and recorded. The opening address by the new Governor of South Australia impressed me quite consider-

ably, and I was delighted to be given the opportunity to witness his presentation. At the same time, I would also like to place on the record my appreciation of the services to South Australia by Dame Roma Mitchell, someone whom I admire and respect tremendously. Dame Roma Mitchell is a great South Australian, a wonderful individual and a person of warmth and humanity—a person we really need in this State. I first met Dame Roma Mitchell as the former President and founder of the Epilepsy Association when she was heading the Human Rights Commission. We were able to do and achieve a lot for people not only with various disabilities but, in particular, with a very difficult disability, epilepsy.

In my life in this Parliament I have now served under seven Governors, the first from 1970 onwards was Sir James Harrison, then Sir Mark Oliphant, Sir Douglas Nicholls, Sir Keith Seaman, Sir Donald Dunstan, then Dame Roma Mitchell and now Sir Eric Neal. I thought that I had better go back and look at the first speech I made in this House on 22 July 1970. That was the occasion of the Address in Reply on the opening of the Fortieth Parliament. In that speech, I said:

I consider that I will be a unique member of the Liberal and Country League team.

I then went on with my former employment background, saying what I would do and what I hoped I could achieve for the people of South Australia. That was 26 years ago. I have been employed for some 45 years, and it is time to retire. The time comes when you ought to accept and acknowledge that it is time to step aside and give others the opportunity to represent the people of your constituency. I said that I would not be discriminated against in my endeavours to improve the lot of my constituents, and the record shows that, from the various suburbs that I represented over that period, in the many times the electorate boundaries changed, I did initiate many things to improve the residential environment for the people of my electorate.

One of the first issues with which I was concerned was litter. In my opening speech I said:

Litter in the form of food scraps, paper, broken beer bottles, etc., is a constant worry to the councils, which endeavour to protect young children from severe injuries.

Of course, the previous Labor Government formed the Department for the Environment and we brought in deposits on drink containers. That almost overnight saw the withdrawal of drink cans and bottles that used to litter our foreshores and the environs of the Torrens River and the Patawalonga. After seeing about \$7 million spent on cleaning up the Patawalonga, in the 30 odd years that I have lived in that area I have never seen it look better, but I cannot say that for the Torrens River. The city of Adelaide section of the Torrens River is an absolute disgrace. After the rains of the weekend, I was absolutely appalled at the rubbish that has collected in the Torrens River in the middle of our city.

After all this time and after all the money that has been spent on media publicity and KESAB programs and campaigns, you would think that we would not witness the amount of rubbish that flows into the Torrens River in the middle of the city of Adelaide which I consider the most beautiful city in Australia. We ought to be proud of the city of Adelaide, and we should all work together to ensure that we keep it in pristine condition and look after and protect the environment. In my speech, I also said:

I find the red tape that a member of Parliament has to go through in attending constituents' inquiries very frustrating and time consuming. I appeal to all Ministers to exert their influence to

streamline our Public Service departments to give their departmental heads and assistants more authority and better working conditions.

Not very much happened over that period. I was frustrated, and I contacted one of my former customers, who was a senior public servant. He asked, 'Well, what's it like being a member of Parliament?' I said, 'I just can't believe this. I will shake the daylight out of the Public Service to try to get a bit of efficiency.' He said, 'Good luck; we will outlive you.' Twenty-six years later, I am retiring and the Public Service goes on bigger and better than ever. It has outlived me, which is a shame. However, there have been a lot changes and improvements for the better. I do not know about their working conditions; I am a little concerned about them. Even when I look at the working conditions in this place the staff have to endure, I am not impressed. I would never have tolerated them in the bank, and I made sure that we almost rebuilt every branch I worked at because the working conditions were unsatisfactory.

I also went on the record in 1970 to say that the new Government had inherited a surplus of about \$3 million in State Treasury. As someone said, that is typical of Scrooge McHall. My old mate 'tin shed' was a pretty miserable country boy and ran a mean lean Government for those days and to have a \$3 million surplus was no mean feat. At that stage we even had a small surplus in the Tramways Trust, as it was known. It was due credit to those who were Ministers in that Government.

Today we find, in examining the Treasurer's and Auditor-General's statements, that when the Brown Government came to office there was a \$350 million deficit and something like \$8 billion in debt on which we have to pay the interest and eventually repay. Something like a \$4.8 billion black hole exists in the superannuation fund. I always blamed the Playford Government for that because the superannuation of the employees of this State has never truly been matched dollar for dollar when it becomes due, namely, on every pay day when they contribute to superannuation and the employer should meet the contribution with that money going into the superannuation fund. Back in the Second World War years all State Governments in Australia decided that they would not do that but would make up the contribution owed to the superannuant when they retired. That is when the false economy came into this country.

A ridiculous situation occurred because, had the Government met its dollar for dollar obligations—I would have put pressure on the various State Governments to do so—those superannuation funds would have had huge amounts of money and those funds could have been made available for State Government development at a very reasonable interest rate. Instead we and future generations will pay and pay dearly for the mistakes made by those Governments back in those days. I have no support for the action they took during that time.

I said that the Government must learn to balance its budget. Every citizen in this country has to balance his or her budget. This State cannot continue to go into debt. We have no right to continually mortgage our State's future income. That situation was predicted back in the 1970s and is the situation in which we find ourselves today. State Government after State Government—whether in this State or in other States or Territories—does not seem to worry about building up huge debts and mortgaging the future of coming generations.

I will have worked for nearly 46 years when I retire. Many tens of thousands of people will never have worked in open or competitive employment for part or even a fraction of that period and that worries me considerably. There is a lack of opportunity for young people to gain and obtain meaningful employment for the whole of a fair and reasonable working life of 45 years. Young people and many others have never had the chance and will never get the opportunity to get a job. That is an absolute indictment on all of us. That is one of the issues of which I constantly remind my Party.

We are not doing enough to create employment or to give people the opportunity to obtain employment. We have lost so many skills through the closing of the E&WS Department. Australian National is under threat. You never hear the term 'fitter and turner' or 'boilermaker' as we did when I was young because so few people are trained in those trade skills. That is a terrible shame because now, if we had had all those skilled tradesmen and had the ability to use them and provide them with the opportunities to assist in the development of Asian countries, this State would be truly proud of what it has done for its citizens.

The water contract has been severely criticised and has never been properly sold. The outsourcing of the water management in this State is not unusual or new. Those who have had the opportunity to go on parliamentary study trips, irrespective of the criticism of the *Advertiser*, and to go into Asia can ask how similar contracts are let by those Governments. They will find that the process adopted here was not unusual.

In my opinion, the mistake made was that, when one tender (for the use of a better word) was late, the other two companies should have been given the opportunity to review their bid. It is a continual bidding process until you reach the top of the tree or around the figure that each of the contestants considers is fair and reasonable. Whether or not that figure was reached no-one will ever know, but the other two companies that provided their figures by a certain time should have been advised that the third party was four hours late and, therefore, they had four hours to review their tender documents.

In future, members will find that with the development taking place in Indonesia, Malaysia, South-East Asia and China the demand for our technology in water management will be quite real. So, there is the opportunity to export expertise and, in so doing, insisting on the use of South Australian-made products, including pipes, pumps, machinery and all the other necessary equipment. The real benefits will be in exporting the hardware as well as the software. I see that as the dawning of a new era, but we have to handle that aspect much better than we have in the past, and we have to be a little wiser in dealing with those issues. I went on to say:

Careful planning and financial management are vital for the new Government to continue and, I hope, improve Government services, successfully maintained and increased by the previous Government.

Yes, the Hall Government was a great period for South Australia, and it is fitting that we know that Steele Hall is enjoying his retirement after his term not only in this House but in Federal Parliament as well. He can look back with pride on many of the achievements of that period. It is fair to say that it was Steele Hall's leadership and genuine sincerity and honesty as a politician which led me to join the Liberal Party while I was President of our South Australian Bank Officials Union. I was impressed with the assistance he gave me on a couple of political matters and, if anyone encouraged

me or gave me the initiative to become a politician, it was Steele Hall.

I pass on the message to his wife, who will second this motion, 'Thanks very much, mate, for 26 years of purgatory in this place!' As I said, it was a unique experience, and perhaps some would say I have been a unique politician, but I wish I had known what I was letting myself in for, because I could have stayed in the bank and Sir Eric Neal might have had me as one of his employees at one stage. I was once offered a job with the Bank of New South Wales (now Westpac) and it might have been an entirely different story.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

Mr BECKER: I joined the lot. I was in the Liberal and Country League, although I always believed that it should have been called the Liberal Party. The Liberal Movement did not impress me all that much because I knew a divided political Party was a troubled Party, and I recall what the Democratic Labor Party did to the Labor Party in Victoria. The late Reece Williams, who became a friend of mine and who was one of the doyens of the white collar union movement, explained to me the problems the DLP caused for the ALP in Victoria.

I went on to say in my speech—and it is interesting to note that this was edited by the member for Coles, so I have to do her in for this one, too:

Tourism is important to me and to the State. I would like to see a modern, progressive air transport system established, linking us with the rest of the Commonwealth and overseas countries. Consideration must be given during the life of this Parliament [this is 1970] to offering the Commonwealth Government land on which to build an international airport outside the metropolitan area.

Here we are 26 years later, and we cannot even get an extension of the runway constructed. A few pegs and posts have been put around the place at the moment, but—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

Mr BECKER: The curfew stays, as long as I live down there. The Deputy Leader knows that you cannot break the curfew at Sydney Airport before 6 a.m. We have given Qantas the dispensation to bring aircraft in at 5 minutes past 5, and it has done very well. It is not my fault that the winds blow in different directions and upset Keith Martyn on 5AD: but if Keith Martyn keeps it up I will switch to 5AA. I would rather put up with Bazz and Pilko than listen to him whinge every morning about the wind directions at the airport.

On a recent trip to Hong Kong I visited the new airport being built there. In all of the 26 years we have argued, we have seen a slight extension to the runway. We now believe that by extending the runway a fully laden jumbo jet can take off. However, what difference will one aircraft a week make! It is a hell of a price to pay for a very small amount of possible export. If this project goes ahead, I hope that this expenditure can be fully justified. It will be interesting to see what the Auditor-General has to say about that in a few years time.

I believe that had we taken the lead 26 years ago, had we acquired the land north of the city, we could have had an international airport operating 24 hours a day. But you do not operate an international airport 24 hours a day—you do not operate any airport 24 hours a day. If you go and talk to the management of the Hong Kong Airport, you have to close the airport for at least two hours a day to clean up all the bits and pieces that fall off planes on the main runway. I did not believe this, but about 60 people were listening to this briefing session when I was there; they were delegates at the Commonwealth conference held in Hong Kong, and we were

told that it is necessary to close the airport for two hours a day to clean the runway.

How efficient are the airline companies that operate in and out of the Asian countries? I have never heard of it at the Adelaide Airport, although we did find that a bolt fell off an Air New Zealand plane some years ago (of course, everybody denied it). But here we have the authorities in Hong Kong saying it is true: you have to close the airport so that you can do your maintenance of the runway. It is unbelievable! We would not want that situation to exist here in Adelaide. Anybody who believes that we could do without a curfew at Adelaide Airport is just not living with reality.

Whilst I believe in expanding tourism, I have always believed that if we are genuine in encouraging international tourism we should link the development of each international hotel with an international airline, as I have said on many occasions. So, when Malaysian Airlines, Singapore Airlines or any other new operator commences operations here—and quite a lot of overseas airlines from America and New Zealand can fly into Adelaide if they wish—we should encourage them to have an international standard hotel. If, for example, the Grand Hotel at Glenelg had been tied to an international airline, one could guarantee that the airline in question would do all it could to ensure that the occupancy of that hotel was at a very high level. It is a shame when you have international airlines coming into a State such as ours and there is no tie-up with a hotel of international standard.

That is really the crux of tourism. That is where I believe that this Government and future Governments must do a lot more work. It is hard work, it is hard selling, it is hard business; but, if we can do that and we encourage international hotel developers with international airline affiliations, I believe we will get some really meaningful tourism development.

We in South Australia must encourage and compete with the other States to bring interstate and overseas visitors here. We did that through the Grand Prix and through a whole lot of other events. I was quite surprised when, over the weekend, for the first time in my life I was invited to go to the Bay to Birdwood Run and attend the Birdwood Museum. I have never been there, because I have just been too busy and too concerned with looking after my own electorate. Whilst the bad weather came in, it failed to dampen the enthusiasm of entrants in this year's RAA Bay to Birdwood Run. I must commend the RAA for taking up the sponsorship, and I hope that the RAA will always sponsor the Bay to Birdwood Run. That to me, as a member of the RAA, is something quite worthwhile and most important.

More than 1 780 cars from South Australia, interstate and overseas took part in what is now the largest historic run of its type in the world. I believe that the member for Custance drove his 1912 Hupmobile. I understand that his navigator, his wife, got out at Collinswood because she got too wet, but I give full credit to the member for Custance. He drove his vehicle all the way to Birdwood and I believe he thoroughly enjoyed the experience. The car that he drove was built to be driven in that weather. You have to take precautions to protect yourself in that weather, and it did not stop him from wearing his particular outfit. And he looked the part. So, full credit to the member for Custance for taking part in it, and I hope that next year he will offer the member for Unley the position of navigator. I think that the two of them would make a great team. They should take a road map with them, because I would not trust the member for Unley's directions. You never know where they might end up. He would

probably take them around the back part of Unley somewhere.

It is pretty difficult to estimate the exact number of spectators who braved the conditions to watch the procession of vehicles worth more than \$48 million. When you consider that 1 780 cars worth \$48 million went from Wigley Reserve, Glenelg, to the National Motor Museum at Birdwood, we certainly had a lot of history, and it was a unique event. Prior to the start, the traditional spreading of seaweed across the road and the cutting of the starting line ribbon was undertaken by the Premier (Dean Brown) and the Mayor of Glenelg (Brian Nadilo).

I am waiting for the Premier and the Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources to come down and swim across the Patawalonga. I am waiting for the date, because I will ask the Glenelg Surf Lifesaving Club boating crew to provide a safety net. By starting at Adelphi Terrace and swimming across to the beach landing at the entrance to Stanley Street, the Premier and the Minister can then walk around the corner to my home to have a shower and a revive, a special brew of port I have that will revive them after swimming the Patawalonga—because they will need it.

Mr Clarke: Aren't you going to join them for the swim?

Mr BECKER: No way! I would be like the Deputy Premier: I would sink. That is why we would need more than one boat crew there to rescue us. For 69 year-old Roly Forrs, of Thorngate, a Bay to Birdwood run official, this year was a very special occasion. After six unsuccessful attempts, Roly and his wife Helen won the prestigious Concours d'Elegance trophy at the 1995 Bay to Birdwood, which entitled him to lead the event as it started from Glenelg. This year's Concours d'Elegance trophy was won by Alan Steel, in a 1924 Rugby F-Tourer. I wonder why the vehicle of the member for Custance did not rate a better mention.

Mr Venning: I didn't put it in.

Mr BECKER: The member for Unley will make sure next year. 'From million dollar machines to penny farthing cycles, there is nothing quite like the run anywhere in the world', says RAA Motorfest spokesman Peter Hennekam. More than a quarter of the run entrants came from interstate or overseas, which is testimony to the great tourism potential of this event. Mr Hennekam said that the RAA, as the premier motoring organisation in South Australia, is proud to support this important event for the enjoyment and benefit of all South Australians, while enhancing South Australia's international reputation for automotive excellence. Mr Hennekam also said:

The RAA is very committed to the growth of this program. We see it growing into a truly international festival of motoring.

More than 30 events made up this year's expanded motorfest program which included chargers, chevys, historic trucks and motorcycles. One entrant journeyed from Papua New Guinea and another from Hong Kong. One in four vehicles in the run rolled into Adelaide from interstate. The ratio of interstate entrants in the run was slightly up on figures for the last event, with the overall number of entrants (1 780) on par with last year. Victorian entrants made up 16 per cent or 284 vehicles. That is amazing.

I never continue to be amazed at the support we get from Victoria. I am the first person to kick a Vic. I will do anything to bag the Victorians in any sport or in any thing, but I pay the Victorians full credit. I have never seen so many Victorian cars in South Australia as I did in the past week. They do not come over for a few days: they come over for a

week or more. The event is worth a lot of money to South Australia. It would be interesting to know how much money is injected into the State's economy as a result of this event. As I said, I pay full credit to the 284 entrants from Victoria.

Twenty-two entrants travelled from Western Australia. The West Australians were always good supporters of the Grand Prix when it was held in this State. South Australia boasted 1 350 entries. There were three penny-farthings and 86 military vehicles in the event. As I said, there were several entrants from overseas and we did meet the people from England. There was also a contingent from Japan who said that they will be here in the future. I hope that the Government sees the wisdom of this event and that it will do all it and the Parliament can to ensure our continued support in every way possible—

Mr Venning: I'll lend you one of my cars.

Mr BECKER: I do not think I could afford the insurance with the way I drive. We must do all we can to ensure that this event goes from strength to strength, that it becomes a world renowned event and that we give every encouragement to ensure that this two week motoring extravaganza continues. It was great to see so many motorcyclists involved. As President of the St John Ambulance Motor Cycle Division it was pleasing to see their support and all the old veteran motor bikes that used to race not only in this State but in country road trials and so on. It was very well supported. It brought back some great memories. As the member for Custance and those of us who did national service in the 1950s would know, the old military vehicles such as the stag hounds that we were trained in were dangerous machines. In fact, they killed many a young person because, with their petrol fumes, it was dangerous to smoke cigarettes anywhere in them.

I do not know whether the Deputy Premier undertook national service but, by jingo, they were good days. It was great to see the army vehicles participating in the event, just as it was to see Woodside. That is one event that has occurred in South Australia in the past few months which is worthy of mention and particular record. As I said, I congratulate everyone involved in it. I give full encouragement to everyone involved in the event in the future.

Another event that went unnoticed but which deserved much more publicity was the Hahndorf King of the Mountain bike race. Five cycling events were conducted at Hahndorf in the Adelaide Hills on Sunday 15 September. I was asked to assist the South Australian Cycling Federation to obtain police approval for partial road closures to conduct this event. I am staggered at the mentality of the bureaucracy in this State. There were three world junior champions, two Atlanta Olympians and five current Australian champions in the top class field of 118 cyclists competing for the King of the Mountain cycle race.

In Europe, there would have been tens of thousands of people at that event. It would have stopped the State: it would have stopped the country. But here there was niggling, nagging, negotiating, and carrying on for over a week to see whether we could partially close a few roads so we could hold this cycle race which went through Hahndorf. Eventually, approval was given, and it was a great event. There was no charge, and it was accident free.

The start and finish was in the main street of Hahndorf outside the German Arms Hotel. The race travelled on an 8.6 kilometre circuit around Hahndorf. The first event was flagged away by the Deputy Premier and Minister for Police (Hon. Stephen Baker). The under 15 and under 17 events were followed by the women's event and by the Hahndorf

King of the Mountains Classic. The under 15 road race was won by newly crowned Australian under 15 road champion, Nick Graham. The women's event was dominated by 17 year old junior world champion Rachael Linke, who sprinted away from the field to win comfortably from South Australian Sports Institute scholarship holders Alayna Burns and Joanne Robinson.

It is important to recognise the role of the South Australian Sports Institute. If there is anything that we have got going in South Australia that Victoria has not, it is our Sports Institute. If there is anything that we have got going, whether it be in cycling or in any of the other sports, particularly the cricket academy, we must hold onto those organisations and encourage our young people. As I said in my speech on 19 July 1970, 'I feel it is wrong that Australia's Commonwealth Games team has to undertake to finance its representation overseas.' They had to do it themselves in those days. I said, 'South Australia can pave the way in this manner by the Government's sharing a greater interest in sport, especially financially.'

I went on to suggest that we should establish a new ministry, a ministry of sport and culture. The word 'culture' was a bit frightening for some of my colleagues, but the message was there that I wanted to establish a Sports Institute along the lines of those that were being established in those days in Eastern Europe, particularly East Germany. We had the location. When I was the shadow Minister for sport, we suggested a location in the country where we could have developed the first truly international style sports institute.

Full credit must go to the cycling people of South Australia that they were able to hold an event such as that and that the young ones are doing so well. The competitors in the main event had a keen battle on the climb up the Balhannah road, where sprinting for the coveted King of the Mountains title took place on every lap. Eventually, Atlanta Olympian Brett Aitken won the King of the Mountains title by one point. In cycling terms, it was pretty exciting, quite demanding and a brilliant ride for the whole event. Aitken was unlucky to cramp in the closing stages of the full race and this allowed State champion Kristin Lewis to win the sprint for the line from the former national champion silver medallist, Darrell Beddome, with Aitken in third place.

Police in attendance controlled the main street, and all of the 8.6 kilometre Hahndorf race circuit was either controlled by the police or the corner marshals, who were provided by the local Country Fire Service and the South Australian Cycling Federation. The member for Davenport knows the role of the Country Fire Service and how wonderful and what a help they are in this type of event. We thank them and give them full credit for volunteering, for giving their time and for assisting to establish an event that will go from success to success.

I am told by the Chief Commissaire of the South Australian Cycling Federation (Mr McMahon) that this marshalling provided cyclists with traffic free conditions through the whole road race and also allowed the traffic to flow safely through the main street of Hahndorf. The relationship and cooperation between the South Australian Police Department, St John volunteers, the Hahndorf Country Fire Service and the South Australian cycling officials was excellent. The marshalling and control of the motor vehicles on the circuit by police was very well handled.

There is the opportunity for this event to grow and develop. There is also the opportunity to hold the Australian titles in this area next year, and I believe that planning is

under way. Again, this is another indication of the type of major event that we are attracting, and will continue to attract, to South Australia through the hard work of many people, not only those employed by the Government but also people who are keen to see South Australia succeed, those who want South Australia to develop, and those who want to do something for their beloved State and their city. They will do it if we give them a little encouragement, help and a step up on the way to achieving something of excellence for South Australia.

It is significant to note that in this year in my electorate and the adjoining electorate some \$28 million is being spent on sporting facilities. Some \$8.2 million is to be spent on upgrading the Hindmarsh stadium in my electorate, so we can bid—hopefully successfully—to have some of the preliminary soccer games for the Sydney 2000 Olympics played here.

The Hindmarsh soccer stadium offers the best pitch in Australia, believe it or not, and it is highly recognised throughout Australia. My colleague the member for Coles is the ambassador for soccer. It is bad luck that Adelaide City did not win this year; I am pleased they won tonight, but it is a pity they did not win the championship in her first year; that would have been better. However, the commissioner for soccer has decided that we will have the best soccer facilities. Having had the opportunity to see similar facilities in Europe, I see no reason why we cannot do that. Again we should be proud of what is being achieved by a band of very keen people who work in a voluntary capacity and who support a very small staff to provide the best and the most competitive soccer in Australia.

We have Adelaide City in the National Soccer League, and its record is so great that we are the envy of other States. Then we have the West Adelaide Soccer Club for which we are doing all we can to ensure that it can be consolidated on one site and provide a very strong alternative team, as they have been in the past.

We have seen the development of Australian football nationally. We have seen what the Victorians have done with Australian football and how they have broken up and merged their clubs, and sent some of their clubs into other States. Let us not be too confident about what that lot is doing, because all they have done is raise millions of dollars to get themselves out of a financial mess. They have been able to sell off some of their teams to Sydney and Brisbane and create other teams in Western Australia, and on each occasion the Australian Football League has received several million dollars. The amount of money that they have pulled out of each State to establish the National Football League is unbelievable.

It was wonderful to see the Sydney Swans take on the North Melbourne club at the Melbourne Cricket Ground last Saturday. I do not think the best team won: I think the Sydney Swans were the real battlers and played well for three quarters of the game, but again that experience shows the Victorians' competitiveness, the manner in which they treat the rest of Australia with contempt, what they are prepared to do and how they go about achieving something for their State. It is full credit to the Victorians in one respect, because they are so determined that their city and their State will achieve and will provide the encouragement, development and growth that they look for.

Through soccer we have the opportunity to do the same. Two great national teams, many young players with brilliant skills. Zoran Matic, the coach of Adelaide City, will go down

in history as a legend who created many of the soccer players who made the competition possible and who strengthened it. It is wonderful to see these young people being invited to play in Europe and England and being offered huge contracts to play for selected top clubs. We do not want to lose them: we cannot afford to keep them. It would be selfish to say, 'You cannot go.' That experience will eventually come back to this country and this State and will ensure and enhance the growth of soccer which is a truly international game which speaks all languages and covers all governments and all locations in the globe. I hope that everyone will support the efforts now being made and will support the redevelopment of the Hindmarsh stadium to ensure that we have the opportunity in the year 2000 to see some of the best soccer in the world played here in Adelaide. They will be given a great welcome and will be well looked after in Australia's most beautiful city—Adelaide.

In 1970 I said that I believed that cultural activities and other fields should receive encouragement and especially financial aid from the Government. That did happen. In 1970 I said:

Adelaide has the Festival of Arts every two years and as a State we must do more to promote that Festival. At last, thanks to the Steele Hall Government, we are now well on the way to providing a world-class festival hall.

The decision to select the site for Festival Theatre was made at the very first dinner which I organised for the Hanson State Electorate Committee of the Liberal and Country League. I am telling stories out of school (as I always do). I organised a dinner for about 150 to 160 people—which had never been done before at the Glenelg North branch of the Liberal Party—and some of the little old ladies said, '\$3.50 for a dinner is a lot of money.'

However, we organised the dinner and the guest speaker was the Premier of South Australia, Steele Hall. As he walked in with his young secretary he said, 'Where do you think it should go—on the banks of the Torrens River or up on the hill?' I did not have a clue. As President of the SEC, I could not let him know that I did not know what he was talking about. He said, 'Where do you think it should go—the banks of the Torrens River or on the hill?' I said, 'On the banks of the Torrens is the only place.' He said, 'Tonight, ladies and gentlemen, I wish to announce that we will build a Festival Theatre; it will be on the banks of the Torrens River.' Thanks Steele. That is why I always called it the tin shed memorial hall—the Festival Theatre. That is how it was done, that is how we got it, and I think that it is one of the State's greatest assets.

The Festival Theatre and the complex have provided brilliant entertainment for the people of South Australia and many opportunities for South Australians to perform and develop their talents which is something of which we can be very proud. Due credit must also be given to the Dunstan Government. Dunstan ensured that the arts were given the support that they deserved. I know that he now gets anxious as he turns 70 years of age that he might see some of the things that he did being undone. We did not agree with everything he did, but that is one area that he did and did well.

It is great to be able to reminisce on what you said in this place 26 years ago. I said, 'I am concerned that the windows in our schools have not been cleaned since this maintenance was cancelled by the previous Labor Government'—in 1967, I believe. Then there was concern about the maintenance of our schools and I suggested that we should have janitors at

all our major schools. Certainly, perhaps one janitor could look after several smaller schools. It has always been a concern to me that we have millions of dollars invested in property in our schools, with millions of dollars worth of equipment in our schools, yet there is nobody living on site. I do not know of any private enterprise or organisation that would allow a factory, a warehouse or any premises with such capital investment left unattended for such long periods.

We should do two things. We should ensure that the schools are used as much as possible, to the fullest extent, and in some suburbs they are. I would like to see a greater use of our schools, and certainly greater protection of their property. We would create quite a few jobs with people living on site, looking after our schools. Even when you consider the premiums that we have to pay to cover the damage created by fire and vandalism to our schools, I believe we would still end up well in front. I believe that people living on the properties, patrolling and attending our schools, would save money.

I do not think we would experience the level of vandalism that we have had over the years. It is a shame when you see schools and classrooms burnt down. It is not only the damage to the building itself; it is the impact it has on the students. You see the students looking at the school the next day in dismay thinking of the work that they have put into their books, including their writings, drawings and their studies in general which has all been destroyed overnight, and it breaks their heart. Nobody really can tell the impact and assess the damage it does to the children and those young minds when they see that sort of damage.

We have never done very much in relation to replacing temporary buildings in our schools. I think that has been a short-sighted attitude of previous Governments where we should have been looking closer at replacing all these temporary buildings with modern constructions. I do not refer just to building in bricks, but there is reinforced concrete and different methods of building these types of premises. When I have been overseas and looked at schools there, I have not seen schools with temporary buildings 50 to 60 years old in schoolyards.

The joke down at Underdale High School when I first went down there was, 'If we do not get rid of these temporary buildings which have been there ever since the school was built, almost 30 years ago, the National Trust will come along and put a heritage listing on the premises.' Thank goodness the Premier had the opportunity recently to see that building demolished and removed, and open the multipurpose hall, so essential for a modern suburban high school. I could not believe it. Previous Labor Government members of Parliament never supported or encouraged the building of a multipurpose hall for a high school, nor for any of the schools. Our schools have suffered neglect, and the teachers' union is quite correct in campaigning as hard as it can for better working facilities and better conditions in our schools. It was my great pleasure to tell them the other day when they came to see me that I thought they were quite weak, that I would not have put up with these sorts of conditions. In our union we never hesitated to fight for the benefits of our employees.

As I said, I reminded everyone that our State motto is faith and courage and that we should not think about it but act upon it. That is the challenge that faces the Brown Government and everyone in this House. We should have faith and courage as far as the future growth and development of South Australia is concerned. We should not get bogged down on

the finances of the State. That is one problem and one hurdle we must overcome, but there are many other opportunities and many other ways in which we should be going about developing South Australia.

I believe that the Government has those policies and has developed them, and we should be fully encouraging the Government in its drive to bring new technology to South Australia and new job opportunities. One only has to look at Westpac and what it has done in my electorate in taking over the old John Martin building. There are now almost 800 people working in the back office of Westpac with modern computer technology. More companies are coming to South Australia, providing several hundred jobs but, unfortunately, it will take about 12 or 18 months. These new jobs must be created; they must be established to provide for the school leavers. We will always have school leavers and I believe it is our responsibility to ensure that, when the young people of South Australia leave school, those who wish to take up employment at that stage have employment opportunities available to them. At the same time we should be encouraging employers to provide the employment opportunities and we should assist the employers to give these young people a fair go.

In conclusion, I thank the Liberal Party for putting up with me. God only knows how it did. I have never had any reports back from it. As I said, I was a unique member of Parliament: I was not going to make it easy for anyone to beat me and I was not going to make it easy for anyone to keep me, because I believed that it was important to represent the people of my electorate and, on many occasions, I got into real trouble representing them. It did not bother me because, if I was representing a street and the people in that street believed in what they wanted and what I was doing for them, then I did not care about the rest of the country; it was what those people wanted. I wanted to ensure that they got a fair go and a fair hearing, and I made sure of that.

My second greatest wish was always to ensure greater accountability of Government and, through the Public Accounts Committee, we have achieved that. I believe that Governments are far more accountable today than they have ever been. I believe that public servants are aware of that accountability, and I believe that there is a vast improvement in the accountability of Government in many respects.

I do, however, have one criticism of the Auditor-General. Many years ago the Auditor-General would publish a list of lost and/or stolen property but that was deleted some years ago because questions were asked in Parliament. That was the end of the story. It is not my fault that the police lost three pushbikes one night at Police Headquarters—no-one knows how they disappeared. It was not a matter of knowing; it was a matter of knowing that there was a stocktake of the Government's assets. We have the major and the minor assets and then we have the equipment. Every company has a list of assets and liabilities, but more so assets, and they keep a very tight watch on stock. With such portable stock as we have today in Government offices right throughout the State, be they computers, mobile telephones, motor vehicles, trailers, or whatever, I think we are entitled to know just how much goes missing every year.

I was also insistent some years ago to know how much gravel was being stolen from the side of the road. No-one believed anyone could ask a question such as that. I have a record of asking more than 4 500 questions in this House in 26 years. I was informed that the roadside rubble dumps in some areas would disappear, and it was found, through

questioning, that a certain percentage was allowed for the disappearance of roadside rubble dumps.

It was further found that a contractor who was contracted to deliver 1 000 tonnes of rubble in preparation for building a new road was picking it up from one end of the dump and carting it to the other end. So the dump was growing, but the top end was disappearing. While it might sound silly and while it might look stupid in *Hansard* that somebody asked a question about roadside rubble dumps in the Highways Department, we did get the person who was pinching the gravel.

It was the same with the telephone system and with many of the other approximately 4 500 questions I asked. They have all contributed to the accountability of Government and to better Government. We have saved tens of millions of dollars. If that has been able to help the Government save some money towards the cost of running Parliament, I have achieved something in the 26 years I have been here.

I congratulate you, Mr Speaker; you are one of about nine Speakers under whom I have served during my term in this House. Earlier today, I was looking through the list and I saw that, when I first came in here, Reg Hurst was the first Speaker, followed by Paddy Ryan, Ted Connelly and Gil Langley. Then we had the Speaker of the first Liberal Government, Bruce Eastick. He was probably the toughest but fairest Speaker we have ever had. Then there was Terry McRae. I looked at T.M. McRae and I thought, 'Everybody's forgotten about dear old Terry.' He was one of those really true gentlemen of the Parliament, being very fair. Then we had John Trainer. Enough said. Then came Norm Peterson, who was a real man's man and a good bloke. That is the best way I can describe Norm.

On you, Mr Speaker, I cannot reflect, and I would not, because the Speaker has been here for as long as I have. He has worked very hard, and I just do not know how anybody has ever undertaken his workload, covering his district and being held in such high regard right through the Mid North, the Upper North and the West Coast. That is one hell of a part of the State. It is nearly 90 per cent of the State. Mr Speaker, you are better known than most Ministers and most people in this State, because you cover that much of that State. It is full credit to you, Mr Speaker, that you have worked hard and diligently for your electorate, as I have endeavoured to do in my electorate. It has been a great pleasure to serve the people of South Australia.

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

Mrs HALL (Coles): Nearly three years on from the last election, there is now speculation about the date of the next contest and the re-election of our Liberal Government. Nothing concentrates the collective political mind more than the thought of a campaign, and so it should be, as it will inevitably focus around policies and the management of our Government and, of course, the credibility of the Labor Opposition. It is for this reason as much as any that I am pleased to have this opportunity to second the Address in Reply and to follow my most esteemed colleague the member for Peake.

I congratulate Sir Eric Neal not only for his speech in opening the spring session of Parliament but particularly for accepting the position of Governor of South Australia. Sir Eric's experience and understanding of industry and commerce are a valuable and rare commodity as far as Governors are concerned, and it will give our community an additional

skill in the hierarchy of public leadership. The address is an optimistic document, as it should be. It confirms the success of the Government's programs in facing the issues that the Labor Party ignored for years. It sums up the Government's determined action to rescue the State from years of Labor's financial disintegration. Points 6 and 7, under the heading 'State Finances', tell the story. Point 6 states:

In delivering its three budgets my Government has moved from a \$350 million underlying State budget deficit to a position where over the next year and with further careful management and a continuing commitment to debt and deficit reduction, we can forecast a real and sustainable State surplus.

Point 7 States:

Our State finances are on track. The 1995-96 underlying deficit in the non-commercial sector is \$101 million. This is \$5 million less than forecast at budget time. My Government is ahead of its debt reduction targets. Asset sales play a significant role in this strategy and the Asset Management Task Force, established in March 1994, is continuing its comprehensive program of divesting non-core public sector assets to reduce State debt. The asset sales program has already achieved a total of \$1.75 billion in sale proceeds, dramatically exceeding the Government's original targets.

It is significant indeed that the heading 'State finances and economic development' is followed by 'Employment'. Logically the way in which our finances are managed translates into the jobs our community can provide. These jobs are overwhelmingly the main objectives of this Government. However, rapid change challenges the way we work and the way we prepare for the global community created by the technological revolution. Who would have thought, for instance—and in fact few did—that the change required to update computer programming to handle the new millennium of the year 2000 would cost the world billions of dollars?

I now refer to two contrasting illustrations that reflect this change. The first is anecdotal but a practical reflection of the job dilemma. Recently an acquaintance of mine talked to a hardware retailer about the effects of import on Australian employment. He instanced a sack truck selling retail for \$49.50. It lands on his shop floor for an all up cost of \$20. If we tally the components of its manufacture, that is, pneumatic tyres, bearings and metal, the base materials in Australia are probably a greater expense than the landed manufactured cost. This is just one item that demonstrates clearly the decline of so much of our traditional manufacture and reminds us that Australia has to be extremely vigilant in international negotiations that affect our industries and their markets.

Particularly vulnerable in this new age is our car industry—the linchpin of the South Australian economy. Newspaper reports about a zero tariff policy that threaten thousands of jobs in the automotive industry are a constant reminder to us all that South Australia, along with Victoria, must keep pressure on the Commonwealth to avoid any reckless action that could take Australian cars off the road. At a time when Australia's overseas balance of trade is our greatest impediment to increased national growth, it is astounding that the more vocal and rational economists would add between \$6 billion and \$8 billion to that deficit by wrecking the Australian automotive industry.

I am amazed that these purists can, on the one hand, identify our overseas debt as our greatest economic handicap and, on the other hand, advocate tariff policies that could destroy our car industry and replace locally manufactured vehicles with imports. Premier Brown has rightly emphasised this point in putting our case to the Federal Government. He

was quoted in the *Sunday Mail* of 7 July pinpointing this issue. He said:

Australia already has the worst trade deficit of any developed country in the world. The loss of our car industry would prompt international bankers to question the whole sustainability of our economy.

I am encouraged by the report of the Prime Minister's remarks yesterday in the *Financial Review* as follows:

In a strong indication of support for the continued assistance for the car and textile industries, Mr Howard said it was legitimate to argue that Australian companies had problems competing against highly protected Asian firms.

Mr Howard said:

I believe in lower tariffs, but I think the lower tariffs in Australia should be matched by equally fair treatment from other countries.

Jobs for South Australians must come before economic purity. My second reference is to several articles carried in the *Advertiser* last week on the employment situation. On Wednesday 25 September Greg Kelton wrote about a Drake International survey. The article stated:

High-tech and business jobs are set to boom in South Australia over the next three months, according to a new jobs survey. But the findings also suggest jobs will be lost in other key areas of the State's economy—including construction, housing, health and transport.

This comment was based on the part of a survey that, among several indifferent results, said:

After a surprisingly poor anticipated result for the June quarter, the information technology sector has rallied and looks to push up staffing levels by 7.1 per cent.

Further on that same page followed a plea from school principals for new employment initiatives and the views of students about their hopes and fears concerning job opportunities. Thursday's edition of the *Advertiser* brought us an article about the average 71 per cent job success rate of our university graduates and Friday's edition contained some critical comments by management about job seekers' attitudes and their defence by youth leaders.

The actions we take to increase employment will always be controversial with short-term objectives sometimes competing with long-term solutions. There can be no doubt that our schools have to build a bridge from their educational responsibilities in the strictest sense to preparing students for the reality of the workplace. This, I know, may seem easy advice in the face of high youth unemployment, difficult home situations and, at times, low morale. But the fact is that most of these young people will eventually get a job and we should make their period of transition as optimistic and beneficial as possible. However, as we know, there are practical things the State Government can do and is doing because it does know that growth is still the basis of prosperity.

The Government and particularly the Premier's support and commitment on a personal level to the information industry is a prime example. On 6 August when the Premier was describing the success of the Government's intervention on this field he said:

Just four days after we were elected in December 1993, a special section on information technology was set up in the Department of Premier and Cabinet. By the following March we had released IT2000, a vision for a new information industry in South Australia. Two years later, we have 2 000 people working in jobs which simply didn't exist in March 1994. That will grow to well over 6 000 jobs by the year 2005.

Another dramatic success is briefly summarised in section 14 of the Governor's speech; that is, the expansion of Roxby Downs with the creation all up of over 6 500 new jobs and

a \$1.25 billion investment by Western Mining. How galling this must be for the Leader of the Opposition and his members. They do not have just the State Bank in their corridor of horrors because of their past mismanagement; they also have their implacable opposition to Roxby in the first instance. Only one of their own members in the Upper House in 1982, rejecting their indefensible position, voted for Roxby to proceed. If Labor had had its way then Roxby would not be here now.

The Leader of the Opposition now has to decide what they are going to do about Yumbarra, the potential new mine with potential new jobs. This is how the Premier described that particular opportunity when he spoke to the South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy on 24 September when he said:

It was through the South Australian Exploration Initiative airborne surveys, that an extraordinary magnetic anomaly—considered to be one of the most significant yet identified—was discovered in Yumbarra Conservation Park in 1993. It is, however, as you know in a section of the park which does not have access for exploration or mining. And it's the kind of land access problem we will increasingly have to deal with. There is a provision under the National Parks and Wildlife Act of 1972, which enables a park to be reproclaimed to allow access for exploration and mining.

I believe that if we, as a Government, do not make an attempt to pursue under that provision the reproclamation of Yumbarra to enable an investigation of the anomaly to determine if it has economic mineral potential, we will be failing in our duty to foster the economic development of the State and the wellbeing of its people. Exploration of this anomaly will not damage the environment of this vast conservation park. There is a moral obligation on the people of South Australia to determine what potential wealth and economic development exists in Yumbarra.

Will Labor seek to stall the search for the new jobs that Yumbarra might bring? Will it recognise how destructive Labor will be, if it again seeks the Roxby option, to strike down another promising State project?

Now stepping from the resources area, I refer to another great provider of jobs in the service industry, that of tourism, about which my colleague, the member for Peake, has already spoken. The importance of tourism continues to be a vital part of the economic development of this State. Many members will have seen tourism's new advertising campaign that commenced on television last Sunday evening. That campaign is built around the economic input of tourism to South Australia, covering employment and export potential. Its theme is 'Tourism is everybody's business'. As Minister Ingerson so ably said, the campaign follows the journey of the tourist dollar, from the arrival of international tourists at Adelaide Airport. It then travels from the taxi driver through various local businesses to a farmer in rural South Australia.

I wonder how widely known it is that tourism is worth \$1.8 billion to our State, and that translates, as we know, into \$5 million each day. Facts and figures from the South Australian Tourism Commission show that the tourism industry employs more than 110 million people world-wide; that is about one in 15 of the global workforce. In South Australia tourism employs about 35 000 people and is worth \$1.8 billion. The plan is to increase this figure to \$2.4 billion by the year 2000. When this goal is achieved approximately 10 000 jobs will have been created in the process.

In addition to that material, figures show that in South Australia tourism generates around 19 million visitor nights annually. In 1995 South Australia attracted some 250 000 international visitors, who spent 2.8 million nights here. The domestic markets, both interstate and intrastate, account for over 80 per cent of our State's visitor nights. In 1995 South

Australians made three million trips, spending more than nine million nights in their own State. In 1995-96 South Australia's hotel/motel room nights sold number more than two million, which is well over 5 000 hotel rooms occupied every night.

Those rather fascinating statistics in part reflect the enormous success Adelaide has as a convention destination. As a city we have an international reputation for a proven capacity to hold major events, and that reputation—well deserved, I might say—is helping us win an impressive percentage of the national convention market. The latest figures released today by the Minister from the Adelaide Convention and Tourism Authority show that we host an impressive 17 per cent of international meetings and conventions held in Australia, and given the global market of industry—it is worth \$8 billion annually—it adds an amount estimated at more than \$250 million to our State's economy.

I understand that the economic impact of every international convention delegate to South Australia is \$2 948, and every national convention delegate is \$1 047. The potential for increasing tourism is enormous. We have our magnificent regions; the growing and lucrative market of nature and adventure-based tourism; and the multimillion dollar National Wine Museum, which will enable our internationally acclaimed wine industry to link into the tourism industry. Figures show that the events tourism market has injected \$90 million to our economy in the past 12 months and attracted more than 45 000 visitors.

Then there is the vast potential to develop our recreational tourism market, with our natural resources, our sophisticated capital 20 minutes from national parks, wineries, coastal playgrounds and beach walks, along with our recreational walking trails; the partnership between the Tourism Commission and the Office for Recreation and Sport, currently looking at a recreational tourism model to feature the Heysen Trail as an international destination; the Riesling Trail, which will eventually connect Riverton and Spalding via the Clare Valley, where visitors will experience wineries as they cycle, walk or horse ride; the magnificent Flinders Ranges; and, for the energetic bushwalkers and bird watchers, everything between, as South Australia identifies as the gateway to the Outback.

This Government has a record of activity, commitment and achievement in the area of tourism. As outlined in the Governor's speech, this Government has recognised and invested in tourism infrastructure, in particular the Worrina Cove resort marina—the partnership between the Government and the Malaysian company MBf. This special project will combine with many tourism features and promotions to give South Australia an increased international profile. Adding to tourism potential and opportunities is a continuous process, and the development of new sporting facilities is an exciting activity and part of this process. As parliamentary secretary to the Minister for Recreation, Sport and Tourism, some of my duties include involvement with three most important sporting developments worth more than \$26 million, and I refer to those outlined in the Governor's speech: the major project at Mile End, the athletics stadium and the netball stadium and, of course, the redevelopment of the Hindmarsh Soccer Stadium, which will provide international-class facilities for both players and spectators.

This Government is to be congratulated on its program of getting on with the job of providing major sporting facilities for athletics, netball and soccer. For more than a decade Labor promised, announced, promised again and then did not

deliver—as usual. By contrast, this Government is supporting and resourcing the sporting community. The document produced by the Office of Recreation and Sport, entitled *Adelaide Australia—Prepared to win*, was released by Minister Ingerson at the Atlanta Olympic Games. It highlights the importance of sport as an integral part of a successful South Australian economy. The first paragraph of this document says:

When the main priority is to achieve peak performance and to win, a reliable, secure and world-class environment for preparation is absolutely essential. Adelaide can provide this. International standard competition venues, matched by a comprehensive range of training facilities, are just the beginning.

This professional approach could inject around \$40 million into the State over the next four years by targeting countries that will bring sporting teams to Adelaide in preparation for the Sydney Olympics in the year 2000. We aim to be successful in a number of sports, which include soccer, athletics, basketball, gymnastics, rowing and cycling. It is an important South Australian sporting initiative and all involved deserve our congratulations and support. This continuing success in so many diverse aspects of our life is very dependent on the public's morale, confidence and general support of community leadership.

Most aspects of politics have a measure of interlocking State and Federal interests. Immigration and multicultural affairs in South Australia best illustrate this point. Let us think for a moment of the calendar of events published by the South Australian Tourism Commission, listing the Italian Carnevale, the Greek Glendi Festival, the Schutzenfest, the Dozynki Polish Festival, the Chinese new year celebrations, the Andamooka Opal Festival, the Kernewek Lowender Cornish Festival, the Spanish Festival, the Latvian Arts Festival and the Multicultural Festival of South Australia, to name but a few.

I consider my electorate and its Festa Montevergine, the celebration of the Madonna del Arco, holding its own in these listings. How else could it be with more than 35 per cent with an Italian heritage in Coles? My electorate is a delightful mix and blend of many nationalities. I am proud to be a member of a Government that supports and is committed to a declaration of principles for a multicultural South Australia which recognises and values cultural diversity. As a State we have an enviable reputation as a most tolerant, generous and inclusive community. These are more than enough reasons for me to reject the over publicised attitudes of Pauline Hanson, the Federal member for Oxley in Queensland. Ms Hanson has a weird interpretation of political responsibility—apparently, to take the lowest common denominator of public opinion and use it as the standard for her political advocacy. There is nothing new in that ploy. It is a basic tool used at times to undermine society's collective desire to raise the living standards of all of its people.

It is a ploy that could not ever successfully take Australia into the twenty-first century. The fact is that Australians have seldom given unqualified support to migration, they do not much like paying taxes, and the letters to the editor display dozens of other public concerns about policy proposed by Governments. However, a study of our most successful political leaders will show that they have often led a reluctant public to a decision that has been beneficial to our nation. Certainly, their leadership was never based on envy and bigotry. I reject the Hanson tirade. I believe that my colleague and friend the Federal member for Adelaide, Trish Worth, said it best for all of us who care about this issue. I quote

from her speech in the House of Representatives on 18 September as follows:

All members on both sides of the Chamber are here to represent all sections of the Australian community and to promote the politics of inclusion and tolerance. It achieves little to concentrate only on negatives and those arguments which seek to divide.

Before concluding my remarks I want to make particular reference to my friend of many years and parliamentary colleague since December 1993, the now member for Peake and former member for Hanson, Heini Becker. I am delighted to follow him in seconding the Address in Reply to the opening of the Forty-eighth Parliament. He and I do not always mirror each other's views on gender questions; however, that is the way of politics, and I have enjoyed our

political discussions and personal friendship over many years. His contribution to South Australia and to his own electorate, his extraordinary campaign skills, his economic determination and his particular debating style are all well known and appreciated. I look forward to his parliamentary input this session, particularly as he is now sitting alongside me, as he reminds me, keeping his eye on me. I have much pleasure in seconding the adoption of the Address in Reply.

Mr WADE secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT

At 11.3 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday 3 October at 10.30 a.m.