

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 27 May 1997

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

GAMING MACHINES

A petition signed by 375 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to reduce the number of gaming machines and hours of operation in the City and District of Port Pirie was presented by the Hon. R.G. Kerin.

Petition received.

LICENSED CLUBS

A petition signed by 150 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to allow licensed clubs in South Australia to sell liquor to a club member for consumption off the premises was presented by the Hon. D.S. Baker.

Petition received.

HOPE VALLEY PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

A petition signed by 105 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to install a pedestrian crossing on Grand Junction Road opposite the Hope Valley Shopping Centre was presented by Mr Bass.

Petition received.

MURRAY BRIDGE TO BOW HILL ROAD

A petition signed by 313 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to upgrade the Murray Bridge to Bow Hill Road was presented by Mr Lewis.

Petition received.

HAPPY VALLEY LAND

A petition signed by 485 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to retain the land bound by Education Road, Chandlers Hill Road and Glenloth Drive, Happy Valley for community use was presented by the Hon. R.B. Such.

Petition received.

QUESTIONS

The **SPEAKER**: I direct that written answers to the following questions on the Notice Paper, as detailed in the schedule that I now table, be distributed and printed in *Hansard*: Nos 70, 74, 75, 77 to 82, 96, 97 and 104.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE REPORTS

The **SPEAKER**: I lay on the table the following reports of committees which have been received and published pursuant to section 17(7) of the Parliamentary Committees Act:

Public Works Committee—

Fiftieth report of the committee on the Roxby Downs Health Centre;

Fifty-second report of the committee on the Glossop High School redevelopment;

Fifty-third report of the committee on the University of Adelaide lower level site development;

Fifty-fourth report of the committee on the Elliston to Lock Road upgrade; and

Fifty-fifth report of the committee on the Kimba to Cleve Road upgrade.

Social Development Committee—

Tenth report of the committee on HIV/AIDS Hepatitis B inquiry.

PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Minister for Infrastructure (Hon. G.A. Ingerson)—
Regulations under the following Acts—

Fees Regulation—Water and Sewerage Fees

Irrigation—Principal

Sewerage—Other Charges

Waterworks—Other Charges

By the Minister for Racing (Hon. G.A. Ingerson)—

Racing Act—Regulations—

Super League Betting

Extension of Approved Sporting Venues

Rules of Racing—Racing Act—Harness Racing

Authority—Novice Reinspersons

By the Treasurer (Hon. S.J. Baker)—

Judges of the Supreme Court—Report, 1996

Police (Complaints and Disciplinary Proceedings) Act

1985—Agreement—Minor Misconduct

Regulations under the following Acts—

Associations Incorporation—Fees

Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration—Fees

Building Work Contractors—Fees

Business Names—Fees

Conveyancers—Fees

Co-operatives—Fees

Criminal Law (Sentencing)—Fees

District Court—

Fees

Fees—Civil Division

Environment, Resources and Development Court—

Fees

Fees—Native Title

Land Agents—Fees

Land Tax—Certificate Fees

Liquor Licensing—

Ceduna and Thevenard Townships

City of Marion

City of Port Pirie

Fees

Town of Gawler

Magistrates Court—Fees

Plumbers, Gas Fitters and Electricians—Fees

Public Corporations—

Dissolution of TransAdelaide—St Agnes

Health Development

SA Co-ordinated Care

Second-hand Vehicle Dealers—Fees

Security and Investigation Agents—Fees

Sheriff's—Fees

Supreme Court—

General Fees

Probate Fees

Travel Agents—Fees

Trade Measurement Administration—Fees and

Charges

Youth Court—Fees

Rules of Court—

Magistrates Court (Civil)—Magistrates Court Act—

Forms

Magistrates Court—Magistrates Court Act—Forms

Supreme Court—Supreme Court Act—Appeal from District Court

By the Minister for Energy (Hon. S.J. Baker)—
Regulations under the following Acts—
Gas—Gas Appliances
Petroleum Products Regulation—Fees

By the Minister for Finance (Hon. S.J. Baker)—
Regulations under the following Acts—
Police Superannuation—Pension Commutation
Superannuation—Pension Commutation
Friendly Societies Act—General Laws—Friendly Societies Medical Association—National Pharmacies

By the Minister for Mines (Hon. S.J. Baker)—
Mobile Offshore Drilling Unit (*Maersk Victory*) Accident—Report, November 1996
Regulations under the following Acts—
Mines and Works Inspection—Examination Fees
Mining—
Fees and Rents
Revocation of Precious Stones Regulations
Opal Mining—
Fees
Principal

By the Minister for Industrial Affairs (Hon. D.C. Brown)—
Regulations under the following Acts—
Dangerous Substances—Fees
Explosives—Fees
Harbors and Navigation—
Fees
Restricted Areas—Blanchetown—Porter Bay
Motor Vehicles—
Accident Touring Roster—Fees
Fees
Registration—Golf Carts
Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare—
Fees
Transitional Dates Amendment
Passenger Transport—
Fees
Taxi Licences
Road Traffic—Inspection and Exemption Fees
Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation—
Medical Practitioners
Service Charge
Speech Pathologists
Rules of Tribunals—
Workers Compensation Tribunal—Documents

By the Minister for Health (Hon. M.H. Armitage)—
Food Act—Report, 1995-96
Regulations under the following Acts—
Chiropodists—Fees
Controlled Substances—
Pesticide Fees
Poisons Fees
Occupational Therapists—Fees
Public and Environment Health—Waste Control Fees
Radiation Protection and Control—Ionizing Radiation Fees
South Australian Health Commission—
Compensable and Non-Medicare Patients Fees
Medicare Patients Fees
Private Hospital—Fee

By the Minister for Local Government (Hon. E.S. Ashenden)—
District Council—By-Laws—Ceduna
No. 1—Repeal of By-Laws
No. 2—Permits and Penalties
No. 3—Moveable Signs
No. 4—Taxis and Hire Cars
No. 5—Caravans and Camping
No. 6—Keeping Horses in a Township
No. 8—Cemeteries
Local Government—Regulations—
Annual Allowance Limits
Certificate of Liabilities Fees
Local Government Superannuation Board
Valuation Fees

Public Parks Act—Disposal of Land—City of Burnside to the Minister for Education & Children's Services—Report

By the Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources (Hon. D.C. Wotton)—
Regulations under the following Acts—
Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium—Charges
Community Titles—Fees
Crown Lands—Fees
Environment Protection—
Beverage Container Fees
Levy Fees
Prescribed Bodies—Minor Policies
National Parks and Wildlife—
Camping Fees—Revocation
Fees
Hunting Fees
Pastoral Land Management and Conservation—Fees
Roads (Opening and Closing)—Fees
Valuation of Land—Fees and Allowances

By the Minister for Primary Industries (Hon. R.G. Kerin)—
Regulations under the following Acts—
Fisheries—
Abalone Fisheries Licence Fees
General Licence Fees
Lakes and Coorong Fishery Licence Fees
Marine Scalefish Fisheries Licence Fees
Miscellaneous Fishery Licence Fees
Prawn Fishery Licence Fees
River Fishery Licence Fees
Rock Lobster Fisheries Licence Fees
Meat Hygiene—
Definition of Cooked Meat
Fees

By the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education (Hon. D.C. Kotz)—
Teachers Registration Board of South Australia—Report, 1995-96
Education Act—Regulations—Materials and Services Charge.

UNITED WATER

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON (Minister for Infrastructure): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.
Leave granted.

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: This ministerial statement concerns United Water and the Government's contract with the company to manage our water resources in the metropolitan area and exports overseas. In the past 18 months in this place we have heard much from the Opposition about the supposed problems with SA Water and this Government's decision to contract the United Water company to manage the State's metropolitan water supplies. This decision to contract our water management to United Water, a vision led by the Premier (Mr Olsen) in 1995, excited strange passions in members opposite. Their response over the past 18 months seems at times to have verged—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON:—on political hysteria.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader does not want to start off the new sitting badly.

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: Today it is my happy duty to report that United Water—having been subjected to the most intensive formal scrutiny of any new company in the State's history—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: I noticed what you said the other day on the air; you want to get your facts right.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: United Water has been given a solid vote of approval by the independent assessment team assigned to report on the first year. The independent team, comprising Arthur Andersen and Price Waterhouse Urwick, shows the venture has been a success beyond all our expectations. In the period between 18 September 1995 and 31 December 1996, United Water has met key commitments. These are commitments fundamental to achieving the vision and creating a foundation for a viable private sector water industry.

United Water has achieved results which underline the massive benefits of our decision to contract some of the world's very best water management companies to bring them into South Australia. Key clauses of the contract required the company to meet certain export commitments. Today the numbers are on the table for all to see. Today the contract has proven to be a winner.

- Aggregate net exports of \$24.3 million have been achieved in just 12 months—more than \$13 million over the committed figure required in the contract of \$9.5 million (\$10.8 million from the water industry and \$13.5 million from the non-water industry). Some 70 companies have been involved in the \$24.3 million net exports.
- United Water has met key obligations under industry development, which includes establishing its headquarters in Adelaide, creating a combined research facility and establishing an international advisory board.
- United Water has made good progress in a number of initiatives contained in the initial industry development program, such as export orders for South Australia and the establishment of the \$750 000 commercial testing laboratory at Collex Waste Management.
- United Water has made successful bids for projects in New Zealand and Indonesia. The work done in developing the local water and waste water industry during the initial years of the contract will underpin the capabilities to supply water and waste water infrastructure markets in the Asia Pacific region. These commitments will help United Water meet its future export commitments.

United Water has taken on a huge challenge and exceeded all expectations. I am pleased to report that we now have a successful company based in South Australia which is working with the Government and with the people to build on its successes. More than \$24 million in exports have been achieved. United Water has also saved taxpayers in management of our own water scheme some \$10 million a year, or on average \$15 per year per customer. This figure came in in the first year. It is a huge achievement and is one that local employees and managers of United Water can be very proud of. It is one that the Government can hold up as one of its major accomplishments. On behalf of the Government, I would like to publicly congratulate United Water on an exceptional first year performance. We look forward to this work continuing.

MAERSK VICTORY

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Minister for Mines): I move:

That the report of accident on 16 November 1996 of the mobile offshore drilling unit (*Maersk Victory*) be printed.

Motion carried.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I seek leave to make a ministerial statement about the findings of an investigation into the *Maersk Victory* drilling rig accident in November last year.

Leave granted.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: The *Maersk Victory* is a mobile offshore drilling unit referred to as a 'jack-up rig'. The name is descriptive of its mode of operation in that it establishes itself at a drilling site by lowering its three legs to the seabed and then jacking up the drilling platform clear of the sea. On the morning of 16 November 1996, the *Maersk Victory* was in the process of establishing itself on the well site Frijole 1 in the Gulf St Vincent. It had lowered the three legs to the seabed and was carrying out an operation called 'pre-loading'. In pre-loading, ballast water is taken on board the vessel in a controlled manner, gradually increasing the load on the legs to a safety margin above that which would be experienced in drilling.

At 10.32 in the morning, and approximately one-third of the way through the pre-load operation (when the three legs were buried at 10 metres into the sub-sea sediments), one leg suddenly penetrated an extra 5 metres through the sub-sea sediments whilst the other two legs remained stationary. The sudden penetration by this one leg set up forces in the rig which severely damaged all legs. A successful evacuation of all 33 personnel was carried out. There were no injuries and no significant oil spill or damage to the environment. Subsequently, recovery operations were carried out to retrieve the rig, which is currently being repaired in Singapore.

The report tabled today was prepared by an inspector appointed pursuant to the Petroleum Act 1940, following an investigation carried out by officers of Mines and Energy Resources in conjunction with officers of the Government Investigation Unit of the Crown Solicitor's office. This report describes the circumstances of the accident, identifies what were, in the inspector's opinion, the contributing causes of the accident and makes recommendations to reduce the risk of this type of accident recurring to as low as reasonably practical. The widest possible dissemination of the report in the upstream petroleum industry will enable all companies to have access to the findings of the report and enable them to take corrective action, if this is required in their systems, thus improving the safety of the industry as a whole.

In summary, the inspector's opinion is that the accident occurred because the assessment of the sub-sea sediments was not sufficiently comprehensive to reduce the risk to a jack-up drilling rig to as low as reasonably practical. The deficiency in the assessment of the sub-sea sediments was the result of deficiencies in management systems and procedures in developing, obtaining and reviewing information about the sub-sea sediments. The accident, which resulted in substantial damage to the rig, caused Maersk Contractors (the owners of the drilling rig) to investigate its existing procedures and management systems in order to prevent a similar accident recurring.

In particular, remedial actions have been taken regarding *Maersk's* requirements for consultancy work, including the quality of seabed surveyors and marine consulting firms, when relying on advice and recommendations from such firms. A specific example is the requirement for soil coring or other similar geotechnical work being a mandatory request in connection with any 'Certificates of Approval' issued for putting a rig on location. Canyon (Australia) Pty Ltd, the licensee of the exploration area, is expected to return to drill within the licence area during the next 12 months.

FIRE BLIGHT

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: I would like to place on record my appreciation of the manner in which the recent situation regarding the bacterial disease fire blight has been handled. The cooperation between Primary Industries South Australia, my office and the Apple and Pear Growers Association has been excellent and is a testament to the professionalism of all involved. At stake is the future of our \$40 million apple and pear industry. Samples collected from ornamental trees in the Adelaide Botanic Gardens were recently tested by Agriculture Victoria, and three positive samples were detected. Those trees have now been destroyed, although samples have been kept for further testing. Further exhaustive testing of the positive samples taken from both the Melbourne and the Adelaide Botanic Gardens has been undertaken at independent laboratories in New South Wales at the Macquarie University and at the Max Planc Institute in Germany. As a result of the discovery in the Botanic Gardens, there has been a prohibition on movement of fire blight host material from South Australia to New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania. The Northern Territory and Victoria have no such requirements on South Australian produce.

It is important now to determine whether we are again free of fire blight in South Australia. We are surveying nearly 3 000 sites at a cost to the State Government of \$150 000. Surveys have been completed at the Adelaide Botanic Gardens and have begun in South Australia's 2 000 hectares of commercial apple and pear orchards. A command centre headed by PISA's Chief Quarantine Officer, David Cartwright, has been established at Lenswood Centre to coordinate the surveys for the Adelaide Hills, Adelaide metropolitan area and near areas. A similar centre is being established at Loxton Research Centre to coordinate the Riverland program. Importantly, industry has also agreed to raise a voluntary levy on apple and pear growers to mount a promotional campaign in Adelaide. The State Government has agreed to put in \$10 000 to kick-start that fund.

We need to encourage more South Australians to eat apples. We can still send fruit overseas, but nearly 6 000 cases a week normally go interstate. Those markets have been denied to us, so we need to create more sales at home. All of us can help that campaign. There is certainly no problem with eating the fruit. Hopefully, with the survey and testing, we can prove that there is no fire blight in South Australia. In the meantime, to prevent the bottom falling out of the market, we are encouraging people to eat more apples. It is a good healthy message.

MEMBER, NAMING

The SPEAKER: The member for Ridley was well aware that I intended to deal with a matter in relation to his conduct and criticism of me in the media. Unfortunately, he has failed to appear in his place, and the Chair takes a very dim view of that matter. In relation to the recent press reports about the contents and correspondence to me concerning the member for Ridley which have caused embarrassment, I will continue to make investigations of those matters. However, I believe the member for Ridley has seriously reflected on me as Speaker, and I have no option but to name the member for

Ridley. As the member for Ridley is not present to make an explanation, I call on the Deputy Premier.

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON (Deputy Premier): I move:

That the honourable member be suspended from the services of the House.

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): Mr Speaker, I wish to address the motion.

The SPEAKER: There is no debate on that motion.

Motion carried.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. It seems extraordinary, in the interests of parliamentary democracy and justice—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.D. RANN:—that the Opposition is not allowed to speak on a naming motion, nor is there any mention of for how long the honourable member who is not present should be suspended.

The SPEAKER: The process is set out in the Standing Orders. As the Leader of the Opposition is fully aware, having been named once himself, I think, in this session, on the first occasion it is for the remainder of the day's sitting; on the second occasion it is for a longer period; and on the third occasion it is for a longer period.

Mr ATKINSON: On a point of order, Sir, on what basis did you rule, as you did, that there could be no debate on the motion to suspend the member for Ridley from the service of the House?

The SPEAKER: The provision is contained in the Standing Orders, as the member for Spence would be well aware.

Mr Atkinson: Which number, Sir?

The SPEAKER: Number 139. The honourable member for Morphett.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Mr OSWALD (Morphett): I bring up the fifty-sixth report of the committee on the Wilpena tourist centre development and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON (Deputy Premier): I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion carried.

QUESTION TIME

EMPLOYMENT

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): Does the Premier stand by his predecessor's central commitment to create an average of 20 000 jobs per year during this term of office and, if not, will he now, in order to be positive and end the negativity, set a new jobs target—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader knows that he is out of order by commenting. He should ask his question or explain it but not engage in comment.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: If not, will the Premier now set a new jobs target to be achieved by the end of this term, given that the State is still almost 50 000 jobs short of the

Government's own target? Last November, exactly six months ago today, the former Premier and former Minister for Employment formulated an employment strategy that was ready to go to Cabinet for approval when, according to a recent media report in the *Advertiser*, 'the Liberal Party upheaval saw Mr Dean Brown replaced as Premier by the then Industry Minister, Mr Olsen'. The report in the *Advertiser* of 21 May states that the new jobs scheme was delayed for six months because of the change of leadership.

The SPEAKER: The honourable Premier, and the Leader was out of order.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The greatest impediment to jobs growth in South Australia is the legacy left to this State by the Labor Party. Had it not been for the \$3.5 billion of debt inflicted upon the people of South Australia, had it not been for the \$2 million interest per day on the State's debt that we are forced to pay, we would have been able to undertake a whole range of initiatives that would have been—

An honourable member interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I will name the honourable member if he keeps interjecting.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: We did not create the mess but we accept responsibility for cleaning it up—and clean it up we will. However, there is no quick fix to the mess we inherited resulting from the collapse of the State Bank and the loss of the Grand Prix—and the Leader of the Opposition knows all about that because he was the Minister responsible for the Grand Prix when it went to Victoria. The Leader does not like the House to be reminded of the fact that he was custodian of the Grand Prix when it left South Australia. Let us not forget the impact of the Keating Labor Government not so many years ago, with interest rates for small-medium businesses averaging 18 to 20 per cent over a period of five to six years.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader will not make any further displays in the Chamber or he will join the member for Ridley.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: That situation sapped all cash out of small business. It was a psychological blanket that depressed new investment and confidence in South Australia. In 1993, recognising the extent of this problem, we developed a strategy and a plan to rebuild South Australia. First, we had to stabilise the debt. Spending \$1 million more a day than we were earning, we could not continue in that way and the plan we put in place arrests that position. We then took up the task of reducing the debt through asset sales, putting the house in order so that we could implement the strategies to start rebuilding the South Australian economy.

What are some of the strategy's key points? Despite the fact that we had this debt position, over the past three years we have reduced electricity tariffs to small-medium businesses in this State by up to 34 per cent. The purpose of this is to give retained earnings to small-medium businesses to get them over the interest rate hurdle of the Keating Labor Government and to give them some assistance to—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: They are a lot better off now under the Howard Liberal Government than they were under the Keating Labor Government.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader will come to order.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Just have a look at the cost of interest rates now. Not only did we provide some retained

earnings to small and medium businesses to give them some assistance but, with a little head room starting to develop in the budget strategy, we have now been able to put in place some key initiatives to rekindle business investment in South Australia. I simply remind members of the House that last year this Government put in place the deposit 5 000 scheme and the youth employment strategy of some \$30 million to encourage the employment of young South Australians. In addition, this year we reduced stamp duty for first home buyers, thereby giving a stimulus to the housing market in South Australia.

What is the outcome of the policy settings? There is an 80 per cent increase in building approvals in South Australia in the first quarter of this year. As they go from building approvals to commencement and construction in the building industry, we will see some take-up in employment opportunities in South Australia. I ask the Labor Party to go out and start talking to some of the business people in this town because what they will hear from the business community is that there is a turnaround in the economy of South Australia. Private new investment in this State is 2½ times the national average. That is laying the foundation to rebuild the South Australian economy.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader is warned for the first time today.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Rebuilding the economy means that we must have a solid foundation. We have spent several years putting that foundation down after it had been destroyed by the previous Labor Government.

The Hon. M.D. Rann: Is that why you sacked Dean Brown?

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

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: We are pursuing these strategies vigorously. Let me give the House two or three examples of a range of examples that one can cite. In the defence and electronics industry we have seen a growth of approximately 20 per cent, involving Motorola, British Aerospace, GEC Marconi—and the list goes on. There is a dearth of software engineers available to meet their requirements. That involves multimillion dollars of investment in South Australia, creating job opportunities for South Australians now and in the future.

Another example is the call centre operation. I well remember the criticism from the member for Hart when we attracted Westpac to South Australia. The Westpac mortgage loans centre, having closed in Perth, Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne and consolidated in South Australia, has created just short of 800 new jobs—800 people have a pay packet that they did not have before. Indeed, at the Henley Beach site, Westpac has just started the second phase of—

Mr CLARKE: I rise on a point of order. Under Standing Order 98, Ministers are required to answer the substance of the question. The question is whether the Premier will stand by his commitment to create 20 000 jobs.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! It is a great pity that the Deputy Leader and the Leader did not take notice of other Standing Orders which clearly state that they are not to disrupt an honourable member who is speaking. The Deputy Leader is correct in that the Premier is making a lengthy answer. However, the question—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! However, in the view of the Chair, the question required an extensive answer. The honourable Premier.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Westpac is starting to expand its operations by going into the next phase, and construction has started. On 28 April, we saw further development take place at Motorola, and yesterday in Adelaide I met Mr Gary Tucker from Motorola and there is the prospect of further expansion in its investment in South Australia and the creation of job opportunities. A company that is establishing in South Australia and is currently constructing its facility in this State will announce, before it opens, a further development and further job generation in South Australia. That will be in the course of the next few weeks.

Mr Clarke: You really do sound like Dean Brown.

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

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: In the wine, electronics and call centre or back office operations, we are seeing expansion and development in this State. Those strategies are important and will get over the problems that have been experienced by South Australia in creating a positive future for this State. I simply ask Opposition members: do they really want to see South Australia rebuilt? Clearly they do not. They are so miserable that they cannot find anything good to say about any policy initiative pursued by this Government in the last 3½ years. Let me repeat this point. We inherited the mess: we did not create it but we will fix it, and there is a plan in place to do just that.

AUTOMOTIVE TARIFFS

Mr WADE (Elder): Will the Premier report to the House on recent developments relating to the Industry Commission report on the automotive industry which is soon to be presented to the Federal Parliament?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the Premier, I point out that I do not want to hear the continual barrage of interjections. Two members have had warnings and they know what will follow. It is entirely up to members.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: There is no doubt that this policy issue is very important for the future of South Australia and investment in this State. It is for that reason that a vigorous campaign has been mounted to ensure that it is not on local, regional economy or local political issues that this matter is determined but in the national interest, because the question of tariffs after the year 2000 at 15 per cent is a matter for the national interest. It is a matter for the economies of South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales. It is for that reason that we have argued that there should be a tariff pause post the year 2000 to 2010.

Of equal importance is the export facilitation scheme, which has not received much publicity but which is part of the Productivity Commission draft report. A replacement EFS scheme is absolutely critical for assisting our automotive components suppliers to gain access to export markets. Comprehensive taxation reform needs to precede any further tariff reform. Urgent progress on greater access to those exports markets in the region is necessary and there must be a change of priorities on microeconomic reform and delivery of promised reforms to improve the cost competitiveness of Australian industry. That policy package indicates that we want to give industry a fair go, and this is a means of demonstrating to the international investing community that

Australia wants multinational companies to invest in this country for the purposes of job creation.

The Government has made three submissions to the Industry Commission and appearances before its public hearings in Adelaide. With those submissions we have also presented an economic model commissioned by the Government by Chris Murphy, a former Treasury official. That ecotech model demonstrated that a tariff cut from 15 to 5 per cent would have a negative impact on the national economy and would lead to a major contraction of the automotive industry and a fall in national consumption.

This issue needs to be pursued after the receipt of the final report by the Federal Government. To date, the Federal Government has not received that report. The Prime Minister has indicated to me that, upon receipt of the report, he will raise the matter with us so that we have the opportunity to present a further case based on the final report prior to Federal Cabinet making its decision. I have continued to make contact with the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and senior Ministers to continue to argue the case for South Australia.

The industry has made progress in developing an alternative to the export facilitation scheme. That has been slow, particularly with four car companies needing to agree on a scheme that will meet their requirements. Broad agreement has been reached on a preferred export facilitation scheme which would meet World Trade Organisation requirements. It is supported by national industry bodies, and I hope that, at the end of the day, it will be acceptable to the Commonwealth.

In effect, the scheme would involve a production bounty and would be paid in the form of duty rebates on automotive imports. Eligibility criteria would have to be agreed to ensure that companies focus on the need for competitiveness and further growth. The scheme would be of the order of several hundred million dollars, as it is now, but the \$200 million per annum cost of the export facilitation scheme underpins exports anticipated to be \$2 billion by the year 2000 and \$6 billion—

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:—by the year 2010. That is a very safe, sure, reasonable investment of Australian taxpayers' dollars to get access to markets for our automotive products. It is proposed to present the replacement EFS scheme to the Federal Minister on Thursday of this week.

From the meetings that I had in Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines and Japan, and with member APEC countries, there is no doubt that the issue of trade liberalisation needs to be watched closely. We need to ensure that in the year 2003 the ASEAN countries move to trade liberalisation and that we do not go ahead of those countries in 2003. That is why a pause between 2000 and 2003 is important to ensure that ASEAN countries move.

Mr Clarke: Are you afraid of questions? It's taken 16 minutes for two questions.

The SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The patience of the Chair has been tested considerably today, so I advise members to be aware of the warnings that have been given or they will find themselves outside the Chamber.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The question of movement in the APEC countries is particularly important, because we must ensure that they do open up. Last year the Bogor

agreement required those countries to table trade liberalisation strategies on cross industry sectors. It is interesting to note that not one member APEC country tabled any trade liberalisation strategy related to their auto industry. That indicates to me that most of those Asian countries do not propose to move down the track of trade liberalisation, which is all the more reason for us to ensure that by 2003 those Asian countries put in place their trade liberalisation plans. This policy question will be clearly and firmly on the agenda in the course of the next month or six weeks. The House can be assured that we will continue to push the agenda in terms of the national economic interest, which also happens to be in South Australia's economic interest.

UNEMPLOYMENT

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): Does the Premier support his Employment Minister's weekend forecast on South Australia's unemployment position at the end of the year, or does he agree with the Minister's own chief adviser that employment statistics will return to South Australia's existing 'poor position' later in the year? The Opposition has received from Liberal Party sources a leaked memo—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections from both sides of the House, and that includes the member for Mawson.

The Hon. M.D. RANN:—from Bob Jackson advising his Minister about the 'media and employment statistics'. The memo, on a computer disk which includes other confidential political advice, advises the Minister on how to handle the media in the light of South Australia's bad employment figures and suggests media diversions from the jobs issue. The memo states:

The expert punters indicate a worsening early in the year and a gradual return later to our existing poor position. From a media point of view, it is important to remain positive and realistic.

Mr Brokenshire interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Mawson for the second time.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: The memo continues:

Also, strategic positions need to be made about Labor Party bashing to be undertaken either now or in the election campaign.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.D. RANN: South Australians need real jobs, not phoney announcements and diversions from the real issue, which is jobs.

The SPEAKER: Order! Leave is withdrawn. I have spoken to the Leader about his displays and about commenting. He appears to have ignored everything that has been said, so the matter will now rest in his hands.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Obviously the Opposition tactics today will be to be disruptive, to interject and to put diversions on the agenda. I happened to see the news reports on the weekend where the Minister for Employment was quoted. I thought her response was concise, accurate, well positioned and focused. From the news reports I saw on the weekend, I agree entirely with what the Minister had to say. It seemed to me that, as suggested, the Minister was absolutely positive and realistic.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader.

EMPLOYMENT

Ms GREIG (Reynell): Will the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education inform the House of the action the State Government has taken to generate jobs for South Australians?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the House that I do not want any further interjections or there will not be much of Question Time left.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I assure the House that any comments I make at all along the lines of what is extremely important to this Government—and that means jobs—will be accurate and not fallacious and will not be by some form of theft or other from any other place.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: No authenticity reported there, Sir. I would certainly like to answer the honourable member's question, which is important, and to report that the programs in the State Government's \$30 million youth employment strategy are now being implemented and are starting to show pleasing results. This Government has taken action, and the results are many hundreds of jobs for young South Australians under this program. We expect thousands of jobs to follow in the coming months. Contrary to the Opposition's approach, we do not just talk about fixing the problem, because we are actually doing it. We have seven job shops set up around the State which are committed to providing 300 jobs for young people by the end of this year, and this is just the start. We will have even more job shops signed up in the near future.

We are developing 24 community at work projects, which will fund innovative ventures in urban and regional areas to stimulate local economies and promote employment growth. Two regional job exchanges are already operating in the Mid North and Yorke Peninsula, and a further three will soon be established in the Riverland, the South-East and Fleurieu Peninsula. These exchanges will help hundreds of people gain work, while meeting the seasonal labour shortages experienced in some country areas. This \$30 million strategy has been the largest single commitment of any State Government in Australia to combating youth unemployment. However, it does not end there. The Premier recently announced—and I hope that members of the Opposition are listening to this—an additional 500 jobs in the public sector under a \$3 million youth recruitment package involving young unemployed people, as well as 150 graduates.

The Government has led by example when encouraging industries to give young people a chance by giving them a job. Since coming to power in December 1993, we have employed 3 500 trainees. This commitment compares to a very minimal 460 trainees employed by the former Labor Government in its last term of office. While this Government has acknowledged that the youth unemployment rate is far too high, it is important to realise that often a distorted picture of youth unemployment is painted. I would like to advise you, Mr Speaker, that the true rate of 15 to 19 years olds seeking full-time work is 10.6 per cent, as a vast majority are committed to school or tertiary studies or already have a job. Even the ABS itself stresses that the figures can be misleading, with the ABS spokesperson, Arnold Strals, saying that only about one in 10 teenagers are looking for work, because the vast majority are unable to work full-time. However, the State Government does not accept the level of unemploy-

ment, and we will continue to take positive action and do a damned sight more than just talk about the problems.

Let us not forget that this Government has reduced unemployment from 11.1 per cent to 9.7 per cent, while working responsibly on behalf of all South Australians to reduce that \$4 billion debt left by the previous Labor Government. The Opposition constantly shows that it is full of words and messages of doom and gloom, but its disastrous track shows that it was pretty short on action and solutions. The problems and programs this Government has put in place will continue to implement and improve the job opportunities for all South Australians, particularly our young people. We could have staged a phone in, as the Opposition did, but we decided to go out there and do it instead.

INDUSTRIAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

Mr CLARKE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Does the Premier categorically deny that he leaked confidential Cabinet information to undermine the Minister for Industrial Affairs, following claims made today by a senior Federal Liberal MP? In today's *Australian* a senior Federal Liberal MP is quoted as saying that the present Premier cannot be surprised at the disunity that he inherited.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member is now commenting; he will explain his question. I point out that he is very close to the wind in relation to whether the question is admissible.

Mr CLARKE: I am quoting from a newspaper, Sir.

The SPEAKER: That does not allow the honourable member to comment. He will explain his question or be ruled out of order.

Mr CLARKE: Did you undermine your former boss or did you not?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The first part of the question is framed differently from the throw-away question as the honourable member sat down. The first part of the question asks whether I leaked confidential Cabinet material, and the simple answer to that is, 'No, I did not.'

UNITED WATER

Mr ROSSI (Lee): Will the Minister for Infrastructure explain how the contract with United Water will assist the local economy of South Australia?

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: Today in a ministerial statement we put down the first aggregate analysis of United Water. That analysis showed that \$24 million worth of net exports have occurred in the 12 months from 31 December 1995. Some 70 South Australian companies have been involved in that process. The process virtually brought forward \$2.172 million by United Water and related companies, \$7.3 million from the registered water industry participants, \$14.6 million otherwise facilitated by United Water, and \$80 000 of import replacement facilitated by United Water. Some examples of South Australian companies involved are Amec Mayfield, \$544 000; Prophecy, \$490 000; Pope Motors, \$925 000; Kinhill, \$250 000; Ahrens Engineering, \$8.52 million; and James Hardie, \$1.8 million. As we all know, the overall savings to the scheme amount to \$10.1 million.

I notice that the member for Hart is laughing. The member for Hart seems to have two sides. He comes into this place on a daily basis and rubbishes, publicly criticises and gets stuck into United Water, but he has a different face when he speaks

on NZBC Radio on relay to New Zealand. Clearly, it was one of the very interesting issues when he was speaking in Auckland in relation to the United Water project. It is important that the people of South Australia note some of these comments and see the sort of hypocrisy that goes on here on a daily basis, where the honourable member is criticising and rubbishing United Water and saying it is not a very good contract. In fact, I will quote what he had to say, as follows:

United Water in South Australia would appear to be providing a reasonable and if not good level of service—

which sounds quite interesting—

and I think the people of New Zealand will be well serviced by United Water. Despite all the controversy and despite all the criticisms we may hear in South Australia in terms of service delivery, United Water are clearly very, very good at what they do.

It is quite amazing that, in New Zealand, where nobody in South Australia can hear him, he props up this company and says how good it is. He even goes so far as to say how good the contract is. That is an incredible position for the member for Hart to adopt, where he is telling South Australians one story and deliberately misleading them, while he tells New Zealanders how good United Water is.

INDUSTRIAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

Mr CLARKE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Does the Minister for Industrial Affairs agree with the Premier, who said today that, as Minister for Industrial Affairs, he has completely absolved him of any part in his downfall and has acknowledged to—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Chair fails to see what relevance that question has, and therefore I rule it out of order.

Mr CLARKE: I rise on a point of order, Sir. On what grounds do you rule it out of order?

The SPEAKER: Order! On the grounds of relevance and because the current Minister is not responsible for that matter.

STATE BANK BUILDING

Mr BECKER (Peake): Will the Treasurer advise whether the Government has sold the former State Bank Tower at 91 King William Street, Adelaide? Earlier this year the Asset Management Task Force commenced the sale process of selling the landmark building which stands as a monument to the excesses of the former State Bank and the previous Labor Government. I understand that the Asset Management Task Force was dissolved in March, in line with its original three year charter, and that the sale process has subsequently been overseen by officers of the South Australian Asset Management Corporation and Treasury and Finance.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: Yes, I am announcing today the successful sale of 91 King William Street to Tan Pty Ltd, which is a company owned by Malaysian investors, for the sum of \$68.2 million. I am pleased about this, for a number of reasons. One is that it represents one of the last major asset sales associated with the State Bank, and those issues have to be put behind this State. The second reason is that the price agreed is above the book value that we had set on it, so we are pleased with that result. The third is that we have international investment in this State, which should please everybody, I hope, including the Opposition. The State Bank building, which is now called SANTOS House, comprises 32 levels. It also consists of the Plaza Building on King William

Street, the Stock Exchange Plaza on Currie Street and the Delmont Building at the south-west corner of the site.

The original cost of the building at the turnkey stage was \$114 million for the construction, so obviously the sum that we have gained from the sale falls well short of that mark. That is testimony to the way in which the former Labor Government allowed the building construction industry and the unions to run rampant in this State and almost double the price of buildings here as a result of its careless attitude and protection of the union movement. That and the REMM site and ASER continue to remind me of how much damage a Labor Government can do, irrespective of the central issue of the State Bank.

The building is 95 per cent leased. It is a good investment, we have achieved what we believe is a good price, and we welcome the new investment to this State and welcome also the people who will enter the State and be part of it. It is another successful sale. Again I congratulate the Asset Management Task Force, which was involved in this sale; the South Australian Asset Management Corporation, which managed the assets of the Bad Bank; and my Treasury officials. We are coming to the end of the winding up process, but we need to be reminded continually of just how much damage was done.

WATER OUTSOURCING CONTRACT

Mr FOLEY (Hart): Why has the Premier failed to acknowledge publicly the substantial role of the former Premier in initiating and developing the water outsourcing contract?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr FOLEY: Today's *Australian* quotes the present Premier as rejecting suggestions that the previous Premier had any role in initiating the water outsourcing contract. The article quotes the present Premier as follows:

When? When? With the greatest respect, when you say 'the water contract under Dean Brown', it wasn't a Dean Brown initiative, it was my bloody initiative.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Just as well the *Australian* was printed today otherwise the Opposition would not have had any questions to ask in the Parliament. This question demonstrates how the Labor Opposition has not learnt anything over the past 3½ years. It did not deserve to govern for 11 years. It bankrupted South Australia. It has no policies, no ideas and no future.

ROYAL ADELAIDE HOSPITAL

Mr CUMMINS (Norwood): Will the Minister for Health inform the House of the Government's plans in relation to the redevelopment of the Royal Adelaide Hospital?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I am delighted that the member for Norwood has asked me such an important question about one of Adelaide's major teaching and tertiary hospitals. Last weekend, the State Government—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Spence will come to order.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE:—announced the go ahead for a \$122 million redevelopment of the Royal Adelaide Hospital. Cabinet has approved \$60 million to be spent at the

Royal Adelaide Hospital in the first of two stages of a redevelopment. The first stage, which will involve \$15.4 million, will start virtually immediately, with the \$44.6 million stage 2 development flowing on from there. The total redevelopment, as I said, is of the order of \$121.89 million. It will see redeveloped, to the best possible standards, facilities at the Royal Adelaide Hospital to ensure that patient care is appropriate to the near twenty-first century.

I am surprised though, to a certain extent, with this good news announcement for health care in South Australia that the member for Elizabeth appeared to have some sort of a fit of pique and basically said that, in fact, the Labor Party had been going to do that when it was in government. That exactly is the point. The Labor Party was always just going to do things, but it just never got around to delivering. In three terms and 11 years the Labor Party, if you like, put its toes over the edge of the diving board in that it promised a new wing at the Flinders Medical Centre; it promised a new hospital at Mount Gambier; it promised a new hospital at Port Augusta; and it promised the redevelopment of the Royal Adelaide Hospital.

This Liberal Government is different: we have taken the plunge and, within our first term, delivered a new private facility at Flinders Medical Centre; we are nearing completion of the new hospital at Mount Gambier; we are well into construction of a new hospital at Port Augusta; and, by August, we will have commenced the redevelopment at the Royal Adelaide Hospital. Labor promised: the Liberal Government is delivering. Another theme in what could only be described as a carping announcement by the member for Elizabeth is that this is an election announcement. It is wrong to say that.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I am very interested to hear the laughs. I am fascinated to hear the laughs because, carrying on the diving analogy, it gives me a springboard into further figures that I know members opposite will be pleased to hear.

The Hon. H. Allison interjecting:

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: As the honourable member says, the Mount Gambier Hospital figured in five election promises. This announcement is nothing more and nothing less than simply a demonstration of the Government's strong commitment displayed in all its budgets. Labor's 11 budgets—and I hope that members opposite listen to this—produced average annual expenditure on capital works of \$45 million. To date, the three Liberal budgets have provided an average of \$77 million—\$45 million compared with a \$77 million average.

Further to debunk the fact that this was an election announcement, in 1996-97 (which I remind members opposite was not an election year) the health capital works budget, both budgeted and expended, exceeded \$100 million for the first time in the State's history. This is a very good news announcement for the Royal Adelaide Hospital, it is very good news for the health care of South Australians, it is evidence of a Government committed in the longer term to better health, and it is evidence of a Government that is willing to invest in world-class services for the future of South Australians.

TORRENS PARADE GROUND

Ms WHITE (Taylor): Will the Premier explain why he included a national wine centre at the Torrens Parade Ground as the number one project on a list of 34 projects that the MFP would use to revitalise the City of Adelaide when the Government had publicly stated that the Hackney site was the preferred site? Last Friday, the *Advertiser* published a Government document on page 1 that listed a national wine centre at the Torrens Parade Ground as the number one project for the MFP.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I simply restate that which I have said on numerous occasions in press conferences, that is, that the Hackney site was always the preferred site of the Government and has been for 12 or 18 months. The Torrens Parade Ground was simply a fall-back position if the Hackney site was not a viable, achievable option.

WORKCOVER

Mrs ROSENBERG (Kaurna): Will the Minister for Industrial Affairs indicate to the House the benefits to injured workers and business resulting from the financial turnaround that has occurred with the administration of WorkCover in South Australia?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: A very dramatic turnaround has occurred in WorkCover over the past 18 months to two years. To highlight how dramatic that change has been, under the old Labor Government legislation WorkCover was increasing its unfunded liability—its debt—by \$12 million a month. Under the present Liberal Government legislation, the ongoing unfunded liability of WorkCover is reducing by over \$6 million a month—an \$18 million a month turnaround between what the Labor Party had operating in South Australia and what this Liberal Government has achieved.

Furthermore, since we took office the number of WorkCover claims per year has now dropped by about 6 000 per year, largely because of the nature of the education program undertaken by this Government and the drive for safer work places. The clear evidence from a recent survey showed that injured workers are now returning to work sooner, they are being paid sooner and they are very satisfied with the private claims managers we have put in place, despite the philosophic opposition the Labor Party has to those private claims managers. Further, we are able to say that the premiums in South Australia under the Liberal Government will not increase, as they are in most other States of Australia but, in fact, are likely to fall in the future as the unfunded liability is eventually written out or removed completely in 1999.

I highlight that story in contrast to that of the Labor Party and its attitude to WorkCover. I bring to the attention of the House a press release issued by the Australian Labor Party on 5 May this year. The opening line of that press release states:

The ALP has called for a wide-ranging investigation into WorkCover corruption.

It was interesting, because the next morning the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was on radio fully backing and supporting the Labor Party motion. I challenged the Labor Party—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: No. The next morning the Deputy Leader of the Opposition supported the Labor Party motion that had been put out by John Hill, State Secretary of

the Labor Party. It is interesting, because I challenged the Deputy Leader and the Labor Party—

An honourable member interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN:—to come up with some hard evidence of the corruption. I said to them, 'If you have any evidence of corruption, go to the police—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Chair was going to deal with the Deputy Leader but I do not think I have to: the honourable member has got himself into enough trouble.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I found the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's interjection that the State Secretary of the Labor Party and Labor Party candidate for the seat of Kaurna, John Hill, is a 'bloody idiot' to be absolutely astounding. There is obviously—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! If there are any further interjections, I will call on the business of the day; the Chair is absolutely committed to that.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: We now know what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition thinks of the Secretary of the Labor Party and its candidate for the seat of Kaurna—

The SPEAKER: I think that the Minister should get back to answering the question.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN:—that is, that he is a bloody idiot. I move on. The original press release was issued on 5 May, the Deputy Leader argued in favour of the motion on 6 May, and then on 9 May the Labor Party issued another press release, 'WorkCover—Apology', which stated:

The ALP State Executive expressly and unreservedly rejects any suggestion whatsoever of corruption or misconduct on the part of officers of the corporation.

On 13 May they went even further. The ALP SA Branch issued another press release, 'WorkCover Corporation', which stated:

The ALP State Executive meeting of 9 a.m. this morning unanimously resolved to rescind its previous motion, passed on 28 April 1997, concerning the operations of the WorkCover Corporation.

John Hill, State Secretary.

That bloody idiot. That highlights exactly where the Labor Party is on WorkCover, that is, it is prepared to publicly run a political campaign against WorkCover and the reforms that this Government has put in place, knowing darn well that they are to the benefit of companies and injured workers in South Australia. Yet when it comes to putting up the substance of its claim of corruption, it has absolutely nothing whatsoever to put forward. It highlights how the Opposition in this State is absolutely hollow when it comes to many of the industrial areas, particularly WorkCover.

PARLIAMENT HOUSE UPGRADE

Mr FOLEY (Hart): My question—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Hart has the call and is entitled to be heard.

Mr FOLEY: My question, Sir, is directed to you. Did the Premier consult with you as the Joint Presiding Officer of the Parliament before he announced that the MFP would take 'a lead role in the upgrading of Parliament House' and, given that this work has substantially been completed, what

additional work will the MFP coordinate? Last Thursday the Premier announced that the MFP would take a lead role in the refurbishment of Parliament House as one of the projects to revitalise the face of Adelaide.

The SPEAKER: I respond to the honourable member by saying that both Presiding Officers are delighted with the input that the Government has had in upgrading this building, which was in a deplorable state after 11 years of Labor Administration. We look forward to the advice and assistance of the MFP.

RURAL TRAINING SCHEMES

Mr ANDREW (Chaffey): Will the Minister for Primary Industries update the House on the outcomes of his plans to improve the training and education of primary producers in South Australia?

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: I thank the honourable member for the question and for his assistance and that of other country members with this initiative. The Government is bringing about a major increase in training and education within the agricultural sector. For South Australia that represents a major shift in emphasis and direction for rural adjustment and restructuring. The Government is committed to improving the access of our farmers to relevant education and training, and we want to provide the means to enable our farmers to access training to update and up-skill themselves. That is what international competitiveness is about. They need to run their businesses based on increasingly sophisticated technologies in an increasingly globalised economy. Therefore, last year I announced that the Rural Adjustment Scheme (RAS) funds would be made available to assist farmers as individuals or in groups. The aim is to improve their skills and to access appropriate training to boost financial, technical, management, marketing and business knowledge.

The response to it speaks for itself. In the space of only a few months nearly 2 000 farmers made use of the RAS training grants program, and already \$260 000 has been committed to approved programs. This scheme has been widely supported, and I acknowledge the support of the Agricultural Bureau and the South Australian Farmers Federation. Recently, one program organised by the Farmers Federation attracted more than 300 people to a seminar on financial planning in the South-East alone. We will see a continuing increase in the uptake, and this program complements the separate \$3 000 farm plan grants which enable farmers to obtain detailed property planning advice. That is a scheme which is the envy of the other States and one which they are now adopting. This Government is willing to get on the front foot and to invest in the intellectual capital of our farmers. It is vital to the future of this major sector of the economy. Finally, I congratulate South Australian farmers on their willingness to take up the challenge of training and education, to equip themselves to have a more viable future and to make an even greater contribution to the State's economy.

HOSPITALS, COLLOCATION

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): My question is directed to the Premier. Has the Government dropped its policy of collocating new private hospital buildings adjacent to public hospitals in favour of a new policy of converting public hospital buildings for private use, and do plans for the Royal

Adelaide Hospital include privatisation of all or parts of the hospital's clinical management and service provision? On Sunday the Premier announced that acute care beds at the Royal Adelaide Hospital would be consolidated and that redevelopment of the Royal Adelaide would identify an existing building to allow a private hospital to be developed. The Premier announced that this would 'assist in re-engineering the clinical management and service provision'.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: It does surprise me that the Labor Party refuses to acknowledge a number of facts. The first of those facts is that under all Administrations throughout Australia there are frequently private patients in public hospitals—item 1.

Item 2 is that the private sector frequently provides appropriate capital so that public services can be better provided. There is no better example of this than is presently in place at the Flinders Medical Centre. The Flinders Medical Centre's new private building, with the involvement of Ramsay Health Care, is providing \$12.5 million of capital that the public does not have to invest because the private sector is doing so. That means that the public patients are the beneficiaries of the private capital. It means that we as a Government do not need to tax the workers. I know that is a strange thing to want to do, from the Labor Party's perspective, but the Liberal Party does not want to tax people unless it needs to. If we can undertake these projects with the involvement of the private sector and the public sector benefits, so much the better.

Because of the question from the member for Elizabeth one might think that there is something inherently wrong with the private sector's being involved in the provision of public services. One need look no further than the British Labour Party, which has swept—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: As the member for Hart said, it did well. One of the reasons it did well, I am sure, is because of its policies, and one of its biggest policies was to be prepared to utilise private sector investment to provide better public services. Some people may say that that is the United Kingdom; we are dealing with Australia. I was in Sydney about week or so ago, and not only the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the *Australian* and every radio station since then, but everyone was talking about the fact that the New South Wales Treasurer is saying, 'Why don't we think about privatising public facilities in New South Wales and using the money to provide better public services?' I can only applaud Mr Egan. It seems as though he has got the message that it is a sensible thing to do.

Why should we continually drain the pockets of South Australian taxpayers to provide services when we can do it better through the private sector? We will continue to do that, and if that means collocating or converting public hospitals with private sector capital to provide better public services, I am confident that the people of South Australia who will utilise those services—who will be the beneficiaries of the modern technology and who will be in hospital for only a day rather than for three weeks—will applaud. As long as that occurs, we will continue to do exactly as we have done so successfully thus far.

SEXUAL OFFENCES

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Treasurer): I table a ministerial statement made by the Attorney-General in another place on a model criminal code discussion paper on sexual offences against the person.

INDUSTRIAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

Mr CLARKE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

Mr CLARKE: The Minister for Industrial Affairs, in answer to a dorothy dixer from one of his backbenchers on WorkCover, referred to a conversation that he allegedly had with me on a radio program dealing with the resolutions carried by the State Executive of the ALP with respect to WorkCover. No such radio interview took place between me and the Minister for Industrial Affairs. On that day the Minister for Industrial Affairs was discussing the ALP State Executive resolution with the State Secretary of the Labor Party. In relation to my comment by way of interjection, which was picked up, I simply want to make this point very clear: if what the Minister said had been true, that is, that I had engaged in that radio interview with him on that subject matter, then I would have been exactly that which I interjected. There was no reflection whatsoever on Mr Hill as the State Secretary of the Labor Party.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Health. The Deputy Leader has been given leave to make a personal explanation and should be able to do so without interjection. He should be cautious that he does not stray outside the bounds of a personal explanation.

Mr CLARKE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Therefore, there was no reflection whatsoever on the Secretary of the ALP, who was simply carrying out his job, on the instructions of the State Executive, to explain a resolution that had been carried by that body. I restate the position quite simply: contrary to what the Minister for Industrial Affairs stated in his answer, I at no time was on a radio interview with him or anyone else concerning the ALP State Executive resolution of that day and, secondly, I myself would have been exactly what I indicated, had I done what he alleged I did.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

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

Ms HURLEY (Napier): The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs (Hon. Dean Brown) has shown great leadership and integrity in putting forward to Cabinet a move to have this Parliament express its apology and regret at the removal of Aboriginal children from their families. It is a leadership that goes beyond that of his Federal Leader (Hon. John Howard) and an action to which the Labor Party gives its wholehearted support. This morning when I heard the Minister announce his view that an apology should be given by the Parliament of this State, I was relieved: relieved that we will once again be able to stand together in a bipartisan manner in defence and support of the Aboriginal people of South Australia.

It is a matter of profound regret to me that Aboriginal children were removed from their families without just cause and with no opportunity for the families to have a say or to

know where their children went. They were truly stolen children, and generations of Aboriginal families have suffered as a result. More than 100 000 children around Australia were affected in this way. The details of this have been explored in the report of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, called 'Bringing them home'. Dean Brown's initiative will give us the opportunity to canvass this issue in the South Australian Parliament, and I expect that as a result an apology will be given in the proper way to Aboriginal people. I look forward to the debate and its outcome.

Mr LEGGETT (Hanson): I would like to provide an update regarding the proposed Hilton shopping centre on Burbridge Road opposite the West Torrens Thebarton Civic Centre. Following the authorisation of the Hilton development plan amendment on 17 April 1997, work on the site recommenced with the placement of a water seal over the site and installation of drainage. We all thought in April that, at long last, the ongoing saga involving the legal delays crippling progress on the site for so long was finally resolved. Work was now under way. This much needed development has always had the full backing and support of the Olsen Liberal Government as well as my personal support as the local member. The bulldozers were finally back at work and it was great to drive past and see the activity.

However, on 15 May Mr Justice DeBelle in the Supreme Court delivered a judgment overturning the approval of the commission issued on 3 December 1996. This means that there is now no current planning approval for the Hilton shopping centre. This is the third time a development assessment approval has been overturned. This has been a body blow for the whole community, particularly those living in the suburbs of Hilton, Cowandilla, Richmond and Marleston in close proximity to the proposed centre. Many older residents in these areas see this development as being very beneficial to them. Geographically it is within walking distance for many of the older people.

The primary basis of Justice DeBelle's decision was a variance between numerical standards governing floor space. To some extent, this view was anticipated. On 17 April the Governor authorised a development plan amendment which has clarified the floor area limits upon which His Honour's judgment is based. Following authorisation of the development plan amendment, the developer has lodged the new proposal for exactly the same development. It is likely that the application will be considered for decision on 10 June in a few weeks time. The new development plan and the application by the developer will supersede Mr Justice DeBelle's judgment, and the stage is therefore now set for the commission in June to consider whether to grant a fresh approval on the new application having regard to the new development plan provisions. This is a mere hiccup in an ongoing saga. The Government has signed the plan amendment report, and I assure members that the centre will be completed for the many hundreds of residents who have patiently waited over a long period.

I certainly support the complex: I want to shop there, too, and the western side of Adelaide needs this shopping centre very badly. I have now attended the two public meetings that have been held concerning the development. Over 400 people were present at each gathering. It has been a very emotive issue and the community's anger is justified considering what has taken place over the past two years. The blame was focused on the local council and indeed the State Government, but, as I mentioned when I addressed the meetings on

both those occasions, Parliaments make laws but we are not above the law and are very much subject to the decisions that are handed down in the courts.

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): I found it quite astonishing in Question Time today that my comments in response to the Premier's announcement about the Royal Adelaide Hospital at the weekend were considered to have been made in a fit of pique. I find that quite astonishing because this announcement was a most cynical piece of electioneering and I guess one of a number that we will see over the coming weeks and months. The first announcement about the redevelopment of the Royal Adelaide Hospital, which, I acknowledge, is absolutely critical and needed, occurred in this Government's 1995-96 capital works program.

Mrs Rosenberg interjecting:

Ms STEVENS: If the member for Kaurna cares to look at those papers and do her homework, she will see that the Government announced that program then. I guess the question really is—

Mrs Rosenberg interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Bass): The member for Kaurna is out of the order.

Ms STEVENS: —not why it is happening now but why it has taken until now and why it has been re-announced coming up to the election. As part of the Premier's press release I noted that he made the statement that this redevelopment proves this Government's commitment to health—

Mr Cummins interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: The member for Norwood is out of the order.

Ms STEVENS: —in South Australia. The facts tell a different story because, if we look closely at what has happened in relation to health in South Australia since this Government took office in December 1993, we see a very different turn of events. In the three years since this Government came to power, the Olsen Liberals have cut spending on health by \$209 million in real terms compared with what was spent in 1993-94; that is, \$209 million in recurrent expenditure taken out of the health budget in South Australia.

The Hon. G.A. Ingerson: Why?

Ms STEVENS: That is a very good question. The Deputy Premier asks 'Why?' Because this Government has no commitment to health in South Australia and, as a result of the \$209 million cut, what have we seen? We have seen wards closed, bed numbers reduced, a reduction in the number of nurses and—

Mrs Rosenberg interjecting:

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

Ms STEVENS: —mental illness funding reduced. As a result of these cuts by this Government, we have seen people with mental illnesses out on our streets with nowhere to go.

Members interjecting:

Ms STEVENS: It is interesting to hear the interjections from the other side. What I am saying is that the Government can get up and re-announce capital works programs that it has announced in other years and not fulfilled. It can do this again and again—and I am sure it will continue to do it—but no-one can dispute the \$209 million cut. I notice that that was not disputed by members opposite. No-one can dispute that fact. Even though it went to the last election knowing the economic situation, it still promised to increase funding in health. It promised more beds and efficiencies, and it

promised to plough those efficiencies back into health services. That promise has been decimated to the extent of \$209 million. That is the sort of promise that it made and that is what has happened to our health system over these past three years. I say to the people of South Australia: do not be taken in by these good news announcements which are simply dressing up the fact that this Government has wrecked our health system over the past three years.

Mr CUMMINS (Norwood): I have heard some rubbish in my time, but the statement from the member for Elizabeth tops the lot. The honourable member talks about political cynicism, but the reality is that the Labor Party promised to upgrade the Flinders Medical Centre, did not do it; promised a new hospital at Mount Gambier, did not do it; promised a new hospital at Port Augusta, did not do it; and, at the top of the list, promised a redevelopment of the Royal Adelaide Hospital and did not do it. All that, I might say, immediately prior to an election. We all know that we are a long way from an election in South Australia. For the honourable member to describe that as political cynicism is beyond my comprehension.

The honourable member was also quoted in the media recently as saying that it was a dishonest and cynical exercise. Is it a dishonest and cynical exercise to look after the sick and injured in South Australia? I think not, because that is exactly what this \$16 million upgrade of the Royal Adelaide Hospital will do. The honourable member is exercising cynical, political, mischief-making behaviour. Unfortunately, it is a disease in the Labor Party, which I suspect has come from the Leader of the Opposition and which is now rampant in the Labor Party and has now been passed onto other members of that Party. Unfortunately, the honourable member has now caught the disease that the Leader of the Opposition has had for some time.

The Leader and members of the Opposition are incapable of putting forward anything positive for the future of this State. I will deal with what we have done. The honourable member talks about this Government's not spending money. The reality is in capital expenditure. As pointed out by the Minister, Labor Party expenditure was \$45 million, while our average was \$77 million per annum—so much for not spending money in relation to health.

It goes further than that. We have managed to contend with the mess that was left by the Labor Party. It left us a maintenance bill of something like \$320 million, with which the Government is dealing. We have had other problems to cope with, and it is a great credit to the Minister that he has done so. Admissions to South Australian public hospitals have increased by 30 000 since 1992-93—an 11.5 per cent increase. We have managed to cope with that. There has been a 10.1 per cent increase in admissions per 1 000 population from 189 in 1992-93 to 208 in 1995-96. To November 1996, waiting lists had fallen 19.9 per cent. In addition, there has been a 46.8 per cent decline in people waiting 12 months or more for surgery. We know what the record of the Labor Party was in relation to waiting lists, and we know what the record of the Labor Party was in relation to waiting for surgery. We have addressed those problems and dealt with them.

In contrast to the promises made by the ALP, we have made promises and we have fulfilled them. There is the new private hospital at the Flinders Medical Centre, there are new hospitals at Mount Gambier and Port Augusta, and we are going to redevelop the Royal Adelaide Hospital. In addition,

although it was not mentioned by the Minister today, the Port Lincoln Hospital is in the final stages of redevelopment. This project is very important to the people of South Australia and the Royal Adelaide Hospital. As pointed out, the project will extend over seven years and it will provide for 700 consolidated acute care beds to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of clinical service delivery—so much for the member for Elizabeth saying that we have been closing wards!

The redevelopment will create 71 low dependency beds. The Hampstead Centre will be upgraded to improve community service facilities and access. The Government intends to do numerous things. Day surgery will be increased to revitalise the delivery of patient service. The RAH is a vital cog in the State's health system and has responsibility for spinal injuries, adult burns, hyperbaric medicine, radiation oncology, adult cranio-facial surgery, neurosurgery, bone marrow transplants, tuberculosis and adult cystic fibrosis. The money we intend spending will address those issues.

Apparently the member for Elizabeth does not care about those issues when she describes what we are doing as dishonest and cynical. She has demonstrated once again, as her Leader constantly does, that all they are interested in is cheap political mileage and that they do not care about the sick of this State. I doubt whether the public would agree with that.

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

Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens): I have been contacted by a very angry young man who was denied a TVSP. This constituent approached his local member, who I know is an affable fellow, but, because it was taking too long to get a result, this man came to see me, because it took some two years to get an answer, and his patience had begun to wear thin. The constituent's previous employment position with the South Australian Dental Service was as a senior technical officer, grade two, with the Dental Engineering Department at the Adelaide Dental Hospital.

In June 1994, when he approached his local member to support his application for a TVSP, members may recall that the Government was falling over backwards to get rid of employees from the State public sector by offering these TVSPs. As I recall, the then Premier got rather carried away on the steps of Parliament House during a media interview and called on Canberra to follow the State Government's lead and abolish the jobs of rail workers in AN. The constituent thought he was on relatively safe ground in applying for a TVSP in this environment. Unfortunately, the written decision that he received was that his position was not surplus to requirements and that it was a required one. From June 1994 until his resignation from the Dental Hospital on 20 November 1996, the constituent pursued a TVSP, but the answer remained the same: not surplus to requirements and a required position.

The constituent took all outstanding leave entitlements plus 12 months unpaid leave to pursue a future outside the public sector while still seeking this TVSP. Knock-backs came from the Health Commission, the Minister for Health, the Dental Hospital and, finally, the former Premier. From first inquiring about a TVSP until his resignation on 20 November 1996, the constituent made clear to his department that he wanted to leave. He was constantly advised that a suitable replacement could not be found. In a letter to the constituent, the former Premier stated:

Every effort was made by SADS to locate a suitable replacement. However, the lack of skills and knowledge available resulted in your position remaining vacant.

The question I ask is this: what efforts were made to advertise the position in State Government periodicals and all commercial newspapers and, if the position of a senior technical officer/bio-medical engineer is so needed and valued, why was this not done? The constituent has monitored all State and private newspapers and has not seen advertised the vocational position which he vacated.

This man is not alone in this view and, if the position was so essential to operations, why was it not given priority in advertising to attract the skilled personnel required? The former Premier stated in a letter to him that, on one hand, he could not leave with a TVSP but, on the other hand, there was no impediment to his resigning. His statement was very contradictory. It sounds as though the then Premier was prepared to see the position vacated provided no money was spent on a TVSP. Instead the constituent has lost approximately \$50 000 and the essential position still has not been filled.

If TVSPs are offered, they should be accessed in an equitable process. It appears to me that this constituent fell foul of a cynical Government that is and was prepared to use underhand methods to avoid paying a worker a TVSP. How else can one describe this in any other way than as a mean-spirited, deceitful act when on the one hand the Government says 'No' to a TVSP because the position and skills are so needed that they must remain in the public sector yet on the other hand makes clear that the worker could resign and makes no effort to advertise the position to the wider public? Both the constituent and this House deserve an explanation. I have raised similar matters before. Several constituents have applied for a package but have not received it because their position was a required one. Although they have since resigned, their position has not been filled. We seek an answer.

Mr BECKER (Peake): The matter related by the member for Torrens does not happen only in her area. I often wonder whether people are being forced out.

Mr Foley interjecting:

Mr BECKER: I point out to the member for Hart that this is not my swan song: we will be here for quite some time. I hope that his football team, which is going very well and I must congratulate Port Adelaide, still has its coach in charge. I hope he is, because I feel very sorry for him.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

Mr BECKER: I would not say that it is a falling out of gangsters.

Mr FOLEY: Mr Acting Speaker, do I have to listen to these insults against my beloved Port Adelaide?

The ACTING SPEAKER: If the honourable member did not interject there would be no reason to make comment.

Mr BECKER: The member for Spence did not help by referring to them as gangsters. I hope that what Port Power is doing is how South Australia is going: full of confidence. We have turned the corner and the lead that is being given by the Government in further developing South Australia will go right through. I get the impression from our sporting teams that, if everybody lifts, the whole State will lift.

In 27 years come Friday I have never heard a member of Parliament, let alone a deputy leader, refer to the Secretary of his Party like the Deputy Leader of the Opposition did today. To refer to John Hill, the Party Secretary, as a bloody

idiot is an absolute insult to that person, but it also highlights the frustration that must exist within the ranks of the Labor Party, particularly its ordinary workers, for whom I have a tremendous amount of respect. When it comes to dealing with issues such as WorkCover there is frustration, and I can understand why the Labor Party wants to put out a policy position, because nothing has been done by the Opposition in this House in the past three years to improve benefits for workers. The Opposition has not really addressed or attacked the issue.

Mrs Geraghty interjecting:

Mr BECKER: The member for Torrens says that that is not fair but, as one or two members of her Party come from that background, overall I would have expected a greater performance for workers. I cannot refer to a debate that is before the House at present. There have been only a couple of speakers from the Opposition with respect to that matter. If it were not for one or two speakers on this side of politics, the true position in respect of workers would not have been put forward. It has been a pathetic performance by members opposite. It was very disappointing for the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to reflect on someone in that manner. However, it highlights the problem. We read in the media all sorts of things that are supposed to be occurring within the Government and the Government ranks. Nowadays, I pick up the paper in the morning to have a laugh, because you never know who is making up what—and it is certainly not coming from our side.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr BECKER: It doesn't. It is not and never has been the form of the Liberal Party to do that. It is being fed by Opposition members to take the heat away from their problems. The Deputy Leader highlighted that today, when he criticised somebody. We know that the performance of the Deputy Leader in this house is such that he is frustrated as a result of what is happening. So he gets up and says, 'Let's have a go; let's stir the place up.' The situation with the Labor Party is a tragedy, because the Government deserves a good, strong tough Opposition—an Opposition that is focused on its job and the tasks on behalf of its constituency.

I refer members to what has happened in the seat of Hanson, my original seat. It has now been divided into three different electorates—Colton, Peake and Hanson. John Trainer wants to come back in. The former Speaker of this House wants to come back as an Independent member of the Labor Party. It was the Labor Party that put him into Parliament and gave him the position of Speaker. In fact, he was the most boring Speaker we ever had, although I do not know whether I am permitted to reflect on him. There were some great people—

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr BECKER: No, Trainer. There have been some good Labor Party Speakers. We just have to say to the people, 'Please don't put him back into Parliament; he'd be an absolute disaster.' If we look at the Elder electorate, we find that another Independent Labor Party candidate is standing for election. When Independents crop up all over the place, we know that something is wrong with the organisation. We have an Independent standing in the seat of Colton—Bob Randall. Bob Randall believes that the world owes him an existence. He was a disaster as the local mayor for Henley and Grange. He was in here only once. He was a oncer, and that is all he should ever be.

STATUTES AMENDMENT (PAY-ROLL TAX AND TAXATION ADMINISTRATION) BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 19 March. Page 1317.)

Mr FOLEY (Hart): This is a very important time, as it may well be the last occasion we meet as a group—in session, at least—before the next State election. However, we will have ample time to reflect on the service of the members for Peake, Kaurna, Hanson and Reynell, and others who will be leaving us. I will concentrate on the Bill. The Government, in discussion with the State Taxation Commissioner, has indicated through this legislation that it would like some flexibility in the payroll tax rebate scheme. It seems to be an eminently sensible suggestion—as against the current practice of refunds being calculated at the end of a year—to give the flexibility and the ability for the Taxation Commissioner to make available monthly rebates. It seems quite sensible, so we have no argument with that.

Equally, in respect of the move to clear up what may be an anomaly in the Bill, a technical deficiency which puts some question over the secrecy of taxpayer information, the Government and the Taxation Office have worked quickly to clean up a potential loophole or problem. It is eminently sensible legislation of a technical nature. In the normal fashion of this constructive Opposition, we are only too willing to assist the Treasurer in the administration of our State's finances. We look forward to doing what we can in other areas over the course of the weeks and months ahead before we resume the Treasury benches. The Opposition signals that it is happy to go through to the third reading.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Treasurer): The issue of incentives for business has caused policy changes over a long period. A number of rebate areas operate out of the Taxation Office for good reason. On 90 per cent of occasions, the Opposition would agree with the procedures adopted previously when it was in government, and since that time by our Government. One of the concerns that has been expressed to us by business over a long period is that, when we offer them a benefit, they do not necessarily see that benefit quickly. It is also an administrative hassle for the Taxation Department.

We have to ensure transparency in the process by knowing exactly what benefits are being given by way of rebates from the taxation system. At the same time, we believe we can do ourselves and everybody else a favour by giving the Taxation Commissioner the flexibility to use them as a contra at the end of the financial year, and not gather the money in at one point and pay the other money out at another point. I am pleased that that is being implemented as a result of this Bill, and I know it certainly meets with the approval of industry representatives. As the member for Hart pointed out, in relation to confidentiality we were not particularly well covered. The Taxation Office prides itself on the confidential treatment of its clientele and, as that was at risk, it has now been fixed by the amendments in this Bill.

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

STATUTES AMENDMENT (REFERENCES TO BANKS) BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 20 March. Page 1376.)

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): The Bill amends the Acts Interpretation Act and other Acts so that a reference to banks in a statute should be read as a reference to a bank, building society, credit union or proclaimed body. It tries to put building societies and credit unions in the same position, legislatively speaking, as banks. So, to take one example, clubs and trustees may now deposit their funds with financial institutions other than banks. Also, the managers of credit unions and building societies will, for the purposes of the Oaths Act, be placed in the same situation as that of bank managers. So, they will be able to take statutory declarations and attest instruments.

The reason for this is that changes to legislation and financial practice in the past 10 years have meant that the prudential requirements for building societies and credit unions are just as rigorous, if not more so, than the traditional requirements for banks. Indeed, as we have seen with the collapse of the State Bank, the investment strategies of some building societies and credit unions are rather more conservative than those of banks. Of course, the State Bank was not the only bank to suffer financial disaster during the 1980s. The Opposition has no objection to the Bill: indeed, we support it.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Treasurer): I thank the honourable member for his support for the Bill. This measure is consistent with contemporary thinking about financial institutions, and certainly the Wallis inquiry. There has been a vast amount of literature on the uneven playing field that has operated in Australia over a long period, for no particularly good reason. If indeed the rules are consistent among the various financial institutions, it is up to each person who wishes to invest or borrow to determine which is the best institution to use for that purpose. The Bill removes the severe requirement of all authorities and Government to bank with a bank. It is appropriate in this day and age that we lift some of the restrictions that have prevailed in the marketplace since statutes defined which sort of institution was appropriate with which to do banking business. I expect some dramatic changes in the make-up, composition and role of financial institutions over the next few years, as the Federal Government grapples with very strong pressures to change the marketplace and level the playing field, as some people would say.

Importantly, we have some very fine institutions in the form of building societies, credit unions and friendly societies which operate very efficiently and effectively. Often they offer far better service than do the banks. On numerous occasions customers have reflected upon this, drawing comparisons with the banks, which sometimes seem to think more about the profit line than the service line. The criticism has often been made that the banks think that the bottom line is far more important than people. I will not get into that debate: I simply observe that, in some areas of service, credit unions far excel the banks. I am delighted with the general thrust of the recommendations that have come out recently on the financial institutions and trust that the Federal Government will pursue them vigorously in the months and years ahead. The changes here are consistent with those recommendations.

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

ASSOCIATIONS INCORPORATION (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 27 February. Page 1089.)

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): Voluntary associations make a democracy work. Without such associations, without joining them, without participating in their rule making and elections and without serving in their leadership, South Australians would not be prepared for the duties of citizenship in our Commonwealth and our State. Clubs and societies are the intermediate bodies between the State and the citizen. Every twentieth century totalitarian has wanted the State to control or crush such intermediate bodies. Six years after totalitarianism ceased to be an important political force in Europe, Australians seem to be deserting our intermediate bodies. New members cannot be found for service clubs, charities and churches, let alone people willing to join and serve as secretaries, presidents, treasurers and church wardens. The difficulty is not Government discouragement but apathy and the increasing competition of the realm of private and household life. Who has not been to an annual meeting at which it is most difficult to elect a committee of management because so few members are in attendance or willing to serve? Voluntary associations are dying out all over South Australia and they are not being replaced at anything like the same rate as they are dying.

The Opposition's only objection to the Bill is that the imposition of corporations law duties on club volunteers may be another deterrent to voluntary service on a committee of management. I should think it will not be a significant deterrent, however, because the potential volunteers will not hear about it or will hear about it only when they are in serious trouble. The Bill before us introduces corporations law rules to voluntary associations in respect of winding up and voluntary administration. Offences such as failing to deliver property to a liquidator, non-disclosure, falsification of books, incurring debts not likely to be paid and trading insolvent are set out in the Bill. Some corporations law provisions are reproduced in the Bill and others are merely incorporated by reference to the corporations law. Because the Government did not want the Act to be unduly thick, it gave priority in reproduction to offences that directly affect the members of committees of management.

The Opposition circulated the Bill to interested parties earlier this year. I am pleased to say that the Law Society responded and thinks that to impose the same penalties on voluntary committee members as directors and officers of companies is a bit steep. This is especially so in respect of non-prescribed associations, namely, associations with a gross revenue in the previous financial year of less than \$200 000. The Law Society makes the point that the committeemen of non-prescribed voluntary associations are unlikely to have accounting or business experience. It says the risks of this Bill to committeemen ought to be publicised.

The Law Society asks if it is appropriate for the Supreme Court to be the forum in which applications to vary the rules of nonprescribed associations are to be heard. I think the costs of approaching the Supreme Court on this matter would be prohibitive. I think it is odd that the Bill imposes a duty on all members of a committee to issue a report to the liquidator. Should this not be merely a majority? With those comments and questions, the Opposition acquiesces in the second reading of the Bill.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Treasurer): I appreciate the support of the Opposition for the Bill. I do note that there is an amendment on file which we will deal with at the appropriate time. There have been some issues in relation to the conduct of associations and, as the member would be more than aware, associations do comprise in many cases volunteers who perform an enormous service for the community at large. The majority of associations are formed for good purposes and maintain those good purposes throughout their lifetime.

The world is a more complex place than it was 10 years ago, and we would all appreciate that there are a lot of pressures on those organisations. It is not only the issue of whether the association is a vibrant organisation and able to sustain its membership and financial capacity, but also whether the associations themselves have the innate capacity to administer their affairs according to the force of law.

The issues for associations are very complex. The Government deals with them on a range of issues. Obviously there are interactions with charitable organisations on a regular basis. In other areas, of course, the associations rarely touch home base with Government except for registration purposes and for the filing of reports. The obligations that arise for members of committees of management and, where relevant, those that apply to other officers of the association will be set out in the Act and not by reference to applied provisions of the Corporations Law. That is the major change. In these provisions we want to make sure everyone is aware of their duties and responsibilities so there are no misunderstandings.

I would emphasise the point that we are dealing with people who are often volunteers, who are not paid for their work. They might be provided with some honorarium if they provide a secretarial role on occasions, but we are not dealing with professional people in the running of these organisations. However, they vary in size and complexity according to the type of organisation and other—

Mr Atkinson: Does the Act's application vary?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I would have thought every association was different. I would have thought that was a natural conclusion the member for Spence would reach. He has a number of associations in his area that do different tasks. They have different roles and responsibilities.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: That is correct. I am simply saying that, in terms of incorporated associations, there are laws that govern them.

Mr Atkinson: That is obvious.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: That is where it starts and ends. That is what this Bill deals with.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I am glad we are all on the same track. It is important that those roles and responsibilities are clearly understood, as well as the winding up provisions. This Act provides the means by which the incorporated associations can clearly understand their real responsibilities under the Act.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 6 passed.

Clause 7.

Mr ATKINSON: This clause allows an association to apply to the Supreme Court for its rules to be varied. I would have thought that, for a small association such as a non-prescribed association with revenue in the previous year of

less than \$200 000, it is a bit steep to ask it to approach the Supreme Court to vary its rules. In Bill after Bill before the House in the past 3½ years, the Government has expanded the jurisdictions of the District Court and the Magistrates Court at the expense of the Supreme Court because it believes that removing matters from the Supreme Court is in the interests of justice and efficiency where only small sums of money are involved.

Indeed, another Bill is before the Parliament that changes the Law of Property Act so that those cases do not have to be heard exclusively in the Supreme Court, yet here we have amendments to the Associations Incorporation Act that require quite small voluntary associations to apply to the Supreme Court in order to amend their rules where, for some reason, the association cannot amend its own rules. My understanding was, certainly in the area of public nuisance, that it will cost an association a minimum of \$3 000 to appear before the Supreme Court. Why the Supreme Court?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: The easy answer is that, in 99 per cent of cases, associations can change their own rules by resolution. Only under extraordinary circumstances (and we must think of reasons why that would occur) is there a need for some form of intervention or some capacity to change the rules.

Mr Atkinson: Why the Supreme Court?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I presume that it is a straight forward case of costing as little money as possible.

Mr Atkinson: Why such an expensive court?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I will take advice as to why the Supreme Court was chosen but, as the member for Spence should clearly recognise, we are dealing only with extraordinary circumstances: there might be a breakdown in the association, or whatever, and there is a need for resolution. If the honourable member allows me some indulgence, I will take advice as to why the Supreme Court jurisdiction was thought to be appropriate.

It is one of those traditions which the member for Spence would recognise and which is repeated in this Bill: where an association has considerable assets and perhaps liabilities (and we are dealing with different ends of the spectrum), obviously the level of complication can increase. Under such circumstances, I presume the Attorney has said, 'Let us prescribe one body to deal with these things.' For example, if an association, for a range of reasons, was unable to conduct its affairs and needed a change of rules, and if it was a very large association and some fairly serious ramifications were involved, then I suspect the Attorney has taken the view—and I am willing to provide the honourable member with a considered response—that the best thing would be not to try to divide it up according to its seriousness, otherwise we would need to deal with all the caveats provided in the Bill as to what should apply under certain circumstances. I am happy for the Attorney to provide the information to the honourable member. I can only presume that, first, it is a matter of tradition and, secondly, it is too difficult to refer the matter to a lower jurisdiction when it might have some very serious ramifications. That is my only suggestion to the member for Spence.

Mr ATKINSON: Let me put it to the Treasurer that what the Government could have done with this Bill is not to specify any particular court to hear such applications. It could have depended on how much money the voluntary association had or what its revenue was in the previous year, because it is on the basis of revenue in the previous financial year that the Act already makes a distinction between prescribed and

non-prescribed associations. We know that if so much money is in dispute, then the case, whatever it is, may be heard in the Magistrates Court, if more is involved it may be heard in the District Court and if a very large sum is involved it may be heard in the Supreme Court. Those thresholds are already prescribed in other Acts. It seems to me that it might have been better for the Bill to remain silent on the question of which court these applications had to be heard in. In my electorate at present there is very serious financial trouble at the Fitzroy Sports Club, of which I am a member.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr ATKINSON: I probably did cause the problem by not going there to play the poker machines or to drink as often as I should have. The Fitzroy Sports Club was previously known as the Renown Park Sports Club. It will be wound up, it appears, with great losses for its creditors—losses running into tens of thousands of dollars. If there had to be a rule or name change for the Fitzroy Sports Club, it is entirely appropriate under this procedure that it go to the Supreme Court. I have no quarrel with that. But what if the Croydon Parish Branch of the Catholic Women's League wanted to alter its rules? I presume that the Catholic Women's League, Croydon Parish Branch, has almost no assets and therefore could not take the benefit of this clause by approaching the Supreme Court because it would not have the \$3 000 required to get before the Supreme Court. The Catholic Women's League, Croydon Parish Branch (if there is such an organisation), would need the ability to go before the Magistrates Court or the District Court to amend its rules, and that would be appropriate given its previous year's revenue and its assets.

Indeed, let me quote a note from the President of the Law Society, Mr David Meyer, which states in respect of this clause:

... it should be questioned whether the Supreme Court is the appropriate jurisdiction and may be it should be so only for prescribed associations.

Having made my point, could I ask the Treasurer: in what circumstances would an association approach the Supreme Court to change its rules instead of calling a meeting of the association and passing a resolution to change its rules? I suppose there is one obvious circumstance, and that is where the association could not get a quorum to pass the resolution. Could the Treasurer explain the clause further to the Committee?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I take the point. The member is reading from a Law Society claim. As a counterclaim, this has been widely distributed to associations and my understanding is that there has been no level of discomfort with the rule.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I am not sure that the member is right: in fact, given the size of some associations I am sure the member is wrong.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: Having belonged to a number of associations over a period of time, I know that we always attempted at least to comply with the law and occasionally, when there was a fight on about something, we would look up the appropriate statute. As far as I am aware, the associations feel comfortable with this arrangement. Indeed, where for a range of reasons they become non-functional—whether it be financial, quorum or some other issue that makes their operations difficult to undertake—the provision is there if they cannot competently move a resolution for them to have

an outlet which would allow them to change the rules to be able to accommodate the problem that has arisen. In terms of the number, we do not expect it to be very large, but I have been assured that the associations feel that it is an appropriate way to deal with this difficulty that has remained in the system for some time.

Clause passed.

Clause 8.

Mr ATKINSON: Does this clause mean that the application of these amendments to prescribed associations and non-prescribed associations differs, or does this Bill apply to them in an identical fashion, which I consider would be a bad thing?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I am satisfied that it is a clarification item only and that it applies to prescribed associations only. It has not changed the mechanisms that were already in place.

Mr ATKINSON: I was under the impression that the Bill applied to non-prescribed associations just as it applies to prescribed associations. The Treasurer might be talking about this particular part, but my question was in respect of the whole Act.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: We are only talking about clause 8, which is the heading of Division 2 of Part 4.

Mr ATKINSON: The Treasurer can be a dog in the manger about the Committee stage, or he can be a generous and helpful public servant. I was not asking about what clause 8 applies to; but using clause 8 as a pretext, is there any differential application of the Act to prescribed associations and non-prescribed associations, because it seems to me that this Bill provides for very heavy burdens on voluntary committeemen in small non-prescribed associations? I was hoping that the Treasurer would be able to allay not only my fears but those of the Law Society and members of the governing party that this Bill has not been sufficiently carefully drafted. I am worried that we are imposing the duties of company directors on people who are voluntary committeemen in small associations. Down the track these committeemen will find themselves under crushing liabilities that they never anticipated when they gave in to the urgings of the few fellow members at an annual meeting to take on these offices.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: The member for Spence should read the Act, which deals with incorporated associations.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: Just wait a second. Read the Act before you ask silly questions. The heading is 'Division 2—Accounts and Audit of Certain Incorporated Associations' and section 35(1) provides:

A prescribed association must . . .

The rules relate to a prescribed association in terms of 'Division 2—Accounts and Audit of Certain Incorporated Associations'. That is the way it has always been and someone said, 'Let's clarify it.' They are prescribed associations—end of story.

Mr ATKINSON: The Treasurer knows that I was just using that clause to make a general inquiry about the Bill, the answer to which interests a number of people in South Australia.

The Hon. S.J. Baker interjecting:

Mr ATKINSON: The Treasurer said—

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Spence has the call.

Mr ATKINSON: The Treasurer said, 'Don't be so dumb.' But the Opposition, albeit in an attenuated form—there being only 11 of us—is trying to do what Oppositions are supposed to do, that is, scrutinise the legislation, even if that legislation is uninteresting to the great majority and will not bear on the next general election. Nevertheless, we are doing our duty and, as you would recognise, Sir, the question is not intimately related to the clause but is to give the Treasurer an opportunity—

The Hon. S.J. Baker interjecting:

Mr ATKINSON: No, it is not intimately related to the clause but is designed to give the Treasurer, if he has bothered to inform himself about the Bill before coming in here for this tiresome chore, the opportunity to explain to the Committee whether there is any differential treatment of prescribed associations and non-prescribed associations. Is he going to ease up on non-prescribed associations? The answer is clearly 'No', but at least he could have answered in better grace.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: The honourable member was asking a question about a specific clause. That specific clause relates to prescribed associations. The honourable member answers his own question because if he thought about it there is a higher level of diligence and accountability associated with prescribed associations—end of story. If the member is so diligent and there is some other area where non-prescribed associations are affected, then I am happy and willing to answer the question to the best of my ability.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: But the member for Spence cannot say, 'I got all that wrong and I want another opportunity to say that I am not silly.' If he had read the Bill and then the Act, he would have seen that it was purely a name change, a simple and straightforward name change consistent with the content of Division 2. If there are any other areas concerning the honourable member which he believes may have an impact on non-prescribed associations, as I said, I will do my best to answer his questions.

Clause passed.

Clauses 9 to 13 passed.

Clause 14.

Mr ATKINSON: I move:

Page 4, line 18—Before the words 'the members' insert the words 'a majority of'.

It seems to me that a number of committees are quite large. Many members of a committee may not be active participants in the management of the association and it is somewhat harsh to impose on them an obligation to make a report to a liquidator when they may know nothing relevant about the affairs of the association. I propose that this provision require that a majority of the committee be required to make a report, and I presume that in nearly every case that will be a single report.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I will walk outside the Act for a second and just deal with the law. Normally, the reference is to the body itself. In this case, it is 'members of the committee' or 'the committee'. Certain assumptions are made about whether that should be a majority of that committee. There have been odd occasions on which some committee members have never been able to be found, as the member for Spence would recognise. The clause merely provides that the members of the committee of the association must submit a report to the liquidator. It is charging those people who are deemed to be responsible, who have held elected or appointed

positions of an association, to be responsible for the delivery of certain information to the liquidator. That is a commonly accepted way of dealing with the situation.

We do not have to work out whether it is three out of five, 10 out of 20 or 11 out of 20 in terms of a majority. If the committee comprises 12 members, three or four of whom are missing, it may not be possible to get a level of consensus as a majority. Obviously, the majority prevails in all duly constituted circumstances. It is not envisaged that all members would be responsible. If we get down to that level of detail we would be saying, 'Committee members: you are responsible.' If you talk about a majority, it means that some people are responsible and others are not. The member for Spence will understand that that would not be appropriate either.

Amendment negatived.

Mr ATKINSON: The Law Society asks whether the report as required by the clause in the form in which the Government insists upon it must be submitted by all members of the committee or a majority of them. In the form in which the Minister wants the legislation, does this report have to be submitted by all the committee or, in effect, only by a majority of them? What happens if one member of the committee does not submit a report or refuses or will not be a party to the report which is submitted to the liquidator? What are the consequences of that?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: In normal circumstances, we would expect that all current members of the committee, if they are alive, well and obtainable, would sign the report. If one or two members are missing for reasons of ill-health, or whatever legitimate reason, and not for matters of criminal negligence, or whatever, it is up to the liquidator to take that into account. I do not believe a problem has arisen as a result of that provision.

Clause passed.

Clause 15 passed.

Clause 16.

Mr ATKINSON: In its note to me the Law Society comments on this clause. Referring to clause 49AB(1)(b), it states:

This [provision] requires an officer or former officer of an association to deliver all the property of the association in the person's custody or under the person's control and that the person is required by law to deliver up.

It says that it is wider than the wording in section 591B of the Corporations Law, which is limited to the property of the company in the person's possession. Will the Treasurer explain the difference and the reason why the clause is worded in this way?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: The member for Spence is correct: it does have wider application than section 591B of the Corporations Law. The provision was based on the Companies (South Australia) Code requirement and also other State legislation, namely, the Financial Institutions (South Australia) Code and the proposed Friendly Societies (South Australia) Code. So, there are at least four other pieces of legislation where this wider application is envisaged.

Clause passed.

Remaining clauses (17 to 21), schedule and title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

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

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr MEIER (Goyder): I wish to highlight to the House some aspects of my recent visit to Britain as the representative of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. This visit was beneficial not only to me as the official delegate of this Parliament but also, I believe, to everyone who attended, and it was most appropriate that it took place in 1997, the Year of the Commonwealth. The conference highlighted many of the activities of the Commonwealth, which consists of 53 independent countries and 140 Parliaments. The conference was attended by 25 participants from 20 countries. Some countries I did not know very much about prior to my visit, but by the end of it I knew a lot more about them and their Parliaments. If time permits, a little later I will highlight some of the countries that were involved.

I pay particular tribute to the United Kingdom branch of the CPA, which was the host. I refer in particular to Andrew Pearson, the Secretary, who oversaw the visit, as well as other members of his staff, including Chris Jones, Paul Jackson (Assistant Secretary) and Simon Millar. Three of those people have a military background, and their organisational abilities shone forth. Other staff members included Helen Haywood, John Hill, Jo Watson and Mareike Czybulka. I give sincere thanks to them for their hospitality during the whole of our visit.

A variety of activities were planned. Many days were spent discussing particular issues, whilst other days were spent looking at various aspects of Britain and issues relating to the Commonwealth generally. I was unaware that the Commonwealth is separated into various organisations. There is the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Secretary-General of which is a very intelligent gentleman, Chief Emeka Anyaoku from Nigeria. As members may recall, Malcolm Fraser sought to occupy that position, but Chief Anyaoku was the successful candidate. The Commonwealth Secretariat oversees the Heads of Government. We probably know it best through CHOGM.

There is also the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Secretariat, of which we as members of Parliament are particularly aware through our parliamentarian magazine which we receive on a regular basis. That body, which is functioning exceptionally well, ensures that all Commonwealth countries and Parliaments are informed of what the Commonwealth is doing.

I do not think members would be aware that the Commonwealth includes every major regional bloc and economic zone on the earth. Its total population exceeds 1 500 million. More than a quarter of the world's population are members of or are involved with the Commonwealth. It is therefore a very representative body, and it is all the more important because membership is voluntary.

In addition, there is the Commonwealth Institute which, again, is in London. The Commonwealth Institute highlights and promotes the aspects of the Commonwealth, particularly through its educational program. In fact, many schools visit the Commonwealth Institute regularly. It is receiving a major facelift at present. It is open to the public but, hopefully, it will become a key attraction in London in coming years with some brand new displays and items that will entice people to visit.

As I said, we were involved in many discussion programs varying from the mundane through to the very interesting. This visit occurred at a most interesting period in Britain's history because we saw the election of a new Government, the Tony Blair Labour Government, after some 18 years of Conservative rule. It was very interesting to pick up and live

with the euphoria that was present in London and Britain generally with the change of Government. The people expect significant changes as a result of the manifesto of the Blair Government.

Members would be interested to know that the House of Commons consists of 659 members altogether and, following the recent election, there are now 418 Labour members of Parliament compared with 164 Conservatives. It is a massive majority of 241 to the Labour Party. That is the greatest victory since 1945. I thought it might have been the greatest victory ever, but apparently it is the greatest victory since 1945. Certainly, the new Prime Minister has sought to bring in a new look rule. I was very privileged to be in attendance at his very first Question Time.

Traditionally, Question Time in the House of Commons has been restricted to a quarter of an hour two days a week for the Prime Minister, but the new Prime Minister has changed his Question Time to half an hour once a week. It was interesting to see the way in which the Prime Minister handled questions during that half hour. It was also interesting to note that members were not allowed to read their questions. One member who sought to use notes when asking a question was interjected on continually by the other side with the comment, 'You are reading! You are reading!' It is something that we might want to take up in South Australia. Whatever the case, I know that many changes will occur in Britain. To what extent the new Government can keep its backbench under control with such a massive majority will become evident over the next year or four and, as a person living in Australia, I will watch with interest.

I want to highlight aspects of the conference rather than the general parliamentary scene. In our first days, besides being made aware of exactly what was at the Houses of Westminster and being introduced to and meeting with various members of Parliament, particularly from the Executive Committee, we also had a chance to discuss the parliamentary scene at Westminster and to seek to identify the similarities and the differences between our Parliament and the Parliament on which ours is modelled, the British Parliament.

It came home to us very clearly that the Chairman was to have been Sir Colin Shepherd but, at the recent election, Sir Colin lost his seat. So, if you are not in the Parliament, you certainly do not engage in Commonwealth Parliamentary Association activities. Whereas he had been there a week or two before, he was no longer with us. That happened in the case of several members who were on the Executive Committee. In fact, the Executive Committee of the CPA was somewhat depleted because of the recent election. We had as our Chairman Dr John Marek, who certainly knew what he was on about and who had been on the Executive Committee for some years. There were many members of the Executive Committee for whom I have a lot of time and respect. It also taught me a lesson in that inter-Party activities within the Parliament are very noticeable; that is, once members become part of the CPA organisation they put aside their political differences. I hope to continue my remarks on a further occasion.

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

Mr CLARKE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I rise to speak about a visit I made to the far northern regions of South Australia at the end of last month. Indeed, Mr Speaker, it was in areas covered by your electorate and the electorate that you are standing for at the next State election.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will have to be particularly careful.

Mr CLARKE: I am sure, Mr Speaker, that you will be only too interested to hear what I have to say about my journey of discovery in that area. In that district I found wholesale repudiation of the Liberal Party in South Australia. Many of the people to whom I spoke were not traditional Labor voters. Indeed, many of them, from places such as Hawker, Leigh Creek, Lyndhurst, Marla and Marree, have voted overwhelmingly for the Liberal Party at consecutive elections over the years. They wonder what they have got to benefit them by having a Liberal Government in office. Quite frankly, after I listened to their litany of woes, I can see that it is very little indeed.

For example, through the Government's policy of privatising road transport gangs in that area, seven local residents of Hawker who previously worked for the Department of Road Transport lost their jobs. A number of those seven people had to leave their local community with their family, which has had a significant impact on a small local economy such as Hawker, with seven fewer pay packets being spent in the region and with seven fewer families participating in community life. Difficulties are also being experienced by Government agencies in those areas because of Government policy making in Adelaide, which may make sense in Adelaide but certainly does not make sense in regions such as Hawker, Marree and elsewhere, and I will provide some practical examples.

Because of the Government's whole of Government contract with EDS, the hospital at Hawker, which previously purchased its computers and computer equipment from a Port Augusta supplier, now has to purchase it through EDS. With respect to the maintenance of that computer, the equipment has to be sent to Adelaide rather than somebody coming from Adelaide to service it at Hawker.

The Hon. Dean Brown: Are you talking about personal computers?

Mr CLARKE: Personal computers, yes.

The Hon. Dean Brown interjecting:

Mr CLARKE: Well, that is the advice that I received. I am drafting letters to all relevant Government Ministers on these issues, and I will be only too happy to relay the stories. What I found from talking to hospital staff in Hawker was that the maintenance work cannot be done satisfactorily because they have to send the computer to Adelaide for it to be dealt with, rather than as occurred previously where the supplier from Port Augusta—

The Hon. Dean Brown interjecting:

Mr CLARKE: The Minister interjects that that is outside the EDS scope. That is not the understanding of this hospital administrator and, if things can be fixed up in that area, so be it. Another point about some of these whole of Government contracts is that that hospital used to have a contract with one milk supplier, Golden North, which supplied milk twice a week during daylight hours. Through State Supply, the hospital now has to purchase its milk from National Dairies, which can make deliveries only at 2 o'clock in the morning, when it is most inconvenient for that small hospital to arrange for staff to receive that milk. The alternative is to store it in an area that is not refrigerated, which is a nonsense. They are also encountering a problem because there are some suggestions by State Supply that they should purchase their local meat through a central supplier rather than through the local butcher in that town. That type of absurd Government regulation does not make sense.

I walked along the pavement of the play areas outside the Maree Primary School, and I was disgusted by their state of repair. I do not know for how long the concrete slabs have been in place. They are an occupational health and safety hazard, not just for the young children playing in the schoolyard area, as the slabs are all pitted, broken and of an uneven surface which would cause quite nasty accidents not only to the small school children playing in that area but also to the teachers at the school.

The police are woefully understaffed. I recall a conversation I had with police officers at the Woomera Police Station, when I was informed that neither of them had had one uninterrupted day off for more than two months, simply because there are too few of them to cover a vast area. When I was in Leigh Creek, where there is normally a four person police station, there was only one young police officer on duty, a young woman, because the other officers were away on sick leave or on annual leave. So for four or five days, there was one police officer on duty in Leigh Creek to cover an enormous area. She would have insufficient back up without going outside her own area; other police officers would have to travel significant distances to assist her. In addition, there are not spare police officers in the surrounding stations, because this Liberal Government has allowed the number of sworn-in police officers to drop by some 250 net over the past 3½ years. That is an absolute fact. In Leigh Creek the only topic of conversation I heard from the workers and from their families was their absolute fear about future job security. They are convinced, as is the Labor Opposition, of the Olsen Government's intention to privatise ETSA after the next State election, should the Olsen Government be re-elected.

Travelling through these far-flung regions of South Australia, I found that many who have been life-long, devoted supporters of the Liberal Party have realised that they have misplaced their faith in that Party. People in the country areas of the State rely on Government intervention and on a strong Government presence in terms of agencies and employment to maintain the viability of those local communities. Since the Liberal Party has been elected to government, all those areas have been significantly undermined. The list goes on. The buildings at the Marla Primary School are in a good state of repair but the area is covered by red dust, and there is the associated problem of keeping the buildings clean. On the odd occasion when it rains, it rains very heavily, and that creates an absolute quagmire so that students and staff are walking in red clay. During the summer months it is so dry that any breath of wind drives the fine sand throughout the building.

To add insult to injury, under this Liberal Government, the hours of the school cleaner have been reduced to such an extent that that person cannot efficiently clean the school in the hours allotted. There is no relief for the school in the form of an additional paved area to cut down on the dust or the wet clay on the odd occasion when it rains in that region.

In conclusion, the hospitality, kindness and generosity of spirit of the people whom I met—and there would have been hundreds of them during the several days that I was there with Ben Brown, our candidate for the proposed new seat of Stuart—was magnificent. I am sure that you, Sir, have enjoyed their hospitality as well. I thank them for their frankness, their forthrightness and their honesty of purpose. I am committed, as is Ben Brown, to ensuring that these people's aspirations and realistic hopes are fully realised.

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

Motion carried.

At 5.10 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday 28 May at 2 p.m.