

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 7 July 1998

The **SPEAKER (Hon. J.K.G. Oswald)** took the Chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

### 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 126, 132, 135, 137, 140 and 144; and I direct that the following answers to questions without notice be distributed and printed in *Hansard*.

#### HINDMARSH POLICE STATION

In reply to **Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens)** 4 June.

The **Hon. D.C. KOTZ**: The price received for the sale of Hindmarsh Police Station was \$270 000 (plus interest of \$3 034.79 due to delayed settlement). The property was valued by the Valuer General at \$300 000.

#### EDS SERVICE DELIVERY

In reply to **Mr CONLON (Elder)** 28 May.

The **Hon. W.A. MATTHEW**: The problem which has been experienced by the South Australian Housing Trust was a result of network management problems. On the evening of 28 May 1998 EDS took action to resolve the problems encountered by the South Australian Housing Trust by introducing an ethernet switch and a dedicated router to service the Internet. The action taken by EDS will result in improved service to the South Australian Housing Trust. In order to ensure the South Australian Housing Trust receives reliable, timely access to its critical mainframe business systems across the network, EDS has embarked on a detailed and complete end-to-end check of the South Australian Housing Trust's network.

This type of problem is commonly experienced when a network has an unexpected influx of additional users, causing it to become overloaded. Inevitably it will occur again, probably at a different location, and will be rectified then also.

#### DEPUTY PREMIER

The **Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier)**: I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The **Hon. J.W. OLSEN**: I advise the House that the Hon. Rob Kerin was elected, unopposed, to the position of Deputy Premier earlier today.

#### RACIAL VILIFICATION

The **Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier)**: I seek leave to make a further ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The **Hon. J.W. OLSEN**: Every Australian deserves to be treated in a fair and equitable manner, whether that be in the workplace, in the home environment or wherever their daily life takes them. It is a fundamental right of every Australian to be protected from the hurt and anguish that can be caused by slurs, ridicule or contempt based purely on the grounds of race. The Government has taken action and it is action which will ensure that South Australia has the toughest racial vilification laws in the nation.

As of today it is a criminal offence for a person by public act to incite hatred towards people on the grounds of their race. As well, the law now allows for people to proceed with

civil damages. The maximum amount of damages that they may be awarded is \$40 000. If someone feels that they have been racially vilified, they now have the right to pursue the matter through the court system, criminal or civil.

The message to anyone who pursues this action is clear: racially vilify anyone and face the full wrath of the courts, fines of up to \$5 000, or gaol for up to three years. On the face of it these penalties may appear harsh, but we make no excuse for them and we make no excuse simply because there is no reason, under any circumstances, to humiliate any person just because of their background.

There are many distinguishing characteristics of South Australia, not the least of which is the fact that we are a multicultural society of which I, for one, am proud and which has bipartisan support. With that we are tolerant of one another and of each other's differences. There will always be antagonists, of that there can be no doubt, but as of now those people will feel the full force of the law if they choose to racially vilify people. There has never been a better time to send a message to the community and to our trading partners that this State, representing more than 150 nationalities, values its ethnic communities and shuns and punishes those people who choose to humiliate those very same people on whose skills, expertise and culture we all draw from.

It is legislation such as the laws we have proclaimed this week which send a message to our trading partners—in no uncertain terms—that South Australians do not tolerate racial disharmony. The emergence of the One Nation Party in this country is of great concern to me as Premier of a State which prides itself in being racially tolerant. I am concerned. I am concerned about the effect Pauline Hanson will have on this State's economy. We are an export economy—our future lies in the export area. Pauline Hanson and her Party will hurt trade in our traditional areas of sheep, beef, wheat, motor vehicles and other manufactured goods. She will wreck the economy and I for one will not sit idly by and let that happen. Every South Australian has worked too hard to sit back and see our State go backwards because of a political Party, which, I believe, does not represent the best interests of all Australians—and I stress to all Australians, because it gets to the heart of what is an Australian.

Australia is a multicultural nation. The reality cannot be altered or ignored, nor should it be. And, in the main, we all enjoy a quality of life beyond that which exists in many countries. One Nation can never change who we are and how we have evolved as a nation. Instead of us using cultural differences to promote division, we should be celebrating them, and we should be proud of them.

Before I close I want to make mention of a celebration of Aboriginal culture occurring in Australia this week. NAIDOC Week is being celebrated across the nation and tonight I have the honour of announcing the recipient of the first NAIDOC Premier's Award for outstanding service to the community. As the first true Australians, the culture that the Aboriginal community has nourished and protected for so many years is the cultural foundation of our country. Those of us who came to this great country later have much to be grateful for. NAIDOC Week serves to focus our mind on all that the Aboriginal community has to offer—and it focuses our minds on the future—reaffirming that there must be a determination to deliver understanding, caring and equity in a time of economic and misguided community pressures, to which I have referred earlier. South Australia's commitment to racial harmony, through its racial vilification laws, will ensure that we do deliver equity to all Australians.

## PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism (Hon. G.A. Ingerson)—

District Council—By-Laws—Coorong—  
No. 1—Permits and Penalties  
No. 2—Council Land  
No. 3—Creatures

By the Minister for Human Services (Hon. Dean Brown)—

Mount Gambier and Districts Health Service  
Incorporated—By-Laws—General

By the Minister for Environment and Heritage (Hon. D.C. Kotz)—

Environment, Resources and Development Committee—  
Report on the Establishment of Artificial Reefs—  
Response by the Minister for Environment and  
Heritage  
Regulations under the following Acts—  
Environment Protection—Public Register  
Land and Business (Sale and Conveyancing)—  
Environment Protection.

## QUESTION TIME

### DEPUTY PREMIER

**The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is directed to the new Deputy Premier. If the Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism is cleared by the Privileges Committee, would the Deputy vacate his position to allow the former Deputy Premier to return to the job?

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question, but it is purely hypothetical, so, on that basis, I will not answer.

### ELECTRICITY, PRIVATISATION

**Mr CONDOUS (Colton):** Will the Premier advise the House whether he has had a reply to his letter from the Leader of the Opposition suggesting that he invite the New South Wales Premier to come to South Australia to explain why the New South Wales Labor Government believes that it is imperative to sell its power assets?

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** We well understand the divergence it would seem between the policies of the South Australian Labor Party and the New South Wales Labor Government. The New South Wales position is best summed up by the New South Wales Premier who on ABC Radio on 27 May said:

The sad thing for sections of my Party who have got their collective heads in the sand over this issue is that it won't go away. I'd like to see my Party face up to this, and face up to it sooner rather than later.

Those are the facts of the matter. We are faced with a set of circumstances which we now have to manage, but we have no policy at all from members of the Opposition; no alternative to be put before the people of South Australia. Clearly, they do have their head in the sand. Consequentially, I have written to the Chairman of the Economic and Finance Committee suggesting that that committee might like to write to the New South Wales Premier and invite him to make a submission outlining why the New South Wales Labor Government believes that power assets in that State must be sold. Perhaps he could even attend a committee hearing in the

future. I suggest that a submission of this kind would provide useful input to the committee, showing that the New South Wales Government believes that a sale is imperative for the same reasons as does this Government. The reasons for that are the national market and its risks, competition and ensuring that we get those competition payments, consumer choice, and reduction in State debt interest payments.

I also note that so far two Labor members have accepted the invitation for the briefing on Wednesday. I am pleased that not only Mr Cameron but also a member of the Lower House on the other side has accepted the invitation for the briefing, and I welcome that. I again extend an invitation to all ALP members to attend this meeting at 12 o'clock on Wednesday at the State Administration Centre. All the advisers will be available, and they will be able to answer any questions that the Opposition wants to put. If they want, they can bring along the media to attest to the fact that they are getting this briefing. I would ask that, instead of simply saying 'No' for the sake of saying 'No', the Opposition at least be informed as to why it is saying 'No'. It is clearly ignoring the facts, the circumstances and the management of the issues. As demonstrated by the New South Wales Labor Government, any responsible Government has to manage those issues.

I will take up one other aspect, namely, how the Leader of the Opposition is on the same policy line as the Mayor of Port Lincoln, Mr Peter Davis. I do not know whether the Leader of the Opposition would like to be aligned with Mr Davis's policy options but, as I understand them, Mr Davis's comments today are wrong. We have put in place a pricing order to ensure equal prices in country and metropolitan areas through to 1 January 2003. We have established a structure which will give equalisation of country and city power prices post the year 2003 and which will stay in place *ad infinitum*, where the maximum variance will be 1.7 per cent. That will be established in legislation.

*Ms Hurley interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** The Deputy Leader was in the House when we talked through the Bill and identified the components of the restructuring legislation that will be introduced, which clearly spells that out. It is in the legislation, clearly identifying that fact for this Parliament, upon which it can make a decision. Mr Davis's claims are wrong. We have put in place a fair and equitable system to look after the interests of country and regional areas of South Australia.

### INDUSTRY, TRADE AND TOURISM MINISTER

**The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition):** I direct my question to the Premier. Did the Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism offer the Premier his resignation from the ministry as well as from the Deputy's position, and why did the Premier ask the former Deputy Premier to continue within the ministry? The former Deputy Premier told the media last night that he would remain in the ministry 'because I have been asked to continue by the Premier.'

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** Late yesterday, the former Deputy tendered to me his resignation as Deputy Premier.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Mawson.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Mawson has the call.

*The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:*

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

## STATE ECONOMY

**Mr BROKENSHIRE (Mawson):** My question is—

*Mr Atkinson interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Spence!

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** You just enjoy your position, because you will be there for a long time.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member will ask his question.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** Will the Premier indicate to the House whether or not there have been any recent improvements in the economic performance of some sectors of the South Australian economy over the past few months?

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** Members of the Opposition might not like this fact, but there are some economic statistics which clearly indicate that there has been some improvement in South Australia and, I acknowledge, room for further improvement. That is why we are continuing to argue—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** Well, let me tackle some of the areas relating to Mr Dunstan because he has it wrong.

*The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I caution the Leader of the Opposition.

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** Let us look at some of the statistics. For the three months to April, the number of dwelling approvals in South Australia were up by 16 per cent from a year earlier; private sector approvals were up by 14 per cent; and approvals for private sector houses in the three months to April were up by 10 per cent from the level of one year ago. According to WorkCover statistics, in the period May 1997 to May 1998 there was 32.8 per cent nominal growth in the construction industry in this State; 17 per cent growth in the agricultural sector; and 35.2 per cent growth in the mining sector. By any test, they are good economic indicators.

ANZ job figures released this week indicate that job advertisements in South Australia rose by 3.3 per cent in June in seasonally adjusted terms compared with a reduction of .8 per cent in May. The trend estimate of job advertisements in South Australia—the important indicator—rose for the eighteenth consecutive month, and the pace of growth remains solid. South Australia has also had the second largest increase in job advertisements in all States over the past quarter and the third largest in all States over the past year. Job advertisements in South Australia are at their highest level since July 1990, the highest level for eight years—a statement of fact.

In the area of employment, clearly there is still a long way to go, and I constantly acknowledge that, but there is a range of economic indicators that are trending in the right direction. I indicated to the House earlier that job growth and job prospects are born principally of private sector investment. In private sector investment over the past few months we have been trending ahead of the other States in percentage terms.

That snapshot of figures that I have just outlined demonstrates the existence of some positive economic indicators that cannot and should not be overlooked. There is evidence that the Government has been prepared to make some tough policy decisions rather than pursue government for the sake of government. The policy decisions that we are putting in place now are right for South Australia. They are difficult decisions, but they are the decisions upon which the foundation of this State will be laid in the next millennium.

If we fail to grasp this opportunity, we do a great disservice to future South Australians. Unlike the Leader, we are prepared to look at policy options that are not only right for South Australia but also in the long-term interests of South Australia, and certainly in the interests of every South Australian.

## INDUSTRY, TRADE AND TOURISM MINISTER

**Mr FOLEY (Hart):** Why did the Premier accept the resignation of the Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism as Deputy Premier, given that the Minister maintains he is innocent in relation to charges of misleading the House?

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** Here goes the Opposition on an around-the-world fishing expedition. Today there will be no questions on policy, no alternative policies put forward and no issues of importance to South Australians raised. The member for Hart is falling into the same trap as is the Leader of the Opposition: he is not prepared to face the real policy options for this State. Rather, he is prepared to adopt diversionary tactics regarding process issues that are irrelevant to the interests of South Australians. We are interested in policies that will deliver jobs and bring investment to South Australians.

## OPAL MINING

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart):** I direct my question to the Deputy Premier. What will be the likely benefits from the agreement between the South Australian Opal Miners Association and Aboriginal groups to allow opal mining at Lambina Station in the north of this State? I understand that the Deputy Premier has given the go ahead for the mining and for claims to be operated and registered. I point out to the House that Lambina is in my electorate.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Indeed, that was comment.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** I acknowledge the interest of the honourable member not just in Lambina but in the opal mining industry over many years. On behalf of its members, the South Australian Opal Miners Association has come to an agreement with the registered representatives of the native title claim, the Yankunytjatjara people (which is an Aboriginal corporation) and the Antakarinja Land Management Aboriginal Corporation. That agreement will see 197 claims initially worked, and that is an excellent result for Lambina. Recent media reports have highlighted the enthusiasm that the opal miners feel for this area, and it has enormous potential to generate wealth for both them and the South Australian economy.

Importantly, there will be many new jobs and, in particular, there will be a good opportunity for Aboriginal groups to take part in opal mining at Lambina. Indeed, the cooperation between the two parties in reaching this agreement is virtually unprecedented. Both parties need to be congratulated on the cooperative way in which they have worked through the issues to get to this agreement. The Mining Registrar is now in a position to start the registration process, and it is expected that there will be more than 200 claims on Lambina Station, and some of them will be Aboriginal claims. Many Aborigines will continue to noodle in the area, and the agreement, as it has been struck, gives the Aboriginal people first noodling rights.

Opal mining goes back some 70 years but recent big finds have sparked the rush of claims, and it is estimated that opal

production is worth \$40 million a year. This area will significantly boost that figure. As the member for Stuart knows, while it is not as big as Coober Pedy, this field at Lambina is certainly significant. This is just one example of how the State Government and the Mines and Energy section of my department is working with the mining industry to create jobs in the regions and is part of a larger move to provide opportunities for Aboriginal groups to develop jobs within the mining industry. A few weeks ago, we launched the second phase of our South Australian exploration initiative, worth \$24 million over the next four years.

Importantly, that is also creating jobs in regional South Australia, and about 90 companies are presently involved in exploration on over 190 exploration licences within the area that was previously in the initiative. One of the keys to the subsequent economic development of the discoveries is the ability to negotiate on heritage and native title issues, and this has provided a good model for how that should be done. I have to report that the Aboriginal groups are keen to see the mining industry develop in the north of the State. I have been talking to some of the leaders there, and they see it as absolutely vital for jobs for the young people to allow them to stay in that part of the State.

#### INDUSTRY, TRADE AND TOURISM MINISTER

**Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** In accordance with Standing Order 96(2), I wish to direct a question to the Minister for Local Government in his capacity as Chairman of the Privileges Committee established to consider whether the former Deputy Premier misled the Parliament.

At any time did the Chairman, either at the direction of the Premier or at his own volition, approach the member for Bragg asking him to resign either from the deputy premiership or the ministry and, as a result, did he give the former Deputy Premier any undertaking or assurance about the nature, extent or outcome of the privileges inquiry?

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** I have not called the Minister yet.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** I call the Minister for Local Government.

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** I take absolute personal objection to that question. The answer is, 'Absolutely no.'

#### NAIDOC WEEK

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite):** Will the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs explain how the Government will recognise the importance of Aboriginal culture and achievement during NAIDOC Week?

**The Hon. D.C. KOTZ:** I thank the honourable member for his very important question. NAIDOC Week provides us all with the opportunity to celebrate and learn more about Aboriginal culture, its history and identity. The contribution made to the State by Aboriginal people is considerable and it continues to grow, just as our understanding of the challenges which Aboriginal people face and how we can help them overcome these challenges is also growing.

On Monday, I had the honour of attending the flag raising ceremony at the Aboriginal Elders Village at Davoren Park that marked the beginning of NAIDOC Week. The National Aboriginal Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week has a long and cherished history. I certainly commend

the members of that committee for their commitment over the many years. For more than 20 years, NAIDOC celebrations have demonstrated to all Australians the importance of Aboriginal cultural heritage in the history of our nation. In more recent years, NAIDOC Weeks have followed particular themes, with this year's being very aptly titled 'Bringing Them Home'.

The Premier in his opening statement acknowledged that, tonight, on behalf of the Government and the people of South Australia, he will be presenting an award to the most outstanding Aboriginal-Torres Strait Islander person for services recognised by the Government. Nominations have previously been sought from the community. This is an award that will recognise the service of one outstanding Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person and celebrate the very real achievements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

In providing this recognition, the Government seeks to highlight the role of Aboriginal people in finding solutions to their problems and in determining their own future. Too often, we are confronted with press and media reports which portray Aboriginal people from a negative viewpoint and this, in some quarters, has led to an intolerance and misunderstanding of Aboriginal culture, its traditions and its achievements.

This Government is committed to the promotion of greater understanding and reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. We have proudly worked, I believe, to eradicate the remaining vestiges of injustice that have been suffered by Aboriginal people and have certainly worked to provide them with improved health services and greater educational and employment opportunities.

Tomorrow, I will be attending a joint meeting of Aboriginal Health and Aboriginal Affairs Ministers in Sydney. The South Australian Government will be leading on issues relating to Aboriginal health, in particular, the areas of mental health and emotional wellbeing, as well as leading the discussion on the serious problem of substance abuse. Our focus is on finding solutions to social and economic problems by working with Aboriginal people.

NAIDOC week is about recognising the skills, abilities and achievements of Aboriginal people and about renewing our commitment to work with them to resolve the problems they face. By recognising the talents and skills of Aboriginal people, by demonstrating their success and by understanding and appreciating the rich and unique culture and traditions they enjoy, the South Australian Government is helping the move to a greater self-determination for all Aboriginal people and their communities.

#### INDUSTRY, TRADE AND TOURISM MINISTER

**Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** At any time during the several hours she spent with the former Deputy Premier last night did the Minister for Employment either at the direction of the Premier or of her own volition approach the member for Bragg and ask him to resign from either the deputy premiership or the ministry?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I rule that question out of order. I do not believe that that question is within the Minister's responsibility in her capacity as Minister for Employment or Minister for Youth.

### ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT

**Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders):** Will the Minister for Employment—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Chair cannot hear the question being asked.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** Will the Minister outline to the House what is being done to encourage young Aboriginal people to improve their employment prospects by taking full advantage of education and training opportunities?

**The Hon. J. HALL:** I thank the member for Flinders for her question, because it is one of the areas in which she has taken a great personal interest. I am very pleased to be able to inform the honourable member of a number of the initiatives being undertaken within the unit which are providing young Aboriginal people with high quality education and training. There are a number of initiatives that are actively encouraging them to take advantage of the numerous opportunities. For the interest of my colleagues, I would like to outline a couple of them. One of the most successful is the school visit program, which some members may have read about, operated by the Aboriginal Employment and Education Development Branch of the Department for Education, Training and Employment.

We all know how important role models can be, particularly positive role models. We are very fortunate to have a number of very positive role models in the sporting arena who are very successful AFL players from an Aboriginal background. They have been particularly helpful in working with this program to promote these areas to young people and to promote the benefits of many things such as giving up smoking, participating in community service or, in the particular case to which we refer here, promoting the full advantages of engaging in training programs. I pay tribute to this particular group of Aboriginal AFL players. The member for Hart would appreciate that Fabian Francis, Shane Bond and Peter Burgoyne (and the Crows supporters would be very pleased to know that Andrew McLeod is included in this) have all participated in this very impressive and highly successful program.

The members of this group of very talented football players speak to groups of students on a one-to-one basis and promote the areas to which I referred earlier. They talk about healthy lifestyles; they talk about the importance of not using drugs; and they talk about the students themselves and the reasons that they should be actively encouraged to stay at school and set some objectives for their future. The members of this group are to be commended for using their very high profile to such a good intent and end result. I believe that, instead of making some of the rather flippant remarks that are often made in this House, we ought to thank these young people for what they are doing. I conclude my answer by referring to a question asked earlier.

I put on record that the member for Bragg and his family are long-term personal and political friends of mine, and I deeply resent the absolutely despicable level to which members opposite have dropped today.

### INDUSTRY, TRADE AND TOURISM MINISTER

**Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Does the Premier have full and total confidence in the performance of the member for Bragg as a Minister of the Crown, given

that he maintains the senior economic development portfolio in the Cabinet?

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** Yes.

### ABORIGINAL HEALTH

**Mr MEIER (Goyder):** I ask the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Ross Smith will come to order.

**Mr MEIER:**—what action the Government is taking to provide greater support and assistance for older Aboriginal citizens, particularly those who are suffering from what could be described as serious health problems?

**The Hon. D.C. KOTZ:** I thank the honourable member for his question, because it is an important one. Older Aboriginal people were identified as one of the major communities of need in the Government's 10-year plan for the ageing and, as a consequence, they have been made a priority target group in the HACC program. There will be significant increases in funding to Aboriginal communities in this program for the coming financial year. There will be an additional \$390 000 of recurrent funding, and this will bring the total recurrent expenditure for Aboriginal specific programs to \$2.7 million. In addition, there will be over \$180 000 as one-off funding provided for new initiatives. With this particularly special focus, 25 per cent of all new recurrent funding and 14 per cent of one-off funding has been dedicated to Aboriginal specific programs. A number of new initiatives which will be supported by HACC funding include:

- \$32 000 to the Coorong District Council to provide home assistance to Aboriginal people from the Raukkan community.
- \$79 000 to the Mount Gambier Community Health Service to provide home assistance services.
- \$43 000 to the Ceduna/Koonibba Aboriginal Health Service for home support.
- \$19 000 to the Colebrook Community Centre to provide a new home help and meals service, specifically for aged Aboriginal people who were formerly residents of Colebrook Home and who wish to return to the area.
- \$80 000 to Nganampa Health Council to provide a range of aged services for two Aboriginal communities in a remote region.
- \$33 000 to the Leigh Creek Hospital for home help, transport and a meals service for Aboriginal people.
- \$103 700 to the Aboriginal Elders and Community Care Services Inc. which will provide community support, home help and respite services across the metropolitan area, with a focus on people with mental health needs. Details of additional funding are as follows:
  - One-off funding of \$30 000 has been provided to the Umoona Community Inc. Aged Care Services, based in Coober Pedy. With this funding the community will employ a trainee to develop skills in assessment, coordination and administration.
  - A further \$152 000 over the next two years has been dedicated to developing culturally appropriate home care services for aged Aboriginal people living in the southern Fleurieu area.

In order to promote knowledge and understanding of issues for the Aboriginal community the Office for the Ageing has funded a research project entitled 'Toward

Aboriginal longevity: health and ageing in the Aboriginal population of South Australia'. This will provide an annotated bibliography of relevant ageing, health and associated literature pertaining to the Aboriginal population. It also identifies risk factors for increased and premature mortality rates of Aboriginal people. This report will be released shortly. Finally, initiatives are under way to improve support to Aboriginal carers, and the recently announced carers' strategy will undertake the development of a statewide Aboriginal specific carers' program. This will ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place to promote, recognise and deliver sensitive services.

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens):** Can the Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services advise the House why a proposal to establish a domestic violence unit at Holden Hill Police Station has been shelved, and will he investigate this matter with a view to ensuring that a unit and child abuse facility will be urgently established at that police station? Currently, residents of the north-eastern area are having to deal with the unit at Elizabeth—an excellent unit—but it has an enormous caseload and vast distances to cover. A unit at the Holden Hill Police Station would be of great benefit to residents in the north-eastern suburbs and provide a quicker response time and more accessible service.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** I will take up the matter with the Commissioner and bring back a report.

### HOUSING TRUST, MIGRANTS

**Mr SCALZI (Hartley):** Can the Minister for Human Services advise the House what assistance the Housing Trust is giving to new migrants to South Australia?

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** We have a program whereby skilled migrants coming into the State are able to access accommodation through the Housing Trust. We offer skilled migrants a fully furnished Housing Trust home for up to 12 weeks whilst they find other suitable accommodation here in South Australia. These are skilled migrants where there is already an established demand within the State. In the last year, because of increased demand, we increased the number of houses available from 15 to 45. The total program costs us about \$500 000, and about 121 newly arrived families have come to South Australia as skilled migrants under the skills program. The average stay in a trust home has been six to eight weeks. The scheme is in heavy demand, and that demand has increased over the past year. That is good for the State because it indicates that skilled migrants are coming to South Australia.

### WORKPLACE ACCIDENTS

**Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens):** Can the Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism explain why prosecutions and the number of prohibition and improvement notices for workplace accidents under the Occupational Health and Safety Welfare Advisory Act have been low, especially with regard to the amount of workplace fatalities and serious injuries that have occurred over the past 12 months, and will the Minister say why the Occupational Health and Safety Welfare Advisory Committee recommendations have not been implemented? Workplace fatalities and injuries have increased at an alarming rate, with some 40 000 accidents in

1997. Prosecutions and other penalties available which can be used against employers through breaches of the occupational health and safety legislation are very low and have dropped steadily over the past five years.

**The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE:** Mr Speaker, I am the Minister responsible for this matter. The matter of workplace fatalities and injuries is of great concern to the Government and we operate on the basis that every single injury, particularly every single fatality, is one too many. However, we realise that there are a number of relatively dangerous professions and, of course, it is therefore the responsibility of the Government and the occupational health and safety laws and regulations to minimise the opportunities for tragedy.

The dilemma, though, is that the present occupational health and safety regulations are not read by many employers and employees; the simple fact is that they are very complex. It is the Government's view that it is absolutely stupid to have regulations which no-one either understands or even bothers to read, and accordingly we are in the final stages of a process that will see a number of those regulations becoming more focused, particularly into areas which WorkCover has identified as areas of risk. We hope that, by making the processes and the regulations more accessible, everyone involved in workplace injury and the potential for workplace injury will be better able to assist in providing an injury free workplace.

In relation to the matter of prosecutions, as members of the House would know I do not have responsibility for ETSA at the moment, but when I did earlier this year—and indeed there was a potential case where there might have been a conflict between my role as Minister for Occupational, Health and Safety and my ministerial role with responsibility for ETSA—to be absolutely clear and to ensure that there was no suggestion of the Government 'going easy' on its own agencies, I referred the responsibility for that decision to the DPP and, in doing so, identified that whatever decision the DPP made the Government would follow. As members would probably realise, the DPP indicated that a prosecution was worthy of occurring, and so that is now occurring on one of the Government agencies. As I indicated before, the simple fact is that every single injury and every single fatality is one too many. We are working extraordinarily hard to ensure that everyone involved—that is, employers, employees, unions, associations of professional groupings and so on—understand the regulations so that they can help us to make the workplace as safe as possible.

### EDUCATION, ASIAN LANGUAGES

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite):** Will the Minister for Education, Children Services and Training indicate what level of interest there is in the study of Asian languages in South Australian schools? Yesterday, I attended a presentation by the Minister for Foreign Affairs (Hon. Alexander Downer), and during that presentation and the questions that followed the audience was reminded again that nothing can be more important to our economic relationship with Asia than enhanced cultural understanding. As someone who has lived and worked in Asia, I have been impressed repeatedly at the level of knowledge of English amongst our Asian neighbours and hence my question as to what we are doing in South Australia to promote a similar interest in languages.

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY:** I am pleased to report that there is no lack of enthusiasm for Asian languages in South

Australia, and the teaching of Asian languages in South Australian schools is certainly alive and doing very well. There will be no denting of this enthusiasm, because we are committed to ensuring that the study of Asian languages continues in South Australian schools, and no political extremism within this country will dent the Government's enthusiasm for promoting it. This Government will stand up and be counted as one that unambiguously sees our economic future linked with our Asian neighbours. If we are to trade successfully and promote long-term and lasting relationships, we must share our languages and culture and, as a result, our understanding of our neighbours to the north will improve.

Should we choose to ignore the major languages of our region, we will choose simultaneously to devalue the cultures and customs of our nearby trading partners. I am sure that I need not explain to this House the links that we have, particularly in terms of agriculture with the Deputy Premier and Minister for Primary Industries in the Asian region, the growing market occurring in that area and the opportunities for young people to become involved in the Asian area.

We are not that ignorant that we will ignore our Asian neighbours. This Government is forward looking and places the highest priority on promoting Asian languages in our schools. The future looks good because large numbers of South Australian school students are studying Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese and Vietnamese. At last count, some 55 000 plus students were studying Asian languages in our South Australian schools. In R-10 schools, 45 per cent of all languages being studied are Asian. While there has been an overall decline in the number of students studying languages in senior secondary schools, I am pleased to say that there has been an increase in the percentage of students studying Asian languages. The percentage of students studying Asian languages has increased from 38 per cent in 1993 to 43 per cent at the end of last year. This Government will stand up and be counted both on its record and its policies, and it is not about to back down on this commitment.

#### ADELAIDE AIRPORT

**Mr KOUTSANTONIS (Peake):** My question is directed to the Minister for Local Government. The Adelaide Airport working party includes the Adelaide City Council, the West Torrens council, the Department of Transport, the Land Management Corporation, the Department of Industry and Trade and the Minister for Local Government. Why has the Minister not included the people's representatives of the western suburbs—namely, the members for Colton, Morphett and Hanson, the Federal members for Hindmarsh and Adelaide, and the member for Peake—on this important committee?

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** I thank the member for Peake for his question and for his acknowledgment that the Government is getting on with the work of governing. The Premier has—

**Mr Atkinson:** Yes, you have formed a committee; well done!

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** The member for Spence harks back to the days of Minister Lenehan when all she did was form committees. We are forming committees with the point of doing some work. I thank the member for Peake, as I said, for acknowledging that we have formed a committee. It is an important committee which will put into reality the Premier's desire that we create between State and local—

*Mr Atkinson interjecting:*

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

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:**—government a seamless fabric that enables both levels of government to better apply public moneys and to work with the newly formed management of the airport. As to why we have not sought to include the people's representatives, the answer is quite simple: it is a working committee and we want workers on it, not talkers.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

#### YOUTH TRAINING SCHEME

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher):** Will the Minister for Employment provide details of young Aboriginal people, as well as those from a non-English speaking background, accessing employment opportunities via the State Government Youth Training Scheme?

**The Hon. J. HALL:** I thank the member for Fisher for his question and acknowledge the work that he has done previously in this very important area. I have told the House on a number of occasions about the great success of our traineeship program. I believe some of the figures that are now starting to be put together are very important, and perhaps each of us ought to reflect on the meaning of them. A 70 per cent success rate in respect of these young people who have had these traineeships is very significant in this day and age, because it means that 70 per cent are either gaining full-time employment or are receiving additional education and study.

Given the enormous importance that we have placed on this program, the House might like to know that, of the 509 young people who were placed in regional and rural South Australia, 38 were from Aboriginal and Islander background and they, together with the 35 who have come from the metropolitan area, make a total of 7 per cent—and, given that there were 1000 trainees, that is a pretty good average. Obviously we would like to improve on that result next time because the House knows that this Government has given a commitment to take on another 1 200 trainees each year for the next two years, and that is a target that we would like to surpass in the next couple of years.

Recently I had the privilege of attending a graduation ceremony at Tandanya, and it was very heartening to see the pride with which some of these young Aboriginal graduates accepted their certificates and talked very enthusiastically about the employment they had won, in many cases they believed, from the experience they had gained from their successful traineeships. The House might like to know that some of the areas in which these young trainees are now working include arts administration. One of them has won a position at the Breast Screening Clinic, another has won a cadetship at the ABC, another has a position at the University of Adelaide, another has won a position at Wilto Yerlo, and another has a position at Sunglasses Hut. One of the very exciting successes of the evening at Tandanya was talking to these young people. One young man in particular has decided that with the experience he gained from the traineeship he felt skilled enough and that he had enough support to establish his own multi-media consultancy, and I will give a plug to its name, which is Skysite Studio.

In addition to these successful young Aboriginal trainees, significant numbers have come from non English speaking backgrounds, and they bring with them their very diverse and valued talents to the program. I believe that this program to

which this Government has given an additional two years commitment is very important, and all members of the House should be very proud of the achievements made by the young people.

#### YATALA LABOUR PRISON

**Ms BEDFORD (Florey):** I direct my questions to the Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services. What are prisoner lock down times at Yatala since staff shortages began? Will the Minister provide details of the ratio of staff to prisoners at all times since then and allow access to the Yatala diary of staff shift times and staff cover records? As a matter of urgency, will the Minister give a commitment to meet with the Chief Executive Officer of Correctional Services and staff PSA representatives to resolve this matter? I refer the Minister to an article on page 9 of the *Advertiser* of 1 July titled 'Yatala officers warn of lock downs'. In that article, Mr John Paget, Chief Executive Officer of Correctional Services, is quoted as saying that he was concerned about the prospect of lock downs because it 'does create a level of frustration and tension'. The article further states that Mr Paget said, 'Staffing levels are down by 10 per cent.'

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** I will seek a report about the exact detail of the numbers the honourable member wants and bring it back to her, because these are quite specific questions. I note that the *Advertiser* article made the point that there are staff shortages of about 10 per cent. That question was raised in Estimates Committees, and the answer was that, while there are some staff shortages, people are being trained at the moment who come on stream next week or the following week, but certainly within the next 14 days. Also, there is a 20 per cent prisoner vacancy rate at Yatala at the moment. This matter has been before the commission three times, and three times the commission has backed the prison management as being in control of the situation and has asked the staff to go back to work, so the situation is pretty well under control.

#### ABORIGINES, SPORT AND RECREATION

**Mr VENNING (Schubert):** Will the Minister for Recreation and Sport inform the House of the strategies the Government has put in place to encourage more Aboriginal people to participate in sport and recreation in South Australia? We all know of the positive influence and notable impact that Aboriginal people make in the sporting scene here in South Australia, and of several fine players including stars such as Gavin Wanganeen and Andrew McLeod, who are great ambassadors for the native people and for our State.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** We have developed a number of programs to promote the participation of Aboriginal people in recreation and sport. For example, during 1998 the Office for Recreation and Sport has conducted a number of talent identification clinics for Aboriginal athletes in a number of areas, including Murray Bridge, Millicent, Renmark and the northern suburbs. That has been done with the assistance of the Talent Search program. These clinics have resulted in selected Aboriginal teenagers participating in sports camps conducted at the Police Academy. The camps and clinics involved the development officers and coaches from Athletics South Australia. As a result of the camps, about five to six young teenagers will probably get the opportunity to become involved in talent development programs directly with

Athletics SA. During 1997 some of these specialist camps involved in tennis and softball saw a number of Aboriginal people go to the Australian Junior Grass Court Tennis Championships held in Sydney.

In the South Australian Sports Institute a number of scholarship holders are also involved in sports such as athletics, soccer, netball, basketball and lacrosse, and we have also made efforts to get Aboriginal people involved in the coaching staff in areas such as volleyball. We have now ensured that the sports camps concept and also the talent search programs have also now been extended to Aboriginal teenage girls, to ensure that they are involved in sport and recreation and also various leadership opportunities.

#### ABORIGINAL LANDS TRUST COMMITTEE

**Ms BREUER (Giles):** I direct my question to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. When will the Aboriginal Lands Trust Parliamentary Committee be meeting? In November last year after the election I was appointed to this committee which, as the local member for much of the lands area, I believe is very vital. I and my fellow appointee, the member for Lee, have made several approaches to the Minister regarding a meeting of this committee, but with no success. Today the Ministers for Aboriginal Affairs, Youth Affairs and Correctional Services have made a number of statements regarding commitments and programs of this State Government for Aboriginal people and have waxed lyrical about their commitment to Aboriginal issues, yet this committee last met in November 1996.

**The Hon. D.C. KOTZ:** I appreciate the honourable member's question. The honourable member has approached me and suggested that if it were reformed she would be willing to stand on that committee, and I am very pleased to hear that.

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**The Hon. D.C. KOTZ:** The committee has not been reconstituted, so perhaps the member for Ross Smith could wait for the answer.

**An honourable member:** You can't remember.

**The Hon. D.C. KOTZ:** That may be Labor Caucus, but let us get it right: the committee was established—

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Ross Smith will come to order. The Minister has the call.

**The Hon. D.C. KOTZ:** The committee was established under the Aboriginal Lands Trust Act 1966. The last activities of this committee were recorded in about 1996. At this stage I have taken into consideration some of the past experiences in which the Aboriginal Lands Trust Committee was involved, and I have come to the conclusion that it is a committee that should certainly be supported. No decision has been made at this time as to when that committee will meet, but I have it under consideration and as soon as I have made a decision on when the committee will meet I will be more than happy to advise the House and the members concerned.

#### FISHERIES HOVERCRAFT

**Mr LEWIS (Hammond):** I direct my question to the Deputy Premier, who is to be congratulated by all of us I am sure, regrettable though the circumstances may be. What is the cost compared to the benefits of the enhanced fisheries compliance program by the commissioning of the new



hovercraft for surveillance and other similar initiatives in this program designed to protect our marine commercial and recreational fishing species through simple, quick access to previously inaccessible areas?

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** I thank the honourable member for both his question and the sentiments he expressed. Last Sunday I launched the new hovercraft for our compliance unit at Snowdens Beach, which is deep in the electorate of Hart, where we got a very cool welcome—and the local member was not there, either. The hovercraft is named after Mick Olsen, who is a very well respected former Director of Fisheries who did a terrific job for 12 years, and this is due recognition of the work Mick Olsen did.

The importance of the hovercraft to the compliance unit is largely due to the fact that it will be able to access areas to which the compliance officers previously had difficulty getting. We are mainly talking about the shallows, flats, creeks and estuaries where traditional craft find it hard going. It will help enormously in terms of those who take undersized crabs and also the netting of creeks and estuaries. It will send an important message to those who are doing the wrong thing that they can be caught where previously they were a little too comfortable.

The cost of the hovercraft was about \$80 000—a good investment in the protection of this resource. Compliance is an important part of fisheries management. Without compliance, management becomes meaningless. The importance to the State of recreational fishing as both a form of recreation and an economic benefit is enormous. About 450 000 people go fishing at least once a year. It is said that they inject about \$350 million into the economy. For both our recreational and commercial fishers we must look after this resource. There is no doubt that the hovercraft will be an important instrument in helping us to do so.

#### HOUSING TRUST TENANTS

**Ms THOMPSON (Reynell):** Will the Minister for Human Services explain why Housing Trust tenants and their children who receive rental subsidy are not eligible to receive any assistance with bonds or rent in advance if they wish to move to private rental accommodation? I have recently heard of two instances where constituents who, for one reason or another, have found their trust accommodation to be unsuitable. When no alternative trust accommodation has been available, they have sought alternative accommodation in the private sector only to find that, despite their low income and difficult personal circumstances, they are not eligible for the sort of assistance that is available to people in similar circumstances but not in trust accommodation.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** First, I point out that rental assistance is provided by the Commonwealth Government under the Commonwealth Rental Assistance Program, the main form of housing assistance provided throughout the whole of Australia. However, the Housing Trust—and, therefore, the Department of Human Services—provides a limited amount of rental assistance in particular cases, which are assessed on a case-by-case needs basis, particularly where a large number of children are involved and where suitable accommodation cannot be found.

If the honourable member would like to refer those particular cases to me, I will have them examined, because the department does provide private rental assistance in conjunction with the Federal Government scheme. If the honourable member will provide me with specific details, I

will ask the department to check again whether or not rental assistance under the Housing Trust should have been given and what other forms of assistance may be provided to those families. We encourage people to take up private rental accommodation if they wish to, and we give assistance in some cases, particularly where families are living below the poverty line.

#### HERITAGE RESTORATION

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen):** My question is directed to the Minister for Administrative Services. Is he awake? Will the Minister advise the House of any new initiatives in his agency to boost South Australian exports, particularly in the area of heritage restoration? I understand that an Export Development Unit operates within the Department for Administrative and Information Services to advance the export potential of construction products and services from South Australia, essentially in the area of heritage. I would be most interested to know about those initiatives.

**The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW:** I assure the honourable member that, whilst I was reading when he was asking his question, I was fully aware that he was doing so. In 1995, under my then ministry, the Government established an Export Development Unit which operated within the then Department for State Government Services. The Export Development Unit now operates within the new Department for Administrative and Information Services. This unit was established to advance pro-actively the export potential of construction products and services from the South Australian building industry—in particular, by facilitating and brokering export opportunities.

I am pleased to advise the House that, since the establishment of the unit, \$11.5 million in sales of goods and services from the South Australian building industry has been generated overseas. That has occurred principally through teams from the South Australian Heritage Consultants and Contractors Group which are led by Government officers to industry development activities in Asia and Western Pacific regions. The group comprises State and local government conservation and public art expertise in conjunction with private sector heritage consultants and specialist contractors and suppliers.

The restoration projects that have been undertaken or are being worked on at feasibility stage include projects in Malaysia, Taiwan and Hong Kong, all of which involve South Australian expertise. These projects include, amongst others: the Ohel Leah Synagogue, Hong Kong; the Acheh Street Precinct, Penang, Malaysia; the Kapital Keling Mosque, Penang, Malaysia; the Pao-An Temple, Taiwan; and some public art work in Taiwan. Further opportunities have been identified in Sri Lanka, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Taiwan and Hong Kong, essentially in the heritage restoration area and to a lesser degree in asset and maintenance management. The development of these opportunities will continue to have the strong involvement of the private sector.

I am also pleased to advise the House that, recently, through the Construction Industry Advisory Council an export directory has been produced via the construction industry web site, and that provides information on 100 South Australian organisations that are ready, willing and available with the expertise to undertake work overseas. I look forward to that directory in itself generating further opportunities and

drawing on the expertise of the South Australian private sector.

### GRIEVANCE DEBATE

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

**Mr WRIGHT (Lee):** I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the Adelaide 36ers on their outstanding performance. I am sure that all South Australians join with me in commending the championship victory of the Adelaide 36ers. This is our first championship victory since 1986 and our first grand final since 1994. This championship has been hard won and hard fought for. It has been a combination of a great player outfit, to which I will come in a moment, but the team has also been superbly backed up by the administration, the trainers, and, of course, the coach, Phil Smyth.

Despite what the Premier said, that is, that the Adelaide 36ers had a mediocre season, I would like to remind the House that the team had an outstanding season in the lead-up to the finals winning 19 matches during the home and away season and finishing in second position. The only thing that I would suggest to the Adelaide 36ers is that they re-educate their No. 1 ticket holder and make sure that he is fully aware of what was achieved during the season.

I want to acknowledge all the players because, obviously, each and every one of them played a vital role throughout the season. It was an outstanding outfit made up of people such as Brett Maher, Martin Cattalini, Darnell Mee, Rupert Sapwell, Scott Ninnis, John Rillie, Mark Davis, Dean Brogan, Kevin Brooks and Paul Rees. Two of those players—Scott Ninnis and Mark Davis—were around in 1986 when we won our last championship. It is significant that both those players have been around for a long time and have now been able to come up with a second championship for the Adelaide 36ers. Scott Ninnis, of course, won another championship when he played for South-East Magic.

Today, I want to pay tribute to the coach of the team, Phil Smyth. Phil Smyth is an example of a home grown, born and bred product. He is an outstanding individual who obviously has stamped his credentials on this team very quickly. It would not be unfair to say that, on a couple of occasions in years gone by, Phil Smyth has been overlooked for the coaching position of the Adelaide 36ers. It does him great credit that in one season he has been able to turn around the fortunes of the Adelaide 36ers. Of course, last season we were not able to make the finals, and it has been the case in the most immediate last few seasons that imports have come into coach the Adelaide 36ers. There is nothing necessarily wrong with that, but here we have an example of an individual of the highest characteristics who was born and bred in South Australia. He is a champion in his own right. Not only was he a champion player but also he has obviously taken the next step and is quickly demonstrating to the rest of Australia how great a coach he will be.

Phil Smyth, along with players such as Andrew Gaze and Eddie Palubinkas, is probably recognised as one of the three best Australian basketballers ever produced in this country. He has a record that is not matched by anyone else in Australia, except for perhaps Andrew Gaze. As a player, Phil

Smyth played in three Australian championships when he was playing for the Canberra Cannons, known as 'the General'. It is great that he has obviously applied some of those great traits he displayed as a player to his coaching stewardship. It might also be known to members that Phil Smyth was captain of the Australian basketball team for many years. He has been in four Olympiads, so we are obviously talking about a player and a person of great quality. I am sure that the Adelaide 36ers is in safe hands. I wish him well and the team all the best for the future. I am sure we have a great future with Phil Smyth as our coach.

I hope that all the players who represented us this year will be back on the court in the next season, which will start in October this year. Let us hope that we can put back to back premierships together and not wait as long as we have had to on this occasion, given that 1986 was our last championship. It might be pertinent for me to also acknowledge Phil's wife Jenny Cheesman and their three children Jacinta, Brooke and Holly.

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

**Mr MEIER (Goyder):** At this time of the year in the electorate of Goyder—and I dare say throughout much of South Australia—many service clubs have their changeover. As the local member, I am thankful to many of those service clubs for extending an invitation to my wife and me to join them. The key service clubs that operate in my electorate are Apex, Lions and Rotary. On Saturday night I was privileged to be in attendance at the handover of the Maitland Apex Club, its twenty-seventh handover. Without fear of contradiction, it was an excellent evening. It really showed forth the spirit of friendship and fellowship, and the determination to help one's community. I would like to compliment the members of the Apex Club of Maitland and also the Apex Clubs throughout this State for the excellent work they are doing.

The one thing that troubles me is that I cannot always get to all clubs. On Saturday night not only was the Apex Club holding its handover but also the combined Apex Club of Moonta and Wallaroo was having a meeting. I could not be in two places at once, but I trust that its handover went well too. I am certainly looking forward to joining the Kadina Apex Club in the not too distant future for its meeting.

**An honourable member:** Hear, hear!

**Mr MEIER:** I hear the member for Lee shout, 'Hear, hear!' He certainly was active in the community in Kadina and Northern Yorke Peninsula in earlier years, where he played a good game of football. He was the male medal winner on three occasions, which was an excellent contribution. I must not be sidetracked from the other young people, namely the Apex organisation in South Australia and Australia. It is noteworthy that in the past 12 months these young men managed to contribute some 1 153 hours of voluntary service to their area. It is something that so many of us do not fully appreciate. In this day and age, we are increasingly coming to believe that any work done should be paid work. I can tell the House that the service clubs do not hold that view. They are happy to provide their voluntary service, and I would hate to think where our communities would be—particularly in country areas (and I dare say in the metropolitan areas as well)—without the millions of voluntary hours that have gone into so many projects.

The types of things they have been involved with include: the local hospital fete, firewood deliveries, bar work, catering,

painting the playgrounds, mowing, tree cutting and the Friday night pub raffle. As members can see, there are some enjoyments as well. So often the people who benefit from their mowing are the senior citizens, as they are the ones who find it difficult to mow their back and front lawns, and Apex is there to help in that respect.

I point out that Apex started officially in 1931 in Geelong, and it came about as a result of the efforts of three young businessmen by the names of Ewen Laird, Langham Proud and John Buchan. Time will not allow me to go into their stories, but the book on the first 25 years of Apex states:

The story of the foundation and growth of Apex is the story of young men. It is the story of the hopes and visions, the enthusiasms and vitality, the exuberance and high spirits of youth.

It is incredible to think that that young organisation started when we were just going into the Great Depression, when people saw a lot of hopelessness in the world in which they were living. However, these young people said, 'We musn't look at it that way. There is a great future; there is great hope.' Through Apex they have shown just what can be done. I would like to pay tribute to not only the Maitland Apex Club but also all Apex clubs throughout South Australia and Australia.

**Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth):** I return to the subject of the redevelopment of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I have some interesting facts to share with the House. It is worth our thinking about them and their implications for people in the western suburbs. A couple of weeks ago, the Minister for Human Services told the Estimates Committee that Stage 1 of the \$43 million allocated for the redevelopment of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital involved a new intensive care unit. He said that this project had been approved by Cabinet on 22 June 1998. He also said that he expected \$43 million to be spent over the first three years on the upgrade of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. It is interesting that this statement is at odds with Budget Paper 5, which shows a total of only \$29 million as a forward commitment from the Government to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. This \$29 million is broken down into three parts: \$4.3 million this year; \$14 million next year; and \$11 million in 2000-1.

It is also interesting to note that this is the third time that the new intensive care unit has been announced, and it is the second time that it has been funded. It was in last year's budget, at a cost of \$5.5 million. So, somewhere between last year and this year, it lost \$1.5 million. Perhaps the same thing happened with the intensive care unit of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital as happened to the Lyell McEwin Hospital redevelopment, which lost \$8 million from last year to this year. The new intensive care unit for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was first announced in the budget on 29 May 1997. It was then announced again by the former Minister for Health on 13 September 1997. When he announced it then, he said that it would be completed by August 1998. Now, this year, this Minister has recycled the funding as the first stage of his plan to redevelop the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

When we consider that scenario, I think it is a good question to ask: where does it actually leave the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and people in the western suburbs in relation to their ongoing health service provision? I think it leaves them no better off than they have been over the past four years. When there have been continual announcements, re-announcements and nothing to show for them, what sort of confidence does this give anyone in relation to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital? Again, it is important for us to reflect on

what has happened to that hospital over the past four years. This Minister, when he began his answers to my questions in the Estimates Committee this year, said:

I can assure the honourable member that there is a commitment by me to upgrade the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Michael Armitage, the former Minister for Health, also said those very same words, but we have seen nothing. In fact, what we have seen is one announcement after another that did not come to pass. The question of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital under this current State Government has included an amalgamation, which is still not finally on its feet, and a \$130 million privatisation announcement in two stages, both of which collapsed and led nowhere. We have had a commitment this year from the new Minister to a redevelopment funded through the capital works budget, and now we see that this redevelopment, when we look at the detail, does not stand up.

I think it is about time the Government came clean about what it has in store for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and, bearing in mind all the problems over the past four years, I believe that the people in the western suburbs deserve a straight answer.

**Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders):** Many small rural communities are unable to provide employment to the majority of their young people. This pulls apart the fabric of these communities as our energetic, dynamic and much loved young ones are forced to seek employment elsewhere. The impact on small rural communities of this youth population drift is manifold. Communities mourn the circumstances that force their children to leave the district with the likelihood that they will never return. This restricts the opportunities of these communities to grow and flourish as the next generation produce their offspring. Older generations have been left to run farms and businesses without the vibrancy, energy and innovation that our young folk bring to the task. Sporting and recreational organisations traditionally provide an opportunity for isolated country people to socialise and interact. These groups find it difficult to field teams in local sporting competitions or recruit younger people to recreational pursuits. It is imperative that these communities are able to provide employment to retain some of their young people if the communities are to continue to be viable.

The Liberal Government has put in place a number of initiatives that are helping to rectify the situation. A major initiative is the exemption of stamp duty on the transfer of the family farm to the next generation. Numerous smaller initiatives have been undertaken, and I commend the Government for implementing the small business incentive scheme and the small businesses which are taking up this initiative.

As a result of the small business incentive scheme, eight small and isolated communities on the Lower Eyre Peninsula will potentially retain some of their young people. A total of 18 employers in the Lower Eyre Peninsula region, outside the major town of Port Lincoln, have made application to employ a young person through the small business employer incentive scheme. The scheme offers incentive to small businesses to offer traineeships or apprenticeships to young people, thereby greatly enhancing their long-term employment prospects. Seven places for apprentices and 11 places for trainees are currently being determined, one each at Tumbay Bay, Elliston and Wudinna; two at Streaky Bay; three each

at Ceduna, Cowell and Cummins; and four in the small community of Cleve.

That the initiative has the backing of small businesses throughout South Australia is manifest in the fact that over 1 000 expressions of interest were received, with a reserve list having to be established. I am delighted that these grants are being offered in addition to other grants and training subsidies offered by the Federal Government. Small businesses participating in the scheme receive \$4 000 over two years. This can make a significant difference as to whether or not a small business is able financially to employ another person. In those regions where employment opportunities are scarce, the small business incentive scheme provides very welcome assistance to employers wishing to expand their businesses and provide employment opportunities to local young people.

I am also extremely pleased that 40 per cent of the grants have been allocated to regional South Australia, which sorely needs this kind of assistance in order to regain some of the vibrancy and population it lost during the farming crisis of the 1980s and early 1990s. To help repopulate our country schools and also to invigorate our many voluntary organisations, we need this input. The SES, St John's and the CFS, as well as service organisations such as Apex, Rotary and Lions Clubs are vital to the good health of our country community. Funds are raised to provide the community with equipment for organisations such as the hospital, St John Ambulance and CFS, as well as for parks, etc. I commend the initiative of the Government.

**Mr KOUTSANTONIS (Peake):** I raise a grievance in relation to the reply to a question I asked the Minister for Local Government earlier today in Question time. I was quite shocked and offended by the Minister's remarks—and the Speaker should be as well. During my short time in this place, I have come to know and respect the Speaker of this House. I know him not to be a talker, but rather a very hard worker—unlike what the Minister said of me.

I find it interesting that the Minister said he thought that the Federal members for Adelaide and Hindmarsh were talkers and not workers. I find it amazing (although I actually agree with the Minister on this matter) that the Minister has finally admitted that the Federal member for Adelaide, whose electorate comprises a large area of the Minister's electorate, is just a talker and not a worker. This is an extraordinary statement for him to make, although it is not extraordinary for those on this side of the House, because we know what Ms Chris Gallus is like: her workload in Canberra is obviously very light, as the Minister has realised very quickly.

However, the Minister criticises me, the member for Hanson and the member for Colton, who I know tries hard, and the Speaker, who is also a hard worker. I was shocked and saddened that it should fall to a Labor backbencher to stand up and defend the Speaker, a Government member.

*Mr Wright interjecting:*

**Mr KOUTSANTONIS:** Dissension against his own Speaker, who is a hard worker—as all members know. I am shocked that the Minister for Local Government, who strolls in and out of this place as if he owns it, is forced to do the Premier's dirty work, because the Premier does not have the courage to do it himself, and now starts criticising the Speaker. When it comes to the Adelaide Airport Working Committee, I have gone over the head of the Minister and gone straight to the source, and I have had a much better response from the Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism than I had from the Minister for Local Government. No

wonder the Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism is a senior Minister, not a junior Minister like the member for Unley. I am shocked and appalled, and I think the Premier should sack him for this.

**Mr Clarke:** At least leave him in a burning warehouse.

**Mr KOUTSANTONIS:** At the very least, leave him in a burning warehouse. I had better be quiet now: Matthew Abraham has just walked in, so I will not say anything. The member for Unley is an exceptional member of Parliament for whom I have a great deal of respect! I am disappointed with his remarks. I feel that the Adelaide Airport Working Committee is a very important facet of the airport's restructuring to become a privately rather than a publicly owned asset. The way in which the junior Minister for Local Government has dealt with this matter is appalling. Members of this House finally criticising the members for Hindmarsh and Adelaide is reassuring, but to criticise the Speaker and the member for Colton is absurd. I have sat with the Speaker, as has the member for Hanson, on the Adelaide Airport Environmental Committee, and he has done an exceptional job. It is unfortunate that the member for Hindmarsh has let him down.

Of course, it took the member for Hanson and myself to include the member for Colton in this airport working party, but we have been left out on a limb when it comes to that working party, which was established by the Minister for Local Government and reports to the Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism. Of course, this is extremely undemocratic. However, we have had some assurances from the Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism, and I take his word on that, because I know that he is a man of his word—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**Mr KOUTSANTONIS:** He is a senior Minister, a real Minister; there are no training wheels on this fellow.

**Mr Clarke:** He knows how to get out of a burning warehouse.

**Mr KOUTSANTONIS:** Yes. I must say that, if I were on the *Titanic*, I would be next to Graham Ingerson, clinging to him like a wet blanket. I would like to know how the Minister for Local Government has the hide to walk in here and criticise a man of the standing of the Speaker of this House; it is outrageous. The Minister should immediately apologise—if not resign—and insist that the State members for Morphett, Hanson and Colton and the Federal members for Hindmarsh and Adelaide be included on this Adelaide Airport working committee, even though the Minister said that the members for Hindmarsh and Adelaide are incompetent and just talkers—not workers.

**Mr Wright:** The Premier ought to sack him.

**Mr KOUTSANTONIS:** Yes. This type of treachery, which is very new in the Liberal Party—

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

**The Hon. G.A. INGERSON (Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism):** I have been asked on behalf of the Retail Traders Association (RTA) to read in a reply to statements made by the member for Kaurana the other day. The RTA has hit back at the member for Kaurana's claims, saying that some of his comments were 'scurrilous' and 'absolute rubbish'. The President of the RTA, Paul Pilkington, has accused the honourable member of making 'inaccurate and misleading' comments and has asked me to put this on the record today. Unfortunately, the honourable member's

comments were reported in the *Advertiser* without being checked and, as I said, I have been asked to do this.

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**The Hon. G.A. INGERSON:** I am reading in their comments. The RTA's Executive Director, Mr David Shetliffe, who left the organisation last week, was not asked to resign: Mr Shetliffe made his own decision to resign. The member for Kaurna had claimed in Parliament that Mr Shetliffe was asked to resign. The RTA notes a comment in relation to debt, and makes the following comment:

The RTA is not \$300 000 in debt. Mr Pilkington said that while the first trading half of the financial year was poor, this had picked up in the second half. [The member for Kaurna had claimed that the RTA was \$300 000 in debt.] The RTA did not lose money on the Asia-Pacific retailing conference last year. In fact, the conference actually made a profit. 'We are very proud of our involvement in that conference,' Mr Pilkington said.

In that instance the member for Kaurna told Parliament that the conference was a 'great money loser'. Further:

The RTA's retail training group is not losing money 'hand over fist' as claimed by [the member for Kaurna]. 'The training market is a very volatile market, but the retail training group is not losing money. . . as claimed. As part of the RTA's complete restructure, we are looking at becoming part of a national organisation to enhance the services we provide to members,' Mr Pilkington said.

The RTA has not breached the Taxation Act, and conducts all its activities in strict accordance with the law. Mr Hill had told Parliament there were possible breaches of the Taxation Act by the RTA, with its retail training group providing sales tax exemption for executives' motor vehicles.

'The retail training group arm. . . is a legitimate sales tax-exempt organisation and is within its rights to provide executives with sales tax exempt cars,' Mr Pilkington said. 'The RTA adheres to its auditors' advice at all times—and our advice is that this is legal and accepted business practice'.

While the Foodtown group of supermarkets has resigned from the RTA, this did not represent 200 members. Also, Foodtown representatives were on the RTA council when trading hours were discussed, and had input into the trading hours debate. [The member for Kaurna] had claimed that more than 200 members—including Foodtown—had resigned from the RTA because of the trading hours issue.

Mr Pilkington said it was clear that [the member for Kaurna's] source had provided him with incorrect information. 'It's a shame that [the member for Kaurna] has resorted to spreading this rubbish before doing his homework,' Mr Pilkington said. 'Unfortunately, it not only reflects badly on him but is damaging to the RTA.'

The Chairman of the RTA has asked the member for Kaurna to apologise for his outburst and to make at least some effort to put things right.

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### PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Deputy Premier):** I move:

That the Privileges Committee have leave to continue to sit during the sittings of the House.

Motion carried.

### MEMBER'S REMARKS

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL (Minister for Local Government):** I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** In today's grievance debate the member for Peake alluded to replies I gave to questions about the committee involving the Adelaide Airport and to

a comment about 'workers and not talkers'. I would merely like to explain that I made no inference in terms of any of my colleagues on this side of the House, neither State nor Federal. I had merely meant to imply that the committee was about working. It has people on it who are skilled in matters such as road construction and various other working matters. I wonder why the member for Peake does not feel that—

**Mr CLARKE:** I rise on a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I thought the Minister was making a personal explanation. Either he said those words, or he did not; we all heard him. If he wishes to withdraw unreservedly, that is up to him.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! We are in the process of making two speeches at this stage. I draw the Minister's attention to the point that has been made. If the Minister is making a personal explanation, he needs to be very clear in that explanation.

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** I just want the House to understand clearly that, when I was speaking about talkers as opposed to workers in relation to the membership of the group, it is a working group and it does not in any way reflect on my colleagues.

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### STAMP DUTIES (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.  
(Continued from 28 May. Page 985.)

**Mr FOLEY (Hart):** As shadow Treasurer I will be the Opposition's lead speaker on this significant piece of taxation legislation. I can assure the House that I will not be overly long, but a couple of points certainly need to be made. As we have said throughout the budget and the Estimates process, the Government will repeat through a number of revenue raising pieces of legislation its high taxing budget. In defence of the Premier, he has not walked away from that and has acknowledged it himself. Certainly, this legislation makes key amendments to stamp duty rates in South Australia which in large part give the Premier and the Treasurer, in their budget, the bulk of their increased funding. We see a significant and staggering increase in the registration of motor vehicles involving certificates of third party insurance from \$15 to \$60, which will attract \$38 million in a full year. Also, across the board general insurance stamp duty rates will increase from 8 per cent to 11 per cent, and in a full year this will equate to some \$30 million.

Also in the legislation is some tidying up of the transfer of heavy vehicle registration from the Federal registration scheme to the State administered registration scheme. With our taxation revenue increase our rate is now quite high compared with other States. The Premier and the Treasurer often quote that, when we take State averages across taxation measures, we are in a mid range position but clearly, when it comes to some of these significant costs, particularly the general insurance rates, we are up there with the highest in the nation. We are in a climate where we want to attract business investment into this State, but these measures will clearly impact on the Government's ability to attract investment.

It would be remiss of me not to make reference to the ensuing national debate on Commonwealth-State financial arrangements. One of the disappointing features of the current debate under way between both the Federal Labor Party and the Federal Liberal Party—and I am equally critical of my own colleagues in the Federal sphere as I am of Treasurer Costello and Prime Minister Howard—is that much is being said about what should or should not be done when it comes to national taxation levels but, of course, there is little or no debate about what should occur between the States and the Commonwealth. It would be fair to say that, when it comes to Commonwealth-State financial relations, whether it be a Labor Government or a Liberal Government in Canberra, it is always a difficult time for the States to both argue the point and get some outcomes whereby the States get a more certain share of Commonwealth revenue.

Clearly, that was proving difficult under the former Labor Government, and it is proving extremely difficult under the present Federal Liberal Government. Whilst some would say the current debate is more important from the States' point of view, exactly how we resolve the States' share of revenue is a critical issue because, until that is resolved, Governments of whatever persuasion have only a narrow taxation base from which to increase revenue and, as has been evidenced in this budget, our very narrow tax base has been leveraged to about as high as we can get it. It is a very indiscriminate method because, by raising taxes, the Government is in effect hurting a limited number of people, in many cases those with the least capacity to pay.

In this instance, if people happen to drive a car, they are in significant trouble, and there are further measures when it comes to the Motor Accident Commission because of other measures which will impact on drivers. I make the point, and I am not critical of the Government, that we need to ensure that we have a strong presence in Canberra when it comes to the issue of Commonwealth-State financial relations so that at the end of the day States are able to rely less on increasing the few taxes they have remaining and are able to get a better share of Commonwealth revenue. Until that occurs we will be tinkering with our narrow tax base and, in so doing, hurting many people with a limited capacity to pay.

I see that debate as quite separate from whether or not we should have a GST. It is a debate that has been ranging for over a decade, and it is a debate that then Prime Minister Hawke was trying to resolve with State Premiers. It is not an issue of how the Commonwealth chooses to raise its revenue but how it chooses to distribute revenue to the States. With this current situation, particularly after the High Court decision that the States no longer can collect revenue from cigarettes, tobacco and alcohol, there is such a significant hole in our taxation base that our own State sources of revenue are diminishing to a level under \$2 billion, well under a third and probably closer to a quarter of what we need to fund our budget.

That highlights the unacceptable situation that currently exists. I simply make the plea to Treasurer Costello or, from my point of view, Treasurer Evans that some positive outcomes should flow from this, but I will not hold my breath. The Commonwealth must face up to the urgent need to reform Commonwealth-State financial relations to ensure that the States have a better guaranteed source of income because, at the end of the day, we are the main service providers. I have this debate often with my Federal colleagues. I am sure that the member for Lee has had the old discussion about certain issues with our Federal colleague,

the member for Port Adelaide, whose opinion of the State Government's ability to manage its finances is well known to me.

Whilst sometimes he is correct, the situation is that our Federal colleagues must accept that, as long as the States are required to continue to provide more services, they must have access to a greater share of income. At the end of the day we know the old trick: the Commonwealth Government continually cuts its payments to the States. That has made it easy for the Commonwealth Government to balance its budget. The current Federal Treasurer, Peter Costello, is no different. In fact, we have the ludicrous situation where we are still paying for Peter Costello's black hole—a silly agreement to which the former Premier and Treasurer signed up—even though it has disappeared and, in fact, he will have a big surplus. That is the nonsense of the Commonwealth-State financial arrangements but, at the end of the day, the Commonwealth holds all the power. We are simply mendicants on our yearly trip to Canberra.

**Mr Meier:** That was not what Federation was meant to do, was it? Federation was not meant to create a situation where the Federal Government was holding all the power.

**Mr FOLEY:** I would not disagree with the member for Goyder at all. I look forward to his contribution on the record as against his comments by way of interjection. That is a useful point for debate. In this Parliament I believe that we should all put our political allegiances to one side and act in the interests of the State. We would thereby argue effectively together which would mean that somehow—certainly by the time I am Treasurer—we will not have to go cap in hand to the annual Premiers' Conference in Canberra, but I suspect that that tradition will continue.

The Opposition supports the Bill. That does not necessarily mean that we agree with or like the taxation measures. They are very painful, very hurtful and most unfortunate but, in the tradition of the Labor Party, we accept the Government's right to spend the money. By agreeing to pass the Appropriation Bill, we clearly must then support the Government in the mechanisms by which it chooses to raise the money. Members should not, by those words, believe that we either like or support what the Government is doing. However, we acknowledge the right of this Government to raise taxes and revenue as it sees fit. The electorate can judge, in 3½ years, the merits or popularity of the Government's decisions. We will certainly be explaining and reminding the electorate of the full impact of the severe taxation impost put on it by this Government.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Before calling on the member for Taylor, I suggest to the member for Ross Smith that, if he wishes to carry out a conversation with someone in the gallery, he might like to join the person in the gallery.

**Ms WHITE (Taylor):** My colleague the member for Hart, the shadow Treasurer, has effectively detailed to the House the Labor Party's stance on this Bill, and so I will not detain the House long. It is not my intention to make a long speech, but I want to place on the record the impact the taxing measures outlined in this Bill will have on my own electorate and constituents.

This Bill contains three measures and, while two out of those three measures will impact on all South Australians, they will have a particularly hard felt impact on people in my electorate. The first measure is the increase of stamp duty on motor registration. The current \$15 charge will increase to \$60 from September this year. The second measure is an

increase on all forms of insurance. The current 8 per cent levy on all forms of general insurance will increase to 11 per cent. That increase has applied to all policies since 1 June 1998. As I indicated, these measures apply to all South Australians. However, an increase of some \$45 for stamp duty on motor registration will have a significant effect on my constituents. People struggle in my electorate. Indeed, many struggle when there is an impost of \$5 on a charge, but a \$45 hit in one go will mean financial hardship to many of my constituents. We as members of Parliament can afford that sort of money. Many South Australians—

**Mr Wright:** Speak for yourself!

**Ms WHITE:** The member for Lee says that I should speak for myself. Many South Australians can afford a tax increase of that order. However, many South Australians living in my electorate—and those of many of my Labor colleagues as well—will find it very difficult to cope with that sort of impost. I thought it was important in this debate to register that these measures will be painful for a number of South Australians and for a very large number of my constituents.

**Mr WRIGHT (Lee):** I also register my concern on behalf of the electorate of Lee. As the previous speaker, the member for Taylor, said, it needs to be highlighted very strongly that this budget and these stamp duty measures will affect the people who can least afford them. It will make very little difference to the way of life of people who can afford them. The member for Taylor was correct—I said somewhat facetiously that she should speak for herself—in saying that these stamp duty increases will have very little effect on members of Parliament and other members of the community who can afford them. However, for the greater percentage of the population these are massive tax imposts. It is a massive increase when we talk about something going from \$15 to \$60. It goes without saying that this is a regressive tax and that it will affect most those people who can least afford it.

This Government must be charged with the responsibility of bringing down a taxation budget which, obviously, will make it far more difficult for people living in the working class suburbs of South Australia to meet these payments. As the shadow Treasurer quite correctly and succinctly outlined, we will not oppose these measures. It is the right of Government to bring down a budget within which it thinks it can work, but I challenge and highlight to the Government that not very much lateral thinking has gone into the way in which it has gone about this process. It has simply made significant stamp duty increases with very little lateral thinking.

There is no breadth or depth in the Government's thinking. For the Government simply to increase stamp duty on motor registration from \$15 to \$60 is a very easy way of going about its responsibility. From now right through to the next election, in any way we can, Opposition members will highlight to members of our communities who can least afford to pay this stamp duty increase who put on the increase, how it was put on and why it was put on. Obviously at a State and national level we are living in very difficult times.

The shadow Treasurer also outlined very correctly the way in which the Federal Government operates. Indeed some of its predecessors, from both major political Parties, have operated in this way for many years, and I imagine that they will continue to do so. It does them no credit because, to have a workable and meaningful system, the States must operate, and to operate we have to receive our correct allocation of

funding. I suggest to all members that the present Federal Treasurer and Federal Government are behaving in a very arrogant way with respect to the sharing of taxation revenue Australia-wide.

My few comments refer specifically to the many people whom I have the responsibility and the honour to represent in the western suburbs electorate of Lee. Many of those people come from working class areas such as Hendon, Seaton, Royal Park and Semaphore Park, and in those areas these stamp duty increases are massive hikes for individuals who can least afford to find \$60 for the stamp duty on their motor registration and increases of approximately 40 per cent on stamp duty on all other forms of insurance. For the majority of the population, whether they live in metropolitan or country areas, these are significant increases which will hurt people and which will cut into their budgets and make it much more difficult for them to go about their daily lives. For that reason, I think that these stamp duty increases have not been well thought through, and it is disappointing that the Government's increase in stamp duty will most affect those people who can least afford it.

**Mr CLARKE (Ross Smith):** In respect of the criticisms of the Government's move by the member for Lee and the member for Taylor, I simply say 'Ditto.' However, I have a specific concern. I have already addressed this matter with the Minister, but I am not sure whether or not this question falls under this Bill because it relates to the savage increase in registration costs for taxi drivers. The impost has been doubled from \$1 000 in round terms to \$2 000 in 12 months.

It is my understanding from a number of representations that were made to me by taxi drivers who are constituents of mine that, until 1994 or thereabouts, there used to be a common registration date for taxis of 31 March each year. That has changed, so taxis can be registered at any time of the year. In other words, the renewal date is movable, but a number of taxis still have a common renewal date of 31 March. On 31 March this year, if those taxi drivers had the wherewithal, they could have renewed their registration for 12 months for \$1 000. However, many taxi drivers, such as those in my electorate, who are doing it hard in terms of getting fares, can only afford to renew their registration every three months.

They already pay a premium because they pay quarterly rather than yearly, but now they have been hit with a double whammy: because they do not have the money to renew their registration for a full year, in effect, for nine months they will pay the new \$2 000 rate, whereas someone who was more financial than they and paid for a year up front have got nine months registration at the old rate.

This seems to me to be fairly inconsistent and most regressive on people who are doing it hard. These are small business people who have had their registration rates doubled without any warning at all. Then there are those who through circumstances, good management or sheer luck are not in debt to the bank and paying off their taxi and who can renew their licence for a full 12 months. They are getting away with nine months at the old rate and the impoverished poor cab driver doing it hard is being lumbered with the new rate from day one. I therefore ask the Minister: what consideration was given to allowing those taxi drivers who are able to renew their licence for only three months at a time a more averaging out system so they were not so heavily disadvantaged compared with someone who was more financially flush than they and who was able to renew it for 12 months in advance?

I will ask a couple more quick questions in Committee. I will raise my queries during the second reading stage and the Minister may be able to address them as I go. I share with my colleagues my concern about the increase in insurance premiums from \$8 to \$11 in every hundred. That is a 27 per cent hike overnight. It is not a bad take. Clause 3(b) provides:

By striking out paragraph (ab) of item 15 of the exemptions from the *Component payable in respect of registration* appearing under the item commencing 'APPLICATION to register a motor vehicle or APPLICATION to transfer the registration of a motor vehicle';

As far as I can see, the principal Act, in relation to exemptions from the payment of stamp duties, provides in section 15A(b):

Any application to register a motor vehicle where the applicant satisfies the Registrar of Motor Vehicles that immediately before the date on which the application is made the motor vehicle is registered in the name of the applicant and not in the name of any other person under the law of the Commonwealth or . . .

And it goes on. What does the Bill do with respect to those exemptions? Are you taking something from people that they have previously enjoyed and, if so, how much, and what type of people are we talking about? Likewise, with respect to 15A(c)—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Chair suggests to the House that, if questions need to be asked with this type of detail, it is much better to ask them in Committee. It is rather unfair on the Minister to be attempting to answer questions in this way. General points can usually be made in the second reading stage but if there are specific questions it is much better to ask them in Committee. I presume the House does not wish to go into Committee, but I think it would be better to do that. Has the member for Ross Smith concluded his remarks?

**Mr CLARKE:** I am happy with that, Sir, and I therefore conclude.

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training):** I thank all members for their contribution. The Government has had to increase our revenue from taxation because of economic impacts and also because of our budgetary situation. I concur with the member for Hart in that I am looking forward to Federal taxation reform. I hope it delivers a better deal to the States, because over the past 10 to 15 years we have seen a reduction in Commonwealth grants to States in real terms and, as a result, there has been greater pressure on State budgets in terms of raising revenue to pay for education, health and other services that we as a State Government have to deliver.

Further to that, as the member for Hart indicated, the Federal Court decision on alcohol and tobacco taxation and the fact that States can no longer collect that money (it must be collected by the Commonwealth) has added increased pressure to our State budget in terms of revenue. So, again, our tax base has been narrowed from what it was before and it delivers to us fewer areas from which we can raise taxation revenue to pay for the services that we deliver to the community.

To give members some idea, in regard to general insurance, it means that, with an increase to 11 per cent, we will be second on the list in terms of the level of taxation applied in this area. New South Wales sits at 11.5 per cent, Victoria and the ACT at 10 per cent and all other jurisdictions at 8 per cent. So, we have come from the lowest level to the second highest. Also, as the member for Hart indicated, the State Government still has to forward to the Federal Govern-

ment \$24 million to fix the black hole that was there when the current Federal Government took over, with increased pressure on our State budget.

I note the comments of the member for Taylor and the member for Lee in terms of the effect on constituents. It will have an impact on constituents and, as the Premier said, we have not walked away from that. It is a budget in which we have had to increase taxation, and I recognise that there will be increased pressure on household budgets to cover that. However, I have not heard any suggestions from members opposite as to what else we might do in terms of covering the money required to pay for services if taxation is not raised.

*Mr Foley interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY:** You do not have too many options. Subsequent to her speech, the member for Taylor asked how third party insurance premiums in other States and Territories compare with those in South Australia. It is not quite as clear cut as that: it becomes a bit convoluted. However, the figures are as follows: the current compulsory third party insurance premium in South Australia is \$225, and that will rise to \$243; in New South Wales it is \$399 for a family and \$399 for a business; in Victoria it is \$275; in Queensland it is \$230; in Western Australia (under the proposed change to the legislation) it is \$214 for a family and \$214 for a business; in Tasmania it is \$226; in the Northern Territory it is \$235; and in the ACT it is \$322.

Regarding the compulsory levy on motor vehicle third party insurance (\$15 to \$60), all the additional funds that are raised from this will go into the Hospitals Fund, as the honourable member would know. In New South Wales it is \$43, in Victoria it is \$28 and in Tasmania there is a \$6 levy on motor vehicle third party insurance. I am fairly sure—but I would stand to be corrected on this—that the sum in Western Australia is \$55 now: I believe that it was raised in the budget that was brought down in May. So, it does put us at the higher end of the third party premium scale.

I thank all members for their contribution in this debate and I look forward to answering questions in Committee.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3.

**Mr CLARKE:** I have already flagged the Minister regarding the points that I raised during the second reading debate concerning taxidrivers. I will not belabour those points unless the Minister wants me to explain further.

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY:** The honourable member is correct in saying that if a taxidriver paid a 12 month licence fee at the end of March that person would receive nine months at the old rate and three months at the new rate as against a taxidriver who renews his licence on a three monthly basis who would pay three months at the old rate and nine months at the new rate. Unfortunately, with the introduction of the electronic lodgment system of licensing, it is not possible to average that fee increase across the board to make a lower fee. If we did that, we would have to come back in 12 months to change the legislation and reinstate the full fee.

So, in answer to the honourable member's question as to whether a system could be introduced to average out this fee increase, I am advised that that cannot be done. When the fee for a passport or a driver's licence is changed, if you are lucky and the renewal falls before that date your licence will continue for five years at the lower rate. However, if you are not lucky, obviously you will have to pay the higher rate. I can imagine the cost involved for struggling taxidrivers who



renew their licence every three months and who have the additional burden of having to pay four administration fees each year.

**Mr CLARKE:** The problem as I see it is that, for purposes of administrative convenience, the Government is saying to struggling cab drivers, who can only afford to renew their registration every three months, that they must bear the burden. I am happy for the Minister to take this question on notice. I tried to obtain some information recently through the Registrar of Motor Vehicles. First, I had difficulty getting through the switchboard. When I finally got through the switchboard and asked for the Statistics Officer, I discovered that that person was engaged on the telephone. I then left a message for the Statistics Officer to phone me back, but that did not happen. I do not know whether that person even got the message.

That is the problem with these newfangled answering systems that the Government and private industry have introduced: no-one can get hold of the person to whom they wish to speak. I am sure that the Registrar of Motor Vehicles would have statistics on the number of cab licences and how many are renewed quarterly, half-yearly or yearly. If, for example, the Motor Accident Commission says that it must double the premiums to get X number of dollars to cover the costs, I would have thought that it would be a relatively minor arithmetic calculation for the department to work out how to average that over all cab drivers over the next 12 months. The computer may not be programmed to do that right now, but I do not believe that it is beyond the wit of the department to do that, because those cab drivers who are struggling the most are subsidising the lucky few who can afford to pay registration fees up front.

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY:** I do not have the details on that. It may well be involved in the programming of the computer, and I will see whether I can get an answer for the honourable member.

Clause passed.

Clause 4.

**Ms WHITE:** Clause 4(3) provides that the third party stamp duty increase will take effect from 1 September 1998. The Minister's second reading speech states that this new charge 'will not apply to applications where the term of the registration is to take effect before 1 September 1998'. What is the starting date for these new fees? Could people avoid this coming year's stamp duty increase of \$45 if they renew their registration before 1 September? By way of example, if their registration is to start, say, on 3 September and they rush in before 1 September and pay it, would they avoid the \$45 increase?

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY:** The starting date is 1 September, so any registration that falls due on or after that date will be charged at the new rate. The Registrar of Motor Vehicles sends out accounts six weeks prior to the due date for payment to allow people time to budget for that. For example, if your car registration falls due on 2 September, you will receive a renewal for registration notice in about the third week of July, which would give you ample time to plan for the payment of that. Thus, 1 September was deemed to be the starting date. In answer to the second part of the honourable member's question, if somebody's car registration falls due on 2 or 3 September but they pay it on 31 August, they would still have to pay the extra \$45, because they would be billed for that six weeks before the due date, and they cannot bring forward that date.

**Ms WHITE:** If a person went in on 30 or 31 August, cancelled their motor registration and paid for a new motor registration, would they avoid the extra \$45?

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY:** I am not sure of that detail; I will have to take that question on notice. If, for instance, they went in on the last day, given the billing structure of the Department of Transport, I am not sure as to how quickly the department would be able to cancel one vehicle registration and then register another vehicle. I will have to seek an answer from the Department of Transport.

Clause passed.

Title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

### GAMING MACHINES (GAMING TAX) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.  
(Continued from 28 May. Page 986.)

**Mr FOLEY (Hart):** This is another Government Bill to provide revenue for the budget. From the outset I say that, consistent with my earlier contribution, the Opposition may not agree with or like certain taxation measures, and some on my side dislike many measures in this Bill. As with gaming, people have various views. But we will be giving the Government support for its legislation, consistent with the principle that in this case this money is required to fund this year's budget. However, I want to make a few comments about what the Government has done with the gaming tax, because it is important that we think seriously and consider the impact of these taxation moves.

The Government, as we know, has now gone to the well in terms of the pokie tax revenue base twice in those four years. I understand—and the Minister may be able to clarify this in the Committee stage—that the revenue expected for this financial year or projected for the next financial year is upwards of \$174 million, well up from the \$130 million-plus envisaged only a few years ago. The Government has increased a number of the rates: it has taken the middle rate for hotels from 40 to 43.5 per cent, and the top rate up 5 per cent from 45 to 50 per cent. The Government advises us that those measures will give it about \$10.9 million in a full year. However, given the way that this Government seems unable to estimate the revenue flow from pokies, it probably would not be a bad thing to add a few percentage points on top of that, in terms of the likely final outcome.

That is not a criticism of the Government: the money just continues to flow in, and it is very difficult to pin down that final figure. In this Bill the Government has provided a concession to clubs, whereby we see a reduction in the rate of taxation for those licensed clubs that have poker machines. I want to ask some questions during the Committee stage about that, because in my discussions (as shadow Treasurer) with the club industry I was not convinced by the argument that simply giving licensed clubs a lower rate of taxation will automatically mean that some clubs will do better financially than they have done before. Having had vast personal experience with sporting clubs, I have a fair idea of where increased profits of licensed clubs tend to go.

If it happens to be a club that is playing football, Australian Rules or whatever, where player payments are involved, it is not unreasonable to expect that some of that money might find its way into player payments—not that all clubs would necessarily do that—

**Mr Conlon:** Port Power wouldn't do that.

**Mr FOLEY:** Port Power wouldn't do it, but other football clubs might. I would not want to name any other clubs that might.

**Mr Conlon:** South Adelaide.

**Mr FOLEY:** No, I think the board of South Adelaide would manage the club much better than I am suggesting: it is very professional and would not see those moneys go into the bottom line. The point I am making is that I put this to the representatives of the licensed clubs and they agreed that simply reducing taxation revenue to licensed clubs will not automatically mean a healthier future for those clubs unless it is accompanied with some structure. The initial discussions I had with the representatives of the licensed clubs was that the trade-off—the money returned to them by way of reduced taxation—would, indeed, go into some form of accredited training or industry support to improve the management expertise available to clubs.

On that basis I thought it was a reasonable proposition. So, I would be looking forward to the Minister's expanding on the situation in terms of the trade-off with the licensed clubs. Having said that, I know it is the Government's tax base. Good luck to the licensed clubs if they have been able to negotiate this trade-off: I hope we will see that return of some \$2 million put to the use that was originally envisaged by the clubs, and I have no doubt that will be the case.

We need to look closely at the pokie tax increase. We now have 50 per cent of all hotels in South Australia affected by this increased taxation. The Opposition has been advised that in excess of 80 per cent of suburban hotels are affected. One must ask the question: who is addicted to poker machines? Is it the poor old punter or is it, indeed, this Government? Members must understand—and it applies equally to the Opposition and the current Government—that, if you increase the taxation take from pokies and use that money to fund recurrent expenditure, you are simply hooked on poker machine revenue. The Government may well be espousing that poker machines are evil, as this Premier has tended to do from time to time, really wishing, in hindsight, that we did not have them. Other members might think, 'How can we wind back the level of poker machines?' One thing is certain: as long as recurrent expenditure is hooked to poker machine income to its present extent, a decision to cut back poker machines will not be easy and, indeed, will be impossible.

If the Government were to increase the take on poker machine income to the extent it has, perhaps it should have put that money into debt retirement or something that was not of a recurrent nature and, therefore, it would have more policy teeth in the future if it was trying to suggest that it would like to see a winding back in the level of poker machine activity.

As shadow Treasurer, I believe that many businesses in this State have been crunched quite severely as a result of these taxation increases. The Premier and the Treasurer have been very much at pains to tell the public that this has not been an anti-business budget and that these tax measures are not anti-business. It seems to me that the only level of activity we are seeing in our economy at present is, indeed, in the hotel-gaming-leisure service industry, and the one sector that seems to be showing signs of economic, robust activity they tax as hard as they can. If you are going to tax somebody, why not pick the industry performing reasonably well! I think we will now see a tapering off of activity and many investment decisions by a number of hoteliers put on hold, if not cancelled completely.

That is an important point. At the end of the day, this Parliament has voted for poker machines to be legal in this State. This Parliament has given the signal to the industry to go for it. Along with obvious regulations and from time to time a watching brief and some changes, it has effectively said to industry, 'Go for it.' Having given those investment signals, it is now changing the rules every 18 months or two years. We saw much debate three or four years ago with former Treasurer Baker to increase taxation. A trade-off was done with the industry that the Government would not increase taxes at that point in time providing a guaranteed level of income was provided by the industry. From memory, that figure was about \$146 million or \$148 million. Could I ask if the Caucus meeting going on at present could conduct their business outside the Chamber or speak a little more quietly.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I would suggest that that is probably a very good idea.

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr FOLEY:** Yes, you are, actually. I am trying to listen with one ear, but it is very difficult to concentrate.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I suggest that the member for Hart get on with it.

**Mr FOLEY:** Thank you, Sir. The deal done with the hotel industry was that a certain level of revenue would be raised. That revenue target was not met in that year and, as we now know, a commitment was entered into by the hotel industry that they would pay it back over a six year period. What we have seen is that that was about the only year they did not reach the targets that were expected. In fact, they have exceeded that each year. They are now upwards of \$170 million projected for the next financial year, according to some evidence given by Treasury officers to the Social Development Committee of the Parliament.

What this Government is doing is increasing the taxation measures but leaving the surcharge in place. So, effectively it is ripping up the deal that it did with the hotel industry, whacking up taxation levels quite significantly and keeping the surcharge. I think that is pretty rotten of the Government. It is a very rotten measure, and I think the Government has been very cruel to the hotel industry to, on the one hand, do a deal and then, within a couple of years, rip up that deal and still increase revenue to the extent that it is.

When I put the question to the Treasurer at the time in the Estimates Committee, 'How can you justify the continuation of a .5 per cent surcharge when you had told the industry that that was there because we have agreed not to raise your taxes? As far as this legislation is concerned, you should not have the surcharge,' his answer was simple. 'Look, we have framed our budget. If the Labor Party wants to knock off the surcharge'—which I might say was a tempting option for us—'we would simply increase the taxation rate. So, instead of having 43.5 or 50 per cent for the two bands, we might make it 44.5 and 51 or 52 per cent for the top rate to get the same revenue.'

So, the Treasurer was simply saying, 'If the Labor Party wants to knock off the surcharge, we will come through and get it on the other end.' It was a circular argument and showed that, as far as business is concerned, you cannot trust this Government; you cannot cut a deal with this Government. You cannot, in good faith, deal with this Government when it comes to issues such as imposts on business. I think it is important for the business community to understand that.

Whilst the AHA has been vocal in its opposition and concerns about this, I have not heard too much come from the

Chamber of Commerce and Industry which seems to be quite happy with this budget. On the night the budget was brought down it was obviously complimentary but also accepting of the taxation measures. Commerce seems to be saying to this Parliament, 'We are pretty happy with you just whacking up the rates of taxation in our only growth area in the economy,' although I doubt that that is really the sentiment of that particular sector.

There are many people who oppose poker machines, who probably do not care so much and who think that we should tax hoteliers to the extent that we are. Let us have a look at this debate, because at the end of the day it is all relative. The Government can continue to increase taxation. Far be it from me to give an economics lecture to a former member of the Government-funded Centre for Economic Studies, but the likely reality is that if we increase taxation the hoteliers will not necessarily take a reduction in their profit levels: they will adjust their investment patterns accordingly. If you make it difficult for business to invest, the fallout of that is jobs. In recent years, this is the only sector where we have seen jobs growth.

I know of a number of examples—and I understand that tonight one of my colleagues will give at least one example—of hotels that face that situation. I know of many hotels in this State, a number of which are in my electorate, that have put investment decisions on hold. There may well be some hoteliers who will go broke, because there are hoteliers who have borrowed money from the banks on the understanding of a certain regime within which they could operate. They have seen the ball game change. How does a hotelier go back to their bank manager and explain that this year they have to pay in taxation \$20 000 or \$30 000 more than they budgeted for when they took out the loan?

There is another level of hurt that will occur in the community, that is, at the community level. I know of many hoteliers, as would all of us, who provide funding to community groups and to sporting clubs in our electorates. When it comes time to pay the extra \$20 000 or \$30 000 in tax, do you think that will come from their profit, or will they take it off their investment decision or the local football club, softball club, church group or whatever? It is obvious what will happen. Obviously, there are hoteliers who may not be as generous as others in the community. As part of a clever business strategy most hoteliers will always invest in the community. As Governments, we have to understand that there is a limit to any business's capacity to pay tax. I would think that a top marginal tax rate of 50 per cent is awfully high.

There will be the argument—and some of my colleagues may well share this view—that we should try to tax the living daylights out of the hotel barons. There is no doubt that many hoteliers are doing very well indeed out of poker machines. But that happens in a mixed economy. It is not for Governments or Parliaments to pitch the level of taxation so that nobody can make a windfall gain from the economy. Of course it will happen, and it should be allowed to happen. Governments should try to restrict that where they can but, equally, hotel operators who are very successful and highly profitable should be given the room to do that. But if we are getting 50¢ in every dollar from them I think that is a fair cop. It is fair to say that those significant hotel groupings in this State that are doing particularly well are probably—and not necessarily the case in all instances—those who are investing more in terms of taking significant capital investment decisions. I can think of some hotels in the western

suburbs which might be categorised as the hotel barons and which are indeed investing many millions of dollars in their facilities.

We have to be a bit fair dinkum about this: if we want some large hotel operators to reinvest, we have to give them the incentive to do so. One question I look forward to the Minister answering is how our taxation levels compare with other States. Let us remember that we are not just competing in our internal economy in South Australia but we are dealing with the national economy when it comes to investment decisions. Why would somebody invest in hotels in this State if, indeed, there was a better rate of return on offer in other States? We have to be conscious of how our taxation levels mix with other States, because there is a relationship between our rates of taxation and the patterns of investment flow that some of these operators will make.

At the end of the day, there will be some members even on my own side who will not agree with my comments but, as shadow Treasurer, they are a reasonable summary of what I think are the impacts. As I said, we will be supporting these measures on the principle that we will support the Government's revenue raising initiatives, given the support we are giving to the budget. However, it does not mean we agree with them—we think they are wrong and are bad policy. In respect of the surcharge, it is downright rotten when it comes to the way in which the Government has treated the industry. Only a few weeks ago during the Estimates Committee the Treasurer said that, if we knock the surcharge off, the Government will pick it up by increasing one of the rates any way so, whatever pleasure or joy one might get from knocking off the surcharge, should that be the will of the Lower House, clearly the Government will adjust the rates accordingly, which means that the industry will end up paying.

At the end of the day every hotelier must understand—and I know my colleagues will ensure that they do in respect of hotels in their electorate—that the Liberal Government is not a friend of the hotel industry. Indeed, this Liberal Government is hostile to the hotel and hospitality industry in this State and, when it comes to the next State election, I have no doubt that hoteliers throughout metropolitan and country South Australia will understand clearly where the political Parties of this State stand when it comes to the hotel industry. The Labor Party stands in support of hotels, while the Liberal Party is hostile to hotels. The Labor Party is supportive of a sound investment climate and regime for the hotel industry, while the Liberal Party is not—

*Mr Brokenshire interjecting:*

**Mr FOLEY:** The member for Mawson can be hostile to the hotel industry and can take great delight in jacking up the rates of taxation for hotels in his electorate.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I have never been hostile to the hotel industry, and I support it.

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

**Mr FOLEY:** The member for Mawson has been caught out. He is hostile to hotels because he is supportive of this taxation increase. Whoever the Labor candidate is in Mawson at the next State election, that candidate will make it very clear to the hotels who stood up for them and who is a friend of hotels in that electorate. It is not their Liberal member of Parliament.

**Mr Brokenshire:** That's a fake statement, and you know it.

**Mr FOLEY:** I take exception to the member for Mawson's saying that I have made a fake statement.

*Mr Brokenshire interjecting:*

**Mr FOLEY:** I look forward to the member for Mawson crossing the floor and voting against the taxation increase.

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr CONLON:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order, if the loudmouth opposite would desist for a moment. Not only are interjections out of order at all times but, if they are to be entertained by this House, one would assume that the member would take his proper seat.

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

**Mr FOLEY:** The bottom line is this: the Opposition opposes this measure but, given my earlier comment that we will give the Government its budget, if you have decided to take money from the hoteliers of this State in the hostile manner in which you are acting, that is your decision.

*Mr Brokenshire interjecting:*

**Mr FOLEY:** The member for Mawson gets a bit excited.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Mawson might like to make a contribution later in the debate.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**Mr FOLEY:** Even the member for Colton is getting a little excited.

*Mr Brokenshire interjecting:*

**Mr FOLEY:** Good luck to him.

**Mr Condous:** Answer his question.

**Mr FOLEY:** I am not the Minister being questioned.

**Mr Condous:** Of course you will not reduce it, and you know it.

**Mr FOLEY:** The Labor Party is amused by the interjections of the member for Colton. We look forward to his voting pattern in this Parliament on a number of issues relating to taxation, shopping hours, and whatever else. We like you, Steve. We know that you are not running at the next election, but the member for Mawson will be out there knocking on the front doors of his hotels and making it very clear who was and who was not hostile to hotels in this State Parliament.

*Mr Brokenshire interjecting:*

**Mr FOLEY:** It is not a threat; I am just stating fact. It is an unfortunate move and one with which we are very disappointed, but I will allow hoteliers to make up their mind. I believe the hoteliers, together with their association, the AHA, need no convincing now as to who is a friend of its industry—an industry which is about jobs. When I look at my electorate today and the number of young people employed in the hotel industry, I reckon it is terrific. I know there are likely now to be fewer young people employed in the future because of this very nasty tax impost and the ripping up of the deal that this Government has done.

I recap: bad policy; a Government that the hotel industry can no longer trust; and a Government that is happy to pillage hotels to prop up its budget and its wilful spending of public moneys, as we have seen evidenced over many years. We will make it very clear to the hoteliers that, when it comes to trust, a degree of honesty and the delivery of good public policy, they can rely on the Labor Party and not the Liberal Party. The Liberal Party is hostile to hoteliers, as evidenced by this legislation.

**Ms WHITE (Taylor):** I want to make a brief contribution in light of the comments made by my colleague the member for Hart, the shadow Treasurer. This Bill hits an industry of

much importance to this State: the hotel industry. Two sectors of the business community copped it in the neck in this year's budget: the taxi industry, and I and many of my colleagues have talked about the huge, cruel impost on that business sector; and the hotel industry. The investments made by hoteliers in recent years as a result of changes with respect to poker machines in hotels, and the money the industry has invested in this State which has created jobs in electorates such as mine—where jobs are pretty hard to come by—have been significant, as they have been significant in some of the licensed clubs in recent years.

The investment in those industries is affected each time the Government imposes a tax increase. This particular tax affects 50 per cent of all hotels in this State. It is a significant tax increase: a 3½ per cent tax increase for hotels in the middle tier and a 5 per cent increase for hotels in the top tier. Hotels in the middle tier will experience an increase in tax on revenue from 40 per cent to 43.5 per cent, and the tax on revenue for hotels in the top tier will increase from 45 per cent to 50 per cent. So, at a time when the Government is talking much about the need to promote investment in industries in South Australia, one of the best performing industries, the hotel industry, is being hit most severely in this budget.

The Bill contains several measures, one of which effects changes in taxation for licensed clubs. The Salisbury North Football Club is a fairly large club within my electorate. It has had much to say and has been lobbying the Government strongly, I believe, for a tax change to help ease the burden for those types of business. This club is an enormous success story in my electorate. A few years back it employed one or two people, and it now employs more than 20 full-time people, as well as a huge number of people who are employed on a part-time basis. The investment in the local community has been huge. That club (as do many other licensed clubs in South Australia) contributes greatly financially to supporting other unlicensed clubs that do not have poker machine revenue, welfare organisations and even local State schools that are experiencing cutbacks in funding. The Salisbury North Football Club and other clubs are even donating to schools to help their fundraising. So, it is contributing greatly to very needy causes within the community.

Hotels have taken a little flack in the media at times in relation to their contribution to the community in terms of the revenue that some of the hotels receive from poker machines. I put on record and tell members about an act of generosity that occurred at the end of last year on the part of half a dozen hotels in the northern region which helped our local community greatly. There is in the northern suburbs an organisation called SCOAP (Salisbury Community Organisations Against Poverty) which does much year round to help people in financial trouble in the northern suburbs. However, at Christmas time it distributes hampers to families who have been identified by welfare agencies as needing support.

Last year I was involved in the fundraising effort for SCOAP. A lot of businesses have been finding it very difficult to donate to any organisation and less and less are they able to give to help out community projects. However, last year six northern hotels each donated a significant sum of money to that organisation. This resulted in hundreds of hampers being distributed in the northern suburbs which could not have been distributed otherwise. So, those hotels and clubs are helping our community directly, as well as creating jobs and investing in our community. A tax impost on them affects their ability to do that. As my colleague the

member for Hart said, when such tax imposts are felt by those hotels, the sorts of efforts that helped hundreds of families in the northern suburbs last year in terms of distribution of hampers at Christmas time are the things that are cut, and that has a direct impact.

Apart from the huge impost that this taxing regime will have on hotels, I must question the Government's strategy and the appropriateness of the message that it sends to business, given that the goalposts were set in place but have now been shifted. As my colleague the member for Hart mentioned, the Bill provides for a continuation of the .5 per cent surcharge to recover the revenue shortfall that the Government is claiming from 1996-97.

I am pleased that it was pointed out earlier that the Government has done pretty well out of poker machines in revenue to the State, apart from that year. That .5 per cent surcharge was part of a deal that the Government brokered with the hotels industry and its association. The hotels have kept their side of the bargain but the Government has decided to increase the tax, tear up the bargain and keep the .5 per cent surcharge on hotels. The clear message is that if you deal with this Liberal Government and you give one inch or give up anything in exchange for another measure, you can be fairly certain that what you give up will remain in perpetuity. That is the message from this Liberal Government.

As my colleague said, this Government is hostile to the hotels industry; it is hostile to the huge investment that that industry has placed in South Australia; and it has decided to increase taxes significantly by up to 50 per cent for the highest tier of hotels. That will have an impact not only in terms of jobs and investment but also in terms of the contribution that the industry makes to the community.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE (Mawson):** I will not dwell too long on this Bill, but there are a few points that I would like to get on the public record, not the least of which is to correct the false representations that the member for Hart made against me with respect to my commitment to and understanding and appreciation of what the hotel industry does economically and socially, as the member for Taylor pointed out in her address.

With respect to this amendment, I am delighted to see that representations that many of us in this House have made in recent times have taken effect. I confess that I have been arguing and debating for a long time that clubs have a special case and should have a reduction in their rate of tax with respect to gaming machines. I am especially delighted to see that a club with which I am extremely proud to be associated—the Hackham Sports and Social Club—and which showed some initiative by bringing poker machines into the club to generate income to support the sporting bodies that are involved with the club, and hopefully in time to improve the general facilities of the complex, will be many thousands of dollars better off as a result of the Liberal Government's decision on this matter.

The club works hard and it has a lot of volunteers. Every dollar of profit goes back in to developing the club, and this means that young people are being given an opportunity to get off the streets and become involved with good peer groups, as well as to get fit and healthy by undertaking sporting activities in the area. I am delighted to see that measure in this Bill.

I want to touch on what the member for Hart said about hotels. I have only four hotels in my electorate. I keep in close contact with them and I would be quite happy to go

around with the Labor candidate when the time comes and introduce that person to the publicans, because I work closely with those publicans. Indeed, I have actually represented relevant Ministers arguments to support and enhance economic growth opportunities for quite a few of those publicans in my role as their local member, so they know full well how much I appreciate what they do.

In fact, I am continually in there battling for them, reminding people who kick and knock hotels in the area on an ongoing basis of some of those investments. One close to my office has created 70 full-time and part-time jobs as a result of expansion and development into gaming and associated eating and general hospitality facilities within the hotel. So, they know already how much I support them.

The fact is that it has been only in the past two or three years that the hotel industry has got off its knees. What really kicked the hotel industry and made it bleed nearly to death over the past 10 or 15 years is not what the Liberal Government is doing right now but what both State and Federal Labor Governments did for 11 to 13 years before we came into office. I will cite two examples. The first was when the Hon. Paul Keating and the Hon. Robert Hawke stopped the opportunity of business tax deductions for lunches and business dinners. What did that do to the hotel industry? I will tell you what it did: it saw those in the industry shutting up room after room, putting off people who were working in the hospitality industry, and being put under major stress when trying to meet their bank mortgages and so on.

I say in this House today that, if that Federal Government had not done that, there would be at least 300 000 direct jobs in the hotel industry, plus the value adding effect when it comes to the food industry and so on, that are now not there—and without \$1 being spent on infrastructure. All those rooms, the seats, the ovens, the crockery and so on were already in place. That decision of the Federal Labor Government really made things difficult for the hotel industry.

Then, to top it off, we had the absolute ineptitude of the Bannon Labor Government era. We all know about that. People no longer had a disposable dollar left or, indeed, a job so that they could go to a hotel with their family and buy a meal, a beer or a glass of wine. That was lost because the Labor Government in this State drove South Australia to bankruptcy. That is fact number two. They are the real facts, and they are the reasons why the hotel industry had such difficult times. I would have preferred not to see 50 per cent of the hotels facing an increase in their tax impost—and any tax is an impost on a business. I would have preferred not to see that happen, but the fact remains that, given the two points I have highlighted to this House, we have no other alternative.

I hear all the time that members on the other side want more money for police, teachers and social welfare but they do not want tax increases. Labor Opposition members in this Parliament also come out kicking and screaming, saying how bad gaming is and so on. They are prepared to kick the hotels when it suits them. They were the ones who did the deal with the hotel industry in the first place, and when it suits them they want to kick the hotel industry and when it does not suit them—

*Mr Foley interjecting:*

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** The member for Hart interjects; I would suggest that he talk to the previous member for Giles. The fact is that this Bill has had to be introduced and these tough decisions made because we have no alternatives. The Opposition shadow Treasury spokesman, who wants to

become a Treasurer one day in a Labor Government, says he can fix all the problems by stopping consultancies. We all know that that is an absolute nonsense, because we know how much was spent on consultancies when they had a much bigger bureaucracy than exists under the current Olsen Government. We also know the sorts of deals that the previous Labor Opposition made when it struck deals with people such as Bruce Guerin, who was side-stepped to the university for five years, because they were inept when it came to advising people like Premier John Bannon. There was full salary of \$140 000 or \$150 000 a year, and we would have to take this guy over again in five years' time and try to place him somewhere. That is the sort of reason why we have had to increase these taxes, and they are the facts. The hotel industry knows that; they are astute business people. I wish them well and look forward to working with and supporting them, but in this case the Government had to make this decision and everybody in South Australia knows it.

**Mr CLARKE (Ross Smith):** Whilst increasing taxation on poker machines in hotels is seen as being very popular in some circles, I ask members here to consider certain facts. This is the third time in just over 13 months that there has been an increase in poker machine taxation, in respect of hotels in particular. And not every hotelier is a pokie baron. I know that it is common in the popular press and certain media circles to try to lump all hotel owners or hotel keepers under the one banner of being a pokie baron. Few are, and those few are doing very well, thank you very much. I will deal with that in more detail later. One would almost get the impression that hotel owners who have poker machines are being treated by some quarters in our community as lepers, or thought of as carrying out a business of ill repute. Let us remember that it was this Parliament that voted in, I think, 1993 or thereabouts, through a conscience vote, to allow poker machines to be introduced into hotels and licensed clubs in South Australia. The operation of poker machines in this State was made legal through a conscience vote of all members of all political Parties in both Houses of Parliament, subject to certain legislative requirements.

We all know of the social effects of poker machines on a number of our fellow citizens. They have been ruinous to some: they have hurt families and have placed significant cost burdens on various welfare agencies. Indeed, some welfare agencies have no doubt lost money as a result of some of their fundraising activities being lost because of revenue that is now going into poker machines. But let us also remember that there are other forms of gambling which do not contribute 1¢ to the Gamblers' Rehabilitation Fund or the Community Benefits Organisation Fund that has been set up as a result of the last lot of legislation, impacting on poker machine taxation, or to the Active Club Grant Program that has been initiated, which seeks to assist a number of sporting clubs throughout South Australia that do not have access to poker machine money. The fact of the matter is that the TAB, the Lotteries Commission and the bookmakers do not contribute to the Gamblers' Rehabilitation Fund or to those other organisations that I have just mentioned.

I also point out that it is very easy for people both within this Parliament and outside to say that every economic ill, every economic downturn or every business failure that we have in this State is due to the introduction of poker machines. That is plainly arrant nonsense, and it should be kept in perspective. We are making hoteliers feel that they are in

a less than reputable business and that they, in fact, ought to pack up their bags and take their investment elsewhere.

I cite an example of a large suburban hotel with which I am acquainted. That hotel owner brought me to his hotel to look at his books. I will not mention the name of the hotel, because that person wants to sell: he wants to get out of the hotel business because he is fed up with the changing of the goalposts, in particular by this Government over the past 13 months, which has seen a significant increase in his taxation imposts. This hotel, without gambling and without the gaming room, as at 30 June last year, was making a loss of \$6 258.77 per week. The front bar trade is almost non-existent these days compared with what it was. This is partly as a result of economic conditions, which have seen people not having the same disposable income to spend in that hotel, or because factories in some of the large working areas have closed, resulting in massive reductions in the work force numbers. There are also the social effects of Government legislation in respect of the introduction of RBTs and the .05 blood alcohol level.

Consequently, if you take into account meals, the front bar trade and the like, and if you exclude gaming machines, this hotel is losing almost \$6 300 a week. This has not been a recent occurrence. The figures for the past three or four years show that, excluding gaming machine operations, the hotel lost between \$5 000 and \$6 500 every week during that period. Clearly, that situation could not have continued for much longer without the hotel closing with the significant loss of a social amenity and, more importantly, jobs in the local area where jobs are scarce.

This hotel has 40 poker machines keeping it afloat. However, as a result of the Government's changing the goalposts on taxation during the past 13 months the hotel has had to pay at least an additional \$170 000 in extra taxes. This Government has cost that hotel \$170 000 over a 13 month period through shifting the goalposts. When he bought the hotel three years ago, he took on a debt of over \$3 million which he is servicing. He has had to go back to the Commonwealth Bank for the second time in 12 months and ask for a debt rescheduling because he now has to pay an extra \$60 000 during the forthcoming year in extra tax and cannot meet his loan repayments. He needs to know whether he will have to go back to the same bank in a further 12 months and again request that he be permitted to reschedule his loan because he cannot afford the repayments due to increased taxation.

This is the degree of uncertainty that this Government has established, not for the so-called pokie barons but for a large suburban hotel such as this. No business can sustain this type of an approach to taxation. It is a knee-jerk reaction: the Government of the day says that it needs some extra money, so it jacks up the tax in a cavalier fashion without taking into account the huge investments that hoteliers have made.

I am not against taxing the windfall profits of hoteliers or such profits gained from any source, but this knee-jerk reaction is not good enough for the type of a hotel that I describe. This is not a pokie baron. This hotel raises tens of thousands of dollars in the Variety Club Bash for charity. It receives endless requests from local schools, football clubs and community organisations in the area because they read in the media that all hotels are pokie barons and have money to spend in the local community. This hotelier is having to cut back on such donations because of the additional taxation imposts that have been placed on him over the past 13 months.

He came into this business three years ago thinking that he knew what the goalposts were, what the taxation regime was, and he worked out his budget accordingly. A number of these so-called pokie barons who own a chain of hotels actually owned their hotels before poker machines were introduced. They might have spent \$1 million upgrading a particular hotel which they quickly recouped from the introduction of poker machines, whereas a person who is just coming into the business will have had to buy a hotel, upgrade it, buy poker machines and get settled. That person faces particular problems.

The stage has been reached where the hotelier to whom I refer does not want to invest in this State any more. If he can sell his hotel, he will pack up his equity in the hotel and, as he has already told me, go to Queensland or New South Wales with that money. He is disgusted with this Government, in particular for the way in which he has been treated. That hotel employs quite a number of locals in my electorate, and in my electorate there are too few jobs.

I also want to raise the issue of the Government's tax threshold of \$945 000, which cuts out at that level. It is probably more appropriate that I raise this matter in Committee but I will just flag it to the Minister: some pokie barons, with multiple hotels, have turnovers well in excess of the \$945 000. Perhaps another taxation threshold could be brought in on those hotels with turnovers of, say, between \$1.2 million and \$1.5 million; perhaps they could have a taxation rate of 60 per cent—and I pluck this figure from the air; it is not based on any research. I would like more information from the Minister on this matter during Committee. If the Minister needs extra money, perhaps he could take it a bit easier on those 80 per cent of hotels that are just making do, as is the case with a suburban hotel which is in the \$945 000 category but the owner of which in no way could be described as being a pokie baron.

Of course, when we take into account these hoteliers and taxation rates, we must not forget that the hoteliers have to pay 36 per cent company tax on any profits they make. The owner of the hotel has not made a profit for the past few years because of his repayments to the Commonwealth Bank for the investment in the hotel. Also, the Minister and his Government is making it increasingly hard for him to repay his debts because they have shifted the goal posts such that it has cost him an additional \$170 000 in tax in 13 months.

I will conclude my remarks by again emphasising to the Minister that he cannot strangle the goose that lays the golden egg. The Minister has effectively sought to do that to many hotel keepers through his taxation hike. He has said that he will not increase other business charges and costs, and spread the burden more fairly across the business community generally. The Minister has picked hoteliers, because he thinks they are a soft target. He must believe the same hype that he reads in the *Advertiser*—that they are all pokie barons and they will not miss having a few extra dollars ripped out of their pockets. Let me assure you, Minister, they do, and they invest heavily in this State. They have invested heavily, and this has provided many people with a lot of work.

I will recapitulate on what I said about some sections of the community wanting to blame poker machines for all the ills we have in society. Poker machines contribute towards it; there is no doubt about it. However, at least the industry puts in money to try to help those people who are addicted to gambling—unlike the State Government, which puts in very little in terms of assisting those very same people. Indeed, it goes out of its way to rip money out of Family and

Community Services and to reduce available funds to those welfare organisations. The hotel and club industry actually puts in money, and it continues to contribute in a variety of ways. It may be that the poker machine industry should never have been introduced into South Australia, but the horse has already bolted. If poker machines are the root of all evil and are the cause of all the massive bankruptcy in this State—as some members of this place believe—then the Government is being derelict in its duty by not banning poker machines outright.

As the member for Hart has already pointed out, this Government is addicted to the income stream from poker machines. I suspect it will be a major feature of our revenue base for many years to come. I do not believe that any State Government of any political persuasion would ever be able to abolish poker machines, given the problems all Parties in this State have experienced in getting money out of the Commonwealth Government, which is shifting some of the burden onto the States.

We will always be faced with that problem, but the Minister has gone too far on this occasion with this group of employers, who have said, 'Enough is enough.' People will not be investing in the hotel industry in this State, which will be disastrous for our tourist industry and for many jobs for young people in our State.

**Ms THOMPSON (Reynell):** I wish to address my remarks both to the situation of the hotels in my electorate and the impact this tax will have on them and to what I see as the Government's confused reasoning in this area. Its policy direction, other than to raise money, is far from clear. We have heard a number of speeches both before and after the election from various members of the Government, notably the Premier, indicating that they wished that pokies had never been introduced. We have heard a number of people talking about the impact on small business, and we have also heard of the social evils that result when people indulge in playing pokies in the same way as they indulge in any form of gambling to an extent that they cannot afford.

However, what I have not seen any evidence of in the budget or in any of the measures talked about is the way in which the Government might be using some of the revenue from the pokies to assist in the restructure of the small retailers who seem to have been affected by the change in expenditure patterns as people have chosen to use their discretionary funds for gaming instead of for purchases. That is all very technical, but what it really comes down to is that the Government is not doing anything to help small business adjust if, indeed, small business is being affected by pokies; nor is it doing anything to curb the use of poker machines, if it believes that this is indeed the root of all evil.

Governments have used price as a means of trying to affect consumption patterns when alcohol and cigarette consumption are involved. It has long been a tradition to look to those sources for extra revenue, but it has also been argued that one of the reasons for doing so is that we know that the excessive consumption of alcohol and any consumption of cigarettes is detrimental to the individual's health and that the community carries a large cost as a result of excessive consumption. But we do not see anything happening in the area of pokies in the way of price control or anything else that will make playing pokies any less attractive to those whom it might be harming. The only measures that we have seen in this area came at the initiative of the hotels themselves, with

the support of the Liquor Licensing Commission, by way of introducing education and banning facilities.

To me, the Government's approach in this area involving pokies is quite confused. We recognise the need for a broad taxation base, because the Government needs to do important things with the money it expends on behalf of the community, both for the community and in business development. But what we do not see here is any form of equity in the approach to taxation. Instead, we are attacking those who choose this form of recreation as opposed to others, and not implementing any structured measures to attack those who are most able to pay. The mythology of the 'pokie barons' is certainly alive in the south, but it does not apply in my electorate.

There are three hotels and a winery with a motel attached that operate pokies in my electorate, and my experience of these hotels is that they are all community minded. Two of them have a very long history in the community, and the third serves in a very special way the community that surrounds it. The Emu Hotel was on the original track to Victor Harbor where people made bets about who was going to buy at the hotels on the left going down and on the right coming back—and if you were conned by that you are probably older than I am.

The Emu Hotel, which was one of the stagecoach hotels, has been upgraded many times over the years and has gone through a number of names, but has returned to its original name. Over the past couple of years, \$1 million has been spend on it in development and upgrading to introduce both a gaming room and large bistro, which is very well patronised. The impact of the change in the tax regime at the Emu Hotel has been, so far, that it has not had to put off any staff, fortunately, but it has had to cut back hours across the board.

Another area that has been affected is entertainment. It has been a strong supporter of live entertainers but it has found that instead of having a two or three piece band it has had to cut back to a solo musician, for example, a pianist. I am sure the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance would be interested to know that this is a different effect of pokies. It has expressed its concern, at times, that pokies might be cutting back on live entertainment in our pubs and clubs, but in the case of the Emu Tavern it is the tax which is reducing job opportunities for live entertainers.

The Emu Hotel also has had to put on hold further plans to upgrade the hotel. It has entered very actively into the campaign to educate gamblers and quite often I have noticed, when I have been there, the *Smart Play* pamphlets that have been liberally littered around. About half a dozen patrons have requested to be banned and that request has been very rigorously but sympathetically enforced by the staff.

The Crown Inn at Reynella is another very old hotel that was originally on the track to Victor Harbor. It is a brewery pub at the moment, but it has been managed by Peter Vaughton for 32 years. He does not seem to have suddenly acquired Mercs, Jags and fast sports cars as a result of the introduction of pokies, although he has acquired a very beautiful Siberian husky.

He also has 40 machines in the pub and has upgraded the gaming area in recent times. He currently has plans to upgrade the drive-in, as well as making further extensions, but they are on hold. Staff hours are also being affected and so is his ability to support community activities. The Crown Inn has been a traditional supporter of schools in the area, as well as the Reynella Community Club. It has frequently given out bottles of wine and dinner vouchers but now is having to think about how many bottles of wine and how many dinner

vouchers it can give out to schools, which are also struggling hard in the face of fund cuts to raise money for computers and do other things they should not have to be doing.

The Lonsdale Hotel is a newer hotel which is located in the industrial area and which serves its local community well. Its hours are geared towards being able to provide some entertainment and recreation for people coming off shift late at night, so its gaming hours are from 11 a.m. to 5 a.m., because people who work shifts are just as entitled to choose their form of recreation as are the rest of us. It also hosts the Lonsdale Business Association, a newly formed group, for its monthly meetings.

The Lonsdale Hotel makes a point of being part of its community, as I have indicated, and one way it does so is by supporting high standards of behaviour. It tries to make it safe for women to attend the hotel alone, and for families to meet in a separate area apart from the gaming area. It also liaises closely with the police over poor behaviour and particularly with respect to any issues involving drugs. It provides work experience for students from the high schools in the area and also for the TAFE hospitality course.

The fourth venue in the electorate that has pokies—but only 25 because it only became involved in the pokies game in October 1997—is the St Francis Winery and motel complex. Since the current owners took over the winery in 1986, the staffing has increased from one to 60, a rapid rate of expansion which is now on hold because once again its business and investment decisions were based on one set of parameters, but those rules have changed. The winery is surrounded by three retirement villages, and the manager informs me that the residents treat the resort as their own private resort. They use the snug lounge with its large roaring fire as their own and see it as just part of their community's amenities.

St Francis is not making any employment decisions now. The number of gaming staff has been reduced as the opportunity arose through turnover, and simply will not continue with its expansion plans. It has development plans approved which are now on hold, as are all employment decisions. I am not painting a picture of robber barons. I am painting a picture of an industry that has been with us for a long time, one that responds in different ways to the community it serves and that provides an avenue of recreation and relaxation for a range of community members.

My observation is that since pokies have come to the pubs, they have been more accessible to women. The traditional image of the front bar has changed. There is almost a different clientele in two of the pubs in my area, with the front bar providing the TAB and the billiard table. The guys line up to place their TAB bets, and women are mainly around in the pokies room. I have talked with a number of these women, particularly the older ones, who often now live alone and do not always have close contact with their relatives who might live some distance away. They find the pokies places comfortable and safe to attend. They feel able to walk in there alone and indulge in a little bit of gaming. Most of them are able to stick very strictly to their budget.

All those with whom I have spoken have told me they know when to stop. Occasionally they get carried away, but basically they budget for how much they will spend on the pokies. I know that this is not always the case, because I have also had a couple of people contact my electorate office and ask where they can go for help as they realise they have a problem with playing the pokies. However, we are not really talking about whether pokies should or should not exist or



whether adults should be able to make their decisions about how they spend their spare money. We are talking about the taxation regime of this Government and how it is totally confused and does not give us any indication of what it is setting out to achieve.

The rhetoric indicates that they think pokies are evil; therefore, increasing the slug on pokies profits is easy game and will be supported by the community as the morally proper thing to do. But there is not one aspect of this taxation impost which indicates that it will ever stop one person from playing pokies to excess. It is cutting off employment opportunities both directly and through the developments which have been planned but which are now on hold. It is not doing anything to assist the small business operators who have been affected as people have decided to play the pokies instead of purchasing garden supplies or a new dress. Absolutely nothing has been done in this way.

It is like everything else that I have observed so far with this Government, namely, a lot of rhetoric, action that does not match it, hopeful thoughts and the thought that if there is an opportunity around perhaps someone will follow it up. But here we do not have any indication of what opportunities they are trying to produce. The people in my electorate deserve the chance to recreate in pleasant surroundings with up-to-date facilities. The hoteliers in the electorate deserve the opportunity to be able to make plans about employment and investment on a secure basis without having the rules changed every year, something that we all know is one of the major barriers for any business ever investing in anything.

**Mr WRIGHT (Lee):** My colleagues on this side of the House have explained in much detail the various costs both at an economic and social level in respect of this legislation. I put on notice that we need to look very seriously at what this tax increase may do in respect of jobs. At this stage the verdict on that is out, but it would be fair to say that, in most business areas, when you increase taxes there will in all probability be some effect on jobs. I have some concerns for a couple of major reasons with regard to the proposed tax increases. First and foremost, I am concerned about what it will do to jobs, because the hotel industry employs a lot of people, in particular young people. Some of them may be in part-time jobs and some, of course, in full-time jobs; but what is critically important in this economy which has an extremely high rate of unemployment and an exorbitant rate of youth unemployment is that we have a flourishing industry where there are meaningful jobs, and we do not want to bite the hand that feeds us.

The second reason I am concerned about this relates to the broken promise and a break in a principle agreement that quite clearly existed between the Government and the hotel industry. For that, the Government stands totally condemned. Once you have a principle agreement you cannot turn around, break that agreement and not be condemned for it. The Government has increased the rate of taxation for middle hotels from 40 to 43.5 per cent and for top hotels from 45 to 50 per cent. There may or may not be certain arguments and merits that can be addressed in relation to that. As we have quite clearly said earlier today and also during this debate, we will not interfere with the Government's taxation measures. The Government was elected to undertake those responsibilities, but what it has done as a result of this taxation increase is many fold.

First and foremost, the Government has broken an in-principle agreement that existed with the industry. For that,

the Government stands condemned. For that, members of the Government have nowhere whatsoever to stand. When the Government did increase these tax rates it should have immediately honoured its agreement by removing the .5 per cent levy that was only ever put in place to boost the taxation revenue and to overcome the shortfall that existed in that particular year within the industry. That was reasonable, and it was accepted across the community.

I understand that the Government is looking at revenue of about \$2 million in that area. As a matter of principle that levy should have gone, because that was the agreement that existed. I am not an apologist for the hoteliers or the hotel industry, but I concur with a number of the significant points made today on this side of the House. I will touch on a range of matters with regard to the hotel industry. The levy should go because the Government had an in principle agreement that the levy would be in place only while there was no taxation increase. Once the Government increased its rate of taxation, the levy should have gone automatically. With the sort of legal process that the Government is going through, it has lost the trust of the hotel industry as a result of what it has done.

Certainly, the Government cannot be trusted any longer with regard to the hotel industry. Like all members in this Chamber I have a number of hotels in the electorate of Lee. I visit them regularly, and on a regular basis I have taken the Leader (Hon. Mike Rann) and the shadow Treasurer to a number of hotels so that we keep in constant contact and get regular information about how they are going. We get feedback and we certainly do not always agree but, as to the .5 per cent levy, the Government cannot be trusted. In fact, it is a most disappointing way of governing. I agree also with comments about the role that hotels play in the community. Certainly, all of the hotels that I regularly visit in Lee are community minded and undertake their community responsibility in a serious fashion.

To a person, all the hoteliers in Lee are very much involved in the community, not just with respect to putting on a range of services within their hotel but going far beyond that and getting involved on a financial and in kind basis with respect to sporting and community clubs in the electorate. Certainly, I welcome the modest increase in taxation for community clubs. That is a welcome signal. Ironically, considering the geography of Lee, in the past I have had representation from the South Adelaide Football Club, which was mentioned today. A number of licensed community clubs have been doing it hard, and they make a reasonable case in demonstrating that life for community clubs is much different from hotels. We should not be looking at one competing against the other. With respect to the modest increase in community club taxation—and I am not sure what the revenue base is for that—I do not believe we should decrease community club taxation and automatically increase the taxation on hotels. They need to be viewed separately and appreciated in their own right.

I do not want to talk about the competition that may exist between them because, naturally, both areas play a significant role. It is fair to say in the main that many community clubs have been doing it hard because they are not able to attract naturally the same volume or type of people as hotels. That may be different for the Port Adelaide Football Club, for the Crows and so forth but I am talking about general community clubs. The West Lakes Community Club, which is in my electorate, has been doing it particularly tough.

That club has a few poker machines, and I am sure that it will very much welcome the modest decrease in the taxation levy as it applies to those clubs. As I said, I am especially concerned with what may result in the area of jobs. It is not unfair to highlight that large investments have been made and, if the goal posts are changed, that some losses will take place, but South Australia cannot afford to lose one job. South Australia's unemployment rate is high enough without further jobs being taken out of any industry, let alone the hotel industry. I know that this is not a general debate about poker machines, which occurred particularly during the 1990s and perhaps more so since 1993, but we are now at a very delicate stage.

Many people in the community, and particularly members of Parliament who, in some respects, are leading the debate with respect to poker machines, must be a bit more mature and realistic about this issue. It is not good enough for people to simply say that poker machines are the root of all evil, because that is simply not true. If poker machines do cause problems in the community—and, sure, they do, like any other form of gambling—let us address that. Let us look at that issue seriously and put in place a package of measures to help address the problems. The hotel industry has also played a role with respect to those problems, and that should be acknowledged.

If more is to be done, the Government needs to become involved. The Government needs to be involved in the poker machine debate, and it needs to be a mature debate. I do not believe that we will turn back the clock and go to a situation where South Australia will not have poker machines, and nor should we. Whether or not one is philosophically in favour of poker machines, one must now look at them from a mature point of view. One must appreciate that there are people in South Australia who will use poker machines as a form of gambling/entertainment.

Will we go back to pre-1993 and say to all South Australians, 'Hop on a bus and go across to Wentworth. You cannot play poker machines in South Australia.'? Of course not. Irrespective of what members think in this House or in the Legislative Council, we will not turn back the clock and revert to a situation of not having poker machines in South Australia. Poker machines are here, so we should have a sensible and mature debate about how we progress. I will not support the installation of poker machines in certain areas, such as shopping centres. We must handle this debate sensitively, we must handle it with some maturity and we must give some leadership to the community. That is our responsibility as elected members of Parliament.

This proposed change to taxation revenue is changing the rules during the course of the game, which is not good enough. The Government is now putting in place tax imposts which, in all sincerity, some hoteliers within the broad community will not be able to meet. Some hoteliers will not be able to commence or continue with investments for which they have planned. That will ultimately cost some jobs in South Australia, and South Australia cannot afford that. That is not what members in this House are about.

What most irks me is that an in-principle agreement existed between the Government and the hotel industry, and the Government has broken the agreement. The Government has not kept to its part of the bargain. I am very proud to represent the hoteliers. I will not always agree with certain things they do but I can say that they are community minded and that they run good, honest and clean hotels. On behalf of the hoteliers, and anyone else in the hotel industry, I say to

the Government and all members, particularly those in marginal electorates, that the Government has broken its deal with the hotel industry. It stands condemned for that, and it also stands condemned for every job that was or will be lost as a result of breaking this agreement with respect to the levy, which will cost individual hoteliers thousands of dollars. I am not sure what the figure will be, but I understand that one hotel within the electorate of Lee will suffer a loss of the order of \$30 000 with regard to the tax increase, and one does not know where or in what direction that multiplier effect will take us.

The member for Mawson condemned some of the points that the shadow Treasurer made regarding this Bill. I will not go into that, except to say that it is not plausible to turn the argument back some 10 to 15 years and refer to the fringe benefits tax. The industry has moved on. Members would find, if they speak to the hotel industry or to restaurateurs, that they have moved on, and the member for Mawson should move on as well. I did not hear the honourable member talk about the stamp duty increase on compulsory third party insurance; nor did I hear the honourable member talk about the increase from \$15 to \$60 which will affect every driver who lives in his electorate. However, the honourable member did speak about business people not being able to claim their lunch anymore—some being unrelated to any business activity at all. Let us get more serious and more mature about this debate. To wind back the clock 10 or 15 years is totally irrelevant, and surely we have gone far beyond that.

I also draw attention to the active club grant, which is another positive example of the introduction of poker machines. When debating this issue and considering poker machines, we must look at the positives and negatives that transpire in the community and we must do it in a professional and mature way. The active club grant is another area where money has been made available as a result of poker machines, and that money has been put to very positive use by sporting clubs in all electorates. I am sure that is something which members on both sides of this House would welcome. Certainly, members would say that this is a positive outcome of poker machines. This grant is very actively sought by sporting clubs, and I am sure that all members of the House will encourage their sporting clubs to become involved and, if they are not involved in it, once again it is another responsibility which we as local members of Parliament have to take more seriously and ensure that all our sporting clubs are participating.

There must be more support for local clubs. These clubs have been the backbone of kids' involvement in this State's sporting activities. Obviously, we all identify with the elite level, which is fantastic—and they are a great example for our kids—but we as legislators in this Parliament have to ensure that we do not go down the American track where only the elite are able to compete. In certain sporting areas that is a trend that has occurred slowly. We must ensure that that does not happen in South Australia or Australia, that there is a broad base and that our kids and also our adults are involved in sporting activities. The active club grant is another way of sending a message to our sporting clubs.

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

**Mr WRIGHT:** I should like to conclude my remarks—*Members interjecting:*

**Mr WRIGHT:**—and get my brief contribution on the record. I am delighted that the member for Mawson has

returned to the Chamber. It is probably an appropriate time for me to invite all members opposite, including Ministers, to revisit this issue. I invite them to honour their pledge in respect of the .5 per cent levy. It is not too late. They have already made one mistake but it can be rectified.

**Mr Clarke:** Only one mistake?

**Mr WRIGHT:** Well, just one in regard to this piece of legislation. I am pleased that the member for Mawson is nodding in agreement. That is good to see.

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training):** I thank all members for their contribution to this debate. I find it very interesting that, while members from the opposite side in particular criticise the Government for raising the tax in this instance, they conveniently forget those people who are suffering because of poker machines. On the one hand, the Government is being asked to supply more services and more support for people who have fallen prey to pokies. On the other hand, the Opposition is advising us not to raise taxes because it would put off investment. Where does the Opposition sit? It wants the Government to support the services that we have to supply, but without raising taxes. Opposition members are sitting on the fence, and I find that very interesting.

There are a couple of things to remember in this debate. First, community hotels and clubs will have a 5 per cent reduction in taxation which will allow them to become more viable. One of the issues that has been raised in my discussions with clubs around the place on this issue has been that they cannot compete with hotels and the low cost meals that hotels provide, and they have had to struggle. Representatives of one football club who visited me suggested that they wished they had never got into pokies because they cannot compete in terms of the hours that they are open and the meals that they supply. This measure helps those clubs and community hotels without any doubt.

Secondly, as to the number of hotels in the middle bracket that will be affected, our estimate is that about 50 per cent of hotels will not be affected because of the category into which their turnover falls. This means that the additional taxation falls on the other 50 per cent in terms of the hotels that are owned by hotel barons, as members of the Opposition or other members suggested, and hotels that have much higher turnover.

The member for Ross Smith mentioned a hotel in his electorate where the hotelier has a debt of some \$3 million and incurs additional taxation. One of the other matters that has not been raised in this debate is the additional capital value of hotels following the introduction of pokies into hotels.

**Mr Clarke:** If you can find a buyer after your taxes.

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY:** That is an issue that is not raised. I note the honourable member's point. A lot of hoteliers are making money but they have also had a capital gain. There is a hotel directly opposite my electorate office in Gawler, and the capital value of that property has doubled since the introduction of poker machines. If he ever decides to sell, he will make a windfall profit in terms of the capital gain in the hotel's selling price.

The member for Mawson raised some good issues when he asked where members of the Opposition were when business lunches were cut out, hotel dining rooms were closed and numbers of staff were put off during the Hawke and Keating Federal Labor Governments. They were very quiet about the impact on the hotel industry and small

business—not only hotels but also restaurants—and that was a very good point. The member for Ross Smith referred to a taxation threshold of \$945 000. Increased taxation was considered, but only eight operators fell above that level, so that was the reason. Why complicate the issue further by going into another level of taxation? We really did not pick up a great deal by creating another level of taxation, so that was why it was left at that level.

As economies change, so does taxation. It does not matter whether it is Labor or Liberal; the whole idea of a tax is to be able to redistribute funds from one sector of the community to supply services to the whole community or another sector of the community. That is what taxation is all about. You cannot lock a Government to a taxation rate it set at a certain level five years ago and say that now it should not be changing it. Economic circumstances change and demand from the community changes and, as a result, whether it be a Labor or a Liberal Government, taxation rates change at the same time. You can see that back in the 1980s the Bannon Government was raising taxes obviously to suit the demands of the community for the services that were deemed to be required at the time. Obviously, taxation has to change over time. If governments were locked into a particular taxation level for, say, 10 years, it really would defeat the whole argument.

Secondly, I refer to our earlier debate on third party insurance. I reiterate that the overhaul of the national taxation scheme is desperately needed in terms of money from the Federal Government coming back to the State Governments. Until we get that sorted out, our taxation base will remain very narrow and the opportunities to raise taxation to pay for education, hospitals, police and services are also very narrow, so we are limited in the number of areas from which we can raise taxation. I thank all members for their contributions and look forward to their questions in Committee.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clause 1 passed.

Clause 2.

**Mr FOLEY:** Earlier I flagged the issue of the licensed clubs getting a significant reduction in their level of taxation. In the second reading stage the Opposition indicated that it supported that. However, on two occasions when I met with the Licensed Clubs Association I expressed some of my views. I articulated earlier (and I think the Minister for Recreation and Sport would understand where I am coming from here) that simply giving a reduced taxation regime to licensed clubs does not automatically mean that their bottom line will improve for the betterment of the community.

In relation to some clubs with which I have been involved, which tend to be football clubs, my fear was that, if they had player payments, one could find that any improved profitability may well find its way flowing through to things such as player payments or coaches' fees, for example.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**Mr FOLEY:** If it was a club such as Port Adelaide, one could rest assured that the money would be well spent.

**An honourable member:** Are you making a comeback?

**Mr FOLEY:** No, I am not. But one can imagine some other clubs, such as North Adelaide, which would—

*Members interjecting:*

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr FOLEY:** In fairness, the licensed clubs acknowledge that point. In their submission to the Opposition, they said that they would like to see as one element an accredited

training program, where the management of the club would be given an opportunity to undertake various levels of management and to develop some business skills to better run the club, and they could then return a better club through better management—an issue of which I know the Government knows little in relation to the words ‘better management’. Perhaps some accredited training for the Liberal Government might help. Am I getting the wind-up from the member for Elder?

*Mr Conlon interjecting:*

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! Does the member for Hart have a question of the Minister?

**Mr FOLEY:** I do.

**The CHAIRMAN:** It might be sensible if we got to that.

**Mr FOLEY:** Has the Minister entered into an arrangement with the licensed clubs to ensure that the windfall that has been returned to them is used as they advised Government in terms of improved management training?

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY:** I believe that that is really up to the industry. If the industry wants to give a direction to its community clubs that it believes additional training should be taken on from the increased money that would come in, that should really come from the industry and not necessarily the Government. In terms of the additional revenue that they will receive by paying less tax, one of the benefits in relation to a couple of clubs that I have had anything to do with is that they will remain viable. A couple of clubs that I know of are in danger of losing viability, so that extra money coming back in will mean that the clubs stay open within the community and the community will benefit from that.

**Mr FOLEY:** I do not want to labour the point, but the reason why we introduced poker machines was to save clubs and hotels from difficult times. When the Licensed Clubs Association approached the Opposition, it specifically stated that, if the Government gave a reduction in pokie taxes, it would apply that money to fund training programs to improve the level of management. If the Minister is now saying that no such agreement had been signed off between the Minister, the Treasurer and the association, that is fine: tell me that. But that is certainly not what I, as the shadow Treasurer, was led to believe would be the fall out of this decision by Government.

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY:** I am advised that no agreement has been signed between the Minister and the Licensed Clubs Association.

**Mr FOLEY:** I will take up that matter perhaps with the Treasurer in discussions and also with the Licensed Clubs Association. But an undertaking was given that, by the Government giving taxation relief, it was about investing that money into better management and developing the management skills of the clubs involved and that it was not simply to go into improved bottom lines for those clubs, which would not necessarily mean improved profitability for the club.

**Mr CLARKE:** I refer the Minister again to the threshold question. In his second reading reply, the Minister said that there were only about eight operators involved. I was not sure whether he meant eight hotels or eight operators with the potential of having several hotels each, I would suspect, with a turnover of well over \$1 million. In terms of increasing the taxation level for those high rollers, what figures did the Treasury use to determine the level of taxation that it thought would be needed to impact on those operators, and what would have been the overall estimated receipts if the Treasury had gone down that path?

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY:** I do not have those details here, but I will take that question on notice and obtain the information for the honourable member. What I can say is that at least one or two of the eight or nine groups that were above that threshold had up to eight hotels. I cannot recall the exact number in total—I will obtain that information for the honourable member—but a significant number of hotels was in that group.

**Mr CLARKE:** I take it that the Minister will provide me with the number of hotels and the actual figure that the Treasury worked out in terms of the level of taxation that it looked at levying and how much money that would have brought into the Treasury coffers had it gone down that path.

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY:** If that information is available I will obtain it for the honourable member.

Clause passed.

Title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

### POLICE BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 3 June. Page 1066.)

**Mr CONLON (Elder):** To a degree, it is a shame that the House is so thinly populated at this time of the night because, without speaking with too much hyperbole, this matter is one of the most important that this House will deal with in the term of this Government. I say that as it is now because—

**Mr Wright:** The Minister should be here to hear you.

**Mr CONLON:** Yes. The Minister has not taken much of an interest in the matter so far, so it is not surprising that he is not taking an interest now. It is my earnest imprecation to the House that there are three areas that it should be very slow to tamper with and careful about changing, and they are: our system of Parliament, our system of courts, and our police service. Each of those things is essential to the health of democracy and the community.

Of course, the parliamentary system is protected by the Constitution, and it is recognised that that system is extremely important to democracy; the courts have always enjoyed a strong degree of protection from the Parliament; and our police force is a feature of one of the most modern and sophisticated Government states. I say that those institutions are vital to the well being of the community because, at a personal level, our morality and ethics determine how we conduct ourselves as individuals.

It is the set of rules to which we agree as a community that governs us and by which we are measured and defined. Each of those institutions has its role to play: the Parliament makes the laws; the courts not only interpret the laws but have a long history in the common law system of assisting to make them; and the police enforce the laws and keep the peace. If any one of these institutions is unhealthy, the community is unhealthy.

The health of those institutions relies on two things: first, how they do their job and, secondly, the confidence the community has in them. We are fortunate to live in Australia where, by and large—and even given all the criticisms levelled against them—we have healthy institutions in all three areas. In South Australia we have a healthy police force. We should look at a Bill such as this through a certain filter. Every time we make a change, we should be careful to do so only to address and identify a defect or failing in the current system; we should ensure that we get a vigorous appraisal of the likely consequences of each change; and we should make

sure that any changes make a new system at least as good as the one we had. That is the filter through which we should look at those things, and it is the filter through which the Opposition has looked at the Bill. That is why we will oppose the Bill and urge the Government to withdraw it—because it fails on all three counts.

I refer to the first measure I spoke of—every time we make a change, we should be careful to do so only to address and identify a defect or flaw in the current system. We know from the Government's own sources—on its own admission—that we have the best police force in Australia, not only with regard to people's confidence in it but also on its own performance. Most members would acknowledge that the community has confidence in the police force in South Australia. I would go so far as to say that the community now has far more confidence in the police force of South Australia than it does in this Government. It would sooner trust the police force of this State than it would the current Government. Therefore, I urge the Government not to tamper with something which is not broken and which is in a far better State than it is.

This measure is important, because we know what happens when we do not have a good police force. We have seen an example of that with the New South Wales police force. On our television screens, on the 6 o'clock news or on current affairs programs, we have seen the obscene passing of money across a dashboard, with police officers laughing and swearing about it at the time and passing bribes to each other. We have also seen the Fitzgerald inquiry in Queensland where, for over 50 years, corruption, fraud and graft were rife in that police force. In the case of the Victorians, we have a more balanced police force, which is much better respected by the community and which does not seem to have as much difficulty in its firearms policy.

We in this State are fortunate in that we suffer from very few police shootings, have very few questions hanging over the heads of the police and experience few of the problems that have afflicted the Eastern States. Again, it leads us to wonder why this Bill is before us. I would say this for the police, and it is something that should be recognised in any debate: when members of the community are feeling most insecure and most in fear, they call the police. When they are in fear of their life, they call the police. When they are in fear of their property, they call the police. When their child is missing or they are suffering a crisis, they call the police.

**Mrs Geraghty:** Or their mum.

**Mr CONLON:** Or their mum, which is not a bad example, as it shows the trust the people place in this institution and the reliance they place upon it. In addition, from my experience I know that that is the surface and I know what the community does not know. I know that, whenever there is a dirty job to be done—a job that no-one else or no other service in the community will do—the police do it. Some years ago there was an industrial dispute about ambulances carrying dead bodies. The ambulance service—quite rightly—said that, by the time the body had reached that state, the ambulance really could not do much for them and that somebody else should be carrying them—and they referred to them as 'stinkers'. That led to a lengthy dispute and was finally resolved by getting the police to deliver the dead bodies from the hospitals to the morgue and *vice versa*.

As I said, whenever there is a dirty job to be done, the police are called on to do it. Who would have their job of going to a family to inform them of a tragedy? Who would have the job of dealing with victims of crime, with the bodies

and with cleaning up the mess? This is the job the police do. It is something for which the community should respect them and something we should keep in mind when we deal with Bills in this House. It is plain that the police have an enormous responsibility. They have great power concentrated in their hands, and it is plain that the community needs to have confidence and trust in the police and they, in turn, need to feel that the community and the Government value and respect their commitment. One is essential to the other.

You do not have a good police force without the respect and confidence of the community, and you do not have a good police force unless the members of the police force feel that they have the trust of the community and the respect of the Government and that their commitment and their job is valued. Unfortunately, we have clear examples of a police force unlike the South Australian one, to which I will refer briefly so that we can understand what we have and place a proper value on it. I refer to the Fitzgerald inquiry into the police force in Queensland. That report exposed widespread corruption, and I will detail how that corruption worked and how it was aided and abetted, as it will be relevant to some of the things that I will speak to later when I speak about this Bill.

One of the central forms of corruption in the Queensland police force was that which occurred in the Licensing Branch, which dealt with hotels and SP bookmakers. A form of corruption had been endemic in that area for over 50 years. In a way that is most indicative of the derision with which those corrupt police held the community. It was called 'the joke', and if you were in on the joke you were being paid for the protection of SP bookmakers. As I said, that went on for some 50 years in Queensland. A former South Australian, Raymond Whitrod, made some inroads in his time there, but unfortunately he was replaced by Terry Lewis, whose infamy is now well known throughout the land.

What Terry Lewis did in regard to the Licensing Branch was transfer to it police who were in on the joke, on whom he could rely and from whom he would receive his corrupt payments, and transfer out of it those who were not in on the joke. If you were not in on the joke, you could be transferred virtually anywhere. The report found that transfers and promotions were dominated by personal and political considerations. Unfavourable transfers existed for those who complained of the corruption that was going on. And worse things happened. Whenever a Queensland police officer was brave enough to blow the whistle, false allegations would be made against him and conspired in by corrupt police officers. The straight police officers found themselves the victims of police and court investigations into their behaviour.

In one famous instance they went to a gaol and persuaded a woman who had been incarcerated for a number of crimes to make a false statement against some of those police brave enough to stand up against their corrupt officers. All this was able to happen because they were controlled by a bent Commissioner, a point to which I will return later. Raymond Whitrod, a fine upstanding South Australian, did a great job in Queensland but in the end was replaced by Terry Lewis. When we look at the Bill before this House, it is not a question of how good our Police Commissioner is, because Police Commissioners come and go. I put on the record that I have the highest regard for Commissioner Hyde. I think that he is a fine, upstanding, honest and decent human being. But he will not be there forever.

The changes in this Bill have to take into account that a Raymond Whitrod can be replaced by a Terry Lewis. Lewis

promoted cronies in his police force. He had a small impediment: he had to get it through the Cabinet of a bent Government, but it was not too much of an impediment. His mates, Parker and other members of the rat pack, were promoted through the ranks at the behest of the Police Commissioner. In fact, Parker, who was one of the original people in on the joke at the licensing branch, went from inspector to deputy commissioner in six months. That is what happens, or there is the potential for that situation to occur, when you have an indecent level of control of the police force in the hands of one person.

The other matters continued for 50 years and would not have been eradicated had it not been for the bagman, Herbert, spilling his guts at the royal commission. Police verballing was rife. There was collusion with the National Party Government to deny civil liberties; to act oppressively against civil demonstrations against the Government; and to support the Government politically on every possible occasion.

When any one of those institutions that I mentioned earlier ails in its health, it afflicts and diminishes the entire community. When two of them ail in health, such as we saw in Queensland, we have a very serious situation and a very serious threat to our democracy. That was the situation in Queensland—a situation which took many years to address.

What do we have in South Australia? As I said, we have the best regarded and best performing police force in Australia. You then have to ask yourself: at what is this Bill addressed? What remedy or mischief is it aimed at? I found that hard to understand, so I looked at the ministerial statement. What is the criticism of the police force? The Minister's explanation states that it does not reflect modern human resource management practices. What sort of managerialist gobbledegook is that?

I ask the question: should the police force reflect what we have come to see as modern human resource management practices? In the past 10 years, I have seen a lot of modern human resource management practices and do not like the look of them very much. They are about changing the balance between employer and employee and winding back the gains of employees made in the last century. That is dangerous in any area of employment. We have seen modern human resource management practices on the waterfront. They involve dogs, men in balaclavas and tattooed security guards. That is a dangerous sort of practice in any calling but, when talking about an institution which enforces the laws and preserves the peace of this State, it is not only dangerous but absolutely absurd. The Minister's explanation continues:

It will introduce progressive and innovative reforms and establish a modern flexible management structure.

These are all code words for the managerialist approach of the 1990s and, as I said, for reducing the influence of the employee in regard to his or her relationship with the employer. Is that what the Bill is about? Is that how we will improve the South Australian police force? There is more: it will bring more flexibility to human resource management within SAPOL. I simply say again that it is more managerialist language of the 1990s. It is the sort of language that goes with other language that you will hear—not in this Bill but, mark my words, down the track if this Bill passes. The other language that goes with this type of language is the identification of core police tasks and the outsourcing of non-core police tasks. That is what goes with flexible human resources management. Do not be fooled: it is a code.

Having said that, does it address the cost of the police force? It does not. If it does, we have no information from the Minister on that. If it were to address the cost of the police force, the Minister may care to explain why \$7 million has been spent on separation packages in the police force and then, in an election year, a further 100 police officers employed. If this Government is concerned about costs, I do not think it has its priorities right. The Government may like to explain why it is going to spend \$150 million to \$200 million on a radio network that is shrouded in secrecy. Make no mistake: this Bill—

*Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:*

**Mr CONLON:** It is! Well might the member for Peake refer to it as *The X Files*. It is easier to get a hold of the material in the *The X Files*. Let us be absolutely frank: this Bill is about the concentration of the control of the police force in the hands of the Commissioner. I will address all those areas in which it does it in a moment. Again I ask, and I will ask all the way through this: at what wrong is it aimed? What are we seeking to remedy? Why do we need more power in the hands of the Commissioner? It has not been explained anywhere. It is certainly not because we have a bad police force. As I said, we have the best one. What is it that the Government is trying to achieve?

This Government has a poor track record on police matters. Despite occasional hiccups over the years in this Parliament, there has been a degree of bipartisanship in our approach to the police. Whichever Party has been in Government, there have always been at least tolerable relations with the police. In fairness to the current Minister, mainly through the activities of the former Minister of Police, this Government has managed to drag relationships with the police to levels that we have not seen previously in this State, to the extent that we saw a Minister of the Crown formerly responsible for the police force come into this House and make outlandish and unfounded claims. He accused the police of this State as behaving like a tribe of marauding Visigoths or, for those less steeped in history, perhaps like a marauding bikie gang, claims which were later found to be unfounded. So, the Opposition would have to be forgiven if we were a little suspicious when this Government introduces changes to the Police Act and changes to the management of the police force.

Recently in my electorate of Elder I was speaking with a constituent who is a member of the police force and has been for 22 years. He is not a political fellow by any stretch of the imagination. He talked about the changes made in the past five years, in particular changes to the roster system. He said that a few years ago he would come to work and be part of a team. He felt like he was respected and valued by the community. He says that now he goes to work but does not know who he is working with from day-to-day. No doubt the new rosters are very well suited to that new managerial code they use. This bloke said that 22 years ago he had a choice between joining the police force and joining the Fire Brigade, and now he wishes he had joined the Fire Brigade. What sort of testament is that for a bloke who has been on the job for 22 years? It shows that this Government is failing the people of South Australia in its handling of the police force. I earnestly hope that the new Minister does much better than those who have gone before him.

I turn now to this Bill and some of its key aspects, those aspects that give an unusual concentration of power in the hands of the Commissioner and which I have to say are redolent of that language of managerialism and economic

rationalism that we know so much about in the 90s. What would you look for first if you were going to introduce the industrial relations policies of the 90s? Would it be contracts? Is that not what they want to do to everyone in the new flexible human relations practice of the 90s? What do we find?

The first version of this Bill would have seen half the current police force put on term contracts. The Government will not admit this, but that is what the first draft would have had. The Government had a bit of a fight about that and had to wind it back. Now, every existing officer—and, if I am correct, there are more than 100—can be placed on contract no matter how long they have been there. What do we know about those contracts? Those contracts can exclude any provision of the Act. There are provisions in the Act which cover the code of conduct, complaints against police, disciplinary measures for police, promotions, etc. These contracts for the 100 officers can exclude any provision of the Act.

Basically, as the Law Society says—and this is not just my view—it will allow them to put conditions in a contract which can become a condition precedent to the dismissal of the officer. So, someone who has been on the job, who has become an officer and who has been there for 30 years can be put on a five-year contract and something can be put in that contract which allows for their dismissal during the term of the contract—outside the protection of the Act. If the Minister says that cannot happen, I will be very interested to hear, perhaps in the Committee stages, why that cannot happen. The clause provides:

... where there is an inconsistency, the term of the contract will prevail.

In addition to the officers who can be put on contract they have a halfway house. Originally the Government wanted senior constables and above—I understand about 1 000 senior constables or more, probably 1 500 people of and above the rank of senior constable in the police service—all to be susceptible to contract employment. The situation now is that they will bring in people from outside the police force and put them on term contracts, to the position of senior constable and above. At least the current senior constables and above are safe. Again, those contracts can include or exclude as much of the Act as the Government wishes. If the Minister can clear that up for me during the Committee stage, I would appreciate it; but on my reading of it those contracts can include or exclude as much as it wishes.

In March I was alarmed to read an article by an Assistant Commissioner of Police—whose name escapes me now—who talked about the likelihood that increasingly ‘traditional’ policing work would be done in the private sector by private security firms. During the Committee stage I will ask the Minister: what will prevent the outsourcing of traditional police work through the use of contracts that make outside security people police officers for certain purposes of the Act?

**An honourable member:** Police labour.

**Mr CONLON:** That’s right. We have seen police labour hire firms everywhere—not wharfie labour hire firms. What is there to prevent it? The current Commissioner says he does not want to do it; the Minister says he does not want to do it; but what will prevent it? If they do not want to do it, it is not consistent with their previous behaviour, because this Government has a track record.

**Ms Thompson:** They didn’t want to privatise ETSA, either.

**Mr CONLON:** That’s right. Finally, the Commissioner will have the ability to make those contracts and, in particular, to set such terms as the Commissioner sees fit. On its own that might not be such a dangerous thing, but the Bill goes on further to concentrate the control of the police force in the hands of the Commissioner. Clause 11 of the Bill refers to the ability to make general orders. Section 22 of the current Act provides that regulations can be made about certain things, including appointments, promotion, and so on. However, clause 11 of the Bill hands that power to the Commissioner to make general orders, and it also provides the Commissioner with a very broad power to make other general orders about the conduct of the police force. Clause 11(1) provides that the Commissioner may make or give general or special orders. Subclause (2)(a) provides that the orders may make provision concerning the various duties to be performed, and that is fine.

Clause 11(2)(c) refers to requirements or qualifications for appointment or promotion; paragraph (d) refers to appointment and promotion processes; and paragraph (e) refers to other matters the Commissioner considers relevant to the control and management of the South Australian police force, the Police cadets and police medical officers. Under the existing Act those matters are dealt with by regulation. The advantage of regulation is that it is an open and transparent process, and under the Subordinate Legislation Act those matters can be laid before the Parliament and are capable of being disallowed by the Parliament. There is a chance for parliamentary scrutiny. It is the essence of a system that will prevent corruption that there should be transparent processes, particularly in terms of appointment and promotion with established and objective criteria.

As I said, it may be that the current Commissioner is a very fine fellow and will establish general orders in a very good way, but we place a good deal of trust in the continuing integrity of Police Commissioners into the future. As to those two aspects, what would Terry Lewis have thought of these provisions? He would not have had to get things through a bent Cabinet. It is a big free kick; but wait, there is more. Doubtless in Committee the Minister will be able to explain the purpose of another provision. Under the current Act there is an ability to make directions to the Police Commissioner, again as long as the process is transparent and the directions are laid before the Parliament. Clause 7 provides:

No ministerial direction may be given to the Commissioner in relation to the appointment, transfer, remuneration, discipline or termination of a particular person.

On the face of it that looks as if the Minister is not interfering, and that may be all well and good, but the simple truth is this: when Terry Lewis appointed his crook mate Parker from inspector to deputy commissioner, at least he had to get it through Cabinet. However, under this provision if we ever get a bad Commissioner who decides to appoint one of his cronies to a position—

*Mr Condous interjecting:*

**Mr CONLON:** I advise the member for Colton that I am speaking through the Speaker. My understanding of Standing Orders is that I must address my comments through you, Mr Speaker, which I am doing, but it does not require me to face you because you do not appear to be paying much attention to me. Clause 7 means that, if we had a Terry Lewis appointing a person like Parker, he would not have to check that with the Minister. In the current Act, appointment of

officers is by the Governor, and the appointment of sergeants and senior sergeants has to be approved by the Minister. Under this Bill the Commissioner appoints them all and the Minister can do nothing about it. If a Commissioner like Terry Lewis appoints someone like Parker in South Australia, the Minister has to come to Parliament.

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr CONLON:** I have lots to go. Your difficulty, Martin, is that this is not the army but the police force.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member will come back to the Bill.

**Mr CONLON:** As I said, the Governor currently appoints officers, but under this Bill it will be the Commissioner; and the appointment of sergeants and senior sergeants currently requires the approval of the Minister, but under this Bill it will be the Commissioner. It is extremely important that a balance is struck in the control of the police force between the Parliament and the police force. Plainly, the Parliament and the Minister should not interfere too much but they should not interfere too little. There have to be appropriate checks and balances and, on this model, there are not appropriate checks and balances on the powers of the Police Commissioner.

Section 24A of the current Act allows the Police Disciplinary Tribunal to review what one might call 'arbitrary transfers' of police officers, that is, where police are transferred from one position to another without a loss in rank. If a police officer has reason to believe that that transfer has occurred as some species of disciplinary measure or as punishment for something he or she has done, without its being overtly stated, that officer can take a case to the Police Disciplinary Tribunal for review. This is a very wise precaution because we know it was the use of transfers that allowed Terry Lewis to control the Queensland police force. It was control of those areas which needed, in his self-interest, to be staffed by corrupt police officers.

The existing section prevents arbitrary transfers. The new section will allow transfers to occur; access to the Police Disciplinary Tribunal is stopped; and, if one really thinks it is crook, one can have a process of review set up under general orders. But who makes the general orders? The Commissioner—the fellow who is doing the transferring. It is an inadequate safeguard and it is a great example of the entire focus of this Bill. It is all about control and discipline. It is a view about how you manage and it is wrong. The police in this State have the confidence of the public of South Australia and they need to believe that their commitment is valued.

This Bill is all about control, command and discipline. It is about neither trust nor confidence. If this is not bad enough we have other new provisions just in case there is not enough power over the police. New section 46 will allow the Commissioner to review police for unsatisfactory performance. That provision has not previously existed. Again, if I look at the Minister's second reading explanation or the relevant ministerial statements, absolutely no indication is given as to why it is necessary. It is a viewpoint based on distrust and the need to control.

This Bill seeks to review the performance of police officers. If an officer's performance is unsatisfactory, the officer is given time to improve. A panel will be appointed, and who is to know who appoints the panel? The panel will be convened to ensure that the process was carried out according to law but, at the end of that process, if an officer cannot show that their performance is satisfactory, they can

be demoted and, if there is no position to which they can be demoted, their employment can be terminated. The fact is that, for those charged with a breach of codes of conduct or charged with very serious matters under the Police Complaints Authority and their employment is to be terminated, they have a right of review that goes through to the Supreme Court.

Those officers accused of really bad things have a right of review all the way to the Supreme Court. But, for those officers who are to be terminated for the far less, one would think, serious matter of unsatisfactory performance, they are forbidden that avenue of appeal. They can have an avenue of appeal to a newly constituted Police Review Tribunal, which replaces the former tribunal and which had representation from the Police Association. A district court judge will preside over this tribunal. It is something that is very hard to understand, but I am sure that, in Committee, the Minister will be able to give us good reasons.

There are new provisions for minor misconduct. What is it that the police have been doing that we do not know about? Why do we need it? We thought the police were pretty good. What is this terrible behaviour to which all of this is addressed? A new provision covers matters of minor misconduct and, again, it excludes appeal to the Police Complaints Authority because it deals only with minor misconduct and has provision for such things as transfer for four months. I am sure that those matters would not look good on a police officer's record. I am sure it is another example of a certain mindset about how an organisation is controlled.

Finally, I turn to the question of the Police Appeal Board and the Promotion Appeal Board, both of which would be abolished by the new Bill. The Police Appeal Board, which allowed a review of some terminations, was constituted by a District Court judge, a police officer selected from a panel of five nominated by the Police Association and a representative of the Commissioner. For no explanation that is to be abolished, as is the Promotion Appeal Board, which was made up similarly—a representative of the Minister, a person nominated by the Police Association in the way I mentioned and by a representative of the Commissioner. These are to be amalgamated into a police review type tribunal, which, if it is examining a review of a termination, will be made up of a District Court judge, and (and here is the beauty) if it is examining a promotional appeal it is to be constituted entirely by a person nominated by the Minister. So, what we have is a Commissioner who makes general orders about the processes for appointment and promotion, and a person's right of appeal will be judged solely by the Minister.

Again, that is a radical departure from the existing provisions. I put to the Minister that there needs to be an explanation for why that should occur. I have my explanation: there is a mind-set about how one controls organisations. It is about a view that the employee has too much power and that more power needs to be concentrated in the hands of the employer. It is something that is not uncommon these days and it is something that is failing. All that is fine, as I said, if you want to treat police as ordinary employees, but frankly I do not. Frankly, the police have too much responsibility and too much power, and far more care needs to be taken in their management. Again I say, given the length of time that it has taken to eradicate corruption in the Queensland police force and the New South Wales police force, where the battle is ongoing, and given the price the community pays for those sorts of police forces, why on earth would one tamper lightly with a good police service? The police have every right to ask



what have they been doing that is so wrong; what behaviour this Minister seeks to punish; and at what these punitive measures are aimed. The answer is 'None.'

This Government desperately needs to review the way in which it controls police matters. As I said, whenever one changes an institution as important as the police, one should ask a number of questions. First, does it address some sort of fault or failing in the police force? The answer to that is 'No.' Secondly, has there been a rigorous examination by the Government of the need for this measure and what it will do? In my view, the answer is 'No.' Thirdly, is it likely to leave us with a police force at least as good as the one we have? The answer again is 'No.' That is why I therefore urge the Government to take this Bill away—I assume it will have the numbers to pass it in this House—and think about it again. I indicate that the Opposition does not support this Bill.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite):** I support the Bill. I do so because I have a particular interest in police and policing. Why is that so? Perhaps it started at a very early age in my case because my father was a policeman and I was brought up in a police family, but also I had the good fortune to serve 23 years in the defence force, during the course of which I had occasion to work with a number of State police forces and the Federal Police, in particular in connection with the national counter terrorist plan which involved exercises with State and Federal Police at a range of levels, but also on a number of projects where the Army, and particularly special forces, was providing skills training to various State police forces to help with their tactical response groups, and so on. So, I have had both professional and personal involvement with policing in addition to that experience which we all have as citizens of this great State and country when working with State and Federal police on a daily basis.

I agree with most of what the member for Elder had to say tonight, particularly in respect of the important role that the police force plays. However, I disagree with many of his conclusions. Policing and being a member of the police force is simply not just a job. Being a policeman and being part of a police service is not just a career. In fact, it is a way of life. It is a commitment not only on the part of the police officer but also on the part of his family, and it is an involvement and an undertaking that affects his entire life. It is not the sort of career or job that one does from one year to the next with a view to changing it in a couple of years. It is a full-on commitment.

Having said that, I must also say that it is a commitment that makes very special demands on those who are fortunate enough to serve, and it is a commitment that requires extremely high standards of performance and conduct from its members. They would be the first to call for a code of conduct and for high standards to be placed upon them because they are professionals and because they belong to an extremely professional body. They would be the first to call for procedures and processes to enable that code of conduct and that high level of achievement to be maintained. They would be the first to call for mechanisms that guarantee that the high status and position of the police force in this State are maintained.

My understanding of the legislation governing South Australia is that it has remained basically untouched since the Police Act 1952. The existing legislation provides for a rigid management system and does not reflect modern human resource management needs or even changes in the work of the police over recent years.

The Bill makes significant and long overdue changes in the management of the South Australia Police and establishes a modern management structure as a basis for performance. It introduces a professional conduct and disciplinary system, and I have no problems with that. It streamlines the processing of misconduct issues which will allow greater focus to be placed on the investigation and prosecution of serious conduct matters. It streamlines promotional appointments and appeals. Again, I have no problem with that.

Within South Australia for some time the name 'South Australia Police' or 'SAPOL' has been used without the word 'Force'. This Bill recognises that change by taking the word 'Force' out of the description and putting the police in its proper perspective as providing an extremely important community service to this State. The changes in the concept of policing are reflected in the Bill which sets out the purposes of South Australia Police to reflect the changing roles and functions, with particular emphasis on the service provided to the community: the emphasis is on 'service'.

In line with modern management practices, many clauses of the Bill are concerned with transferring power previously vested in either the Minister or the Governor to the Commissioner, and the member for Elder made mention of that. I refer, for example, to the appointment and number of non-commissioned officers and the removal of the involvement of the Governor in the appointment of commissioned officers.

The Bill also makes the Commissioner subject to the direction of the Minister rather than the Governor. I have no problem with that. That is called effective management. What the Opposition seems to be saying is that it wants to put someone in charge of the police force but it wants to require that person to report to the world. It wants to have a range of mechanisms in place to make sure that he cannot do his job effectively. Having appointed him, we do not trust him to effectively manage the force, therefore we need to implement a range of measures to ensure that his effective control of the force is impaired. I do have a problem with that.

The examples given earlier of police corruption and the breakdown of effective policing in States such as Queensland are lamentable, and I agree with many of the points the member for Elder has made, but my argument is that that was the responsibility and the fault of the Queensland Government. It appointed that Commissioner and he failed to do his job. Had it appointed a decent and proper Commissioner, the circumstances would have been different. It is muddy logic to conclude that, because in that particular case the Commissioner was found to have been acting unlawfully, the whole concept of the Commissioner's being empowered to commission, command, organise, control and coordinate his force is flawed; it simply is not. The answer is to find the right man and to employ that Commissioner on the right terms and basis so that he is responsible and accountable to Government. The Bill also establishes a human resource management philosophy for all actions concerning human resource management issues.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Waite has the call.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Recent amendments to the Police Act provided for the appointment of Assistant Commissioners on contractual terms. Provision is now made for the appointment of officers on term appointments. I have no problem with that. The Bill also provides for the appointment of persons who are not members of SAPOL to the rank of senior constable or above on term appointments. This

provision will give the Commissioner flexibility to identify specific positions which require the direction of specific resources to provide specific outcomes within given parameters.

**An honourable member:** For example?

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** For example, the system proposed is not so different from that well established and in use within the Australian Defence Force. If the Australian Defence Force wants to hire or has a need—as it has had—for helicopter pilots for the purpose of flying helicopters alone, it does not put those people through a four year officer training course involving a whole range of skills which are totally unrelated to helicopter pilot duties and waste the taxpayers' money: it has a vehicle to recruit those people into the service directly, give them the minimum of training required for them effectively to perform the duties for which they have been hired and put them to work. The same applies for doctors, lawyers, psychologists and a range of other specialist appointments. They have a direct entry officer scheme to train and then hire on a three year contract—called a special service officer category—such professionals to provide for a service need. It does not require those officers to be trained to the extent of other officers, nor does it offer them full-time permanent positions.

The current arrangements in the South Australian police force require not only that but, in such cases, time, effort and taxpayers' money are wasted training people in a range of skills that they do not need. Such people are also offered permanent employment when the very need for their employment may be temporary. It seems to me that it is a very sensible management mechanism to bring the South Australian police force's human management arrangements into the 1990s.

Appointments to a rank instead of to a position, together with the ability to laterally transfer, will promote organisational efficiency by allowing the Commissioner to move officers for organisational efficiency, management development needs and anti-corruption strategies. A member aggrieved by a lateral transfer will be able to have his or her grievance dealt with in accordance with a specified process. What we are saying is, 'Let us put this person in charge of the police force, but let us not enable him to manage his people. Let us not enable him to move officers from one location to another or one position to another, as the needs of the police service require.'

The Opposition appears to be arguing that that is an arrangement that we should encourage. This Bill seeks to break free of the shackles of inefficient personnel management to enable the Commissioner to move his people around to meet the needs of the community. I cannot see any difficulty with that. Presently, commissioned officers are appointed to a particular position—for example, the Assistant Commissioner, Crime. Under the proposed Bill, a promotion to a particular position will be made only when the position has been identified as one of a specialist nature. Instead, it is intended that promotion to a rank will be based on generic competencies identified as being common to that rank.

The Bill also allows the Commissioner laterally to transfer the member from one position to another. That is a practice which has been commonplace in the defence force from time immemorial. If a person is promoted to a position or appointment—major, lieutenant colonel or whatever—he may then move from command of a company to an operations management position for a two year posting, then to a personnel management position. He may then move to a training

management position and then go back into the command structure and command, on promotion, at a higher level. In this way, organisations ensure that their senior management personnel have had experience in a range of fields right across the organisation before being promoted from one level to another. These management processes are basic common-sense in large organisations—public sector and private—and, in particular, in organisations such as the defence force and the police service. It is in this way that one develops leaders for the future within a police service. And it is this Bill that will enable officers to be so moved and to gain such experience.

The member for Elder has made the point (with which I thoroughly agree) that we have good reason to be proud of our police force: it is a disciplined and professional service. The police deserve a system of management which is a credit to them and a credit to the State. The present Act and regulations are very prescriptive in their approach to disciplinary matters. What is needed today is an approach which promotes professional standards, supported by all members of the organisation and which provide for diverse strategies to deal with people not upholding professional standards; because they will always be there—as has been shown in New South Wales and Queensland. And let us never presume that those risks will not arise here.

The Bill provides for a two-tiered disciplinary procedure. Major misconduct will be dealt with by the Police Disciplinary Tribunal, established under the Police Complaints and Disciplinary Proceedings Act 1985. Minor misconduct will be dealt with through informal inquiry. The standard of proof in an informal inquiry is proof on the balance of probabilities. A finding of an informal inquiry may be reviewed. Anyone who remembers the O.J. Simpson case would appreciate just how difficult it is to prove a person's guilt 'beyond a reasonable doubt'. Yet that is the archaic arrangement that we have at present. Under this Bill, criminal behaviour by members of SAPOL will continue to be dealt with in the criminal justice system.

The Bill provides some flexibility for the Commissioner of Police to manage unsatisfactory performance by transferring a member to a position of the same or lower rank or by terminating the appointment of a member. However, no appointment can be terminated unless the member has been allowed a period of between three and six months to improve his or her performance, and a panel has confirmed that the process and assessments made conform to the requirements of the Act and are reasonable in the circumstances. These are important and reasonable disciplinary measures that involve checks and balances.

The Police Appeal Board and the Promotions Review Board are replaced by a one person police tribunal comprising a judge of the District Court. The Police Appeal Board hears appeals against the termination of the services of a member and the Promotion Review Board, as its name indicates, hears promotion appeals. The proposed single person review tribunal is intended to streamline the process and to promote consistency in decisions. From my reading of the Bill, this step does away with red tape and, effectively, management by committee. It empowers the police force to get on with the business of policing. The Bill is an important measure which recognises the role of the police in today's society which promotes the effective management of SAPOL and which assists the Commissioner in responding to the needs of the community.

The many Neighbourhood Watch groups and other community organisations in my electorate of Waite have a keen interest in this issue. So, I have involved them in the development of this Bill, and I will keep them informed. The police provide a crucial service to this community. I have visited the police at Sturt and spoken with them on other occasions within my electorate and raised this Bill with them. From the discussions I have had with them, they are generally supportive of the Bill and the need for change.

South Australia is lucky compared with some other States in that it has a professional police service. That may not always be so unless we have in place a set of arrangements which will enable the police service to do its job. Let us help the police to keep it that way by putting in place a process which they own to manage their affairs by enabling the Commissioner to manage the police service so that it meets community needs. Let us have the best police service possible and enable each individual police officer, if he so chooses, to rise to the top of his field and be promoted to the highest ranks.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition):** I rise to oppose the Bill before the House. In doing so, I point out to those who might read *Hansard* that this Opposition has supported more than 90 per cent of the legislation presented to this Parliament by the Brown and Olsen Governments. So, opposing this Bill is not a step that the Opposition takes lightly, but it believes that it would be derelict in its duty to rubber stamp a Bill which seriously undermines the integrity, impartiality, professionalism and performance of the finest police force in the country.

South Australia's police force is proudly proclaimed, and rightly so, as an exemplar in terms of holding the respect and trust of the community. I know this to be true. As the local member in Salisbury for nearly 13 years, I have had contact with outstanding and devoted police officers who passionately believe in their own professionalism and community service. I have been to football clubs and schools and seen local police give up their spare time to make a difference for kids. I have met police officers who spend many hours working for charities such as those which support children with cancer. Indeed, on a more personal level, when my home and Salisbury office were threatened some years ago, I could not fault the sensitivity and professional support my family received from both local police in Salisbury and Star Force officers.

As a Minister with a variety of portfolios, including Aboriginal affairs and youth affairs, I met and worked with outstanding police throughout the State. I am thinking of the Hindley Street police and their efforts to work with youth workers, kids at risk, kids with drug and health problems, street kids and so on, as well as the teams of support and Aboriginal police aides in this State in places such as Ernabella who work so well in terms of Aboriginal policing at the interface between the South Australian law and traditional Aboriginal law and customs.

That is why the police have and will continue to have my strong and active support. I believe that the police in this State enjoy the support and trust of the vast majority of South Australians, but the key to earning that trust is a police force that is judged to be clean and professional. What we do not want in South Australia and what we have not seen are the Terry Lewis, Russ Hinze debacles in Queensland or the Rex Jackson type scandals in New South Wales. However, that is

exactly what we could be facing in future years if this Bill is passed.

We have all heard that the key to problems faced in Queensland during the Bjelke-Petersen rule related to the lack of and, indeed, complete ignorance of the separation of powers under the Westminster system. I might ask the Minister during Committee whether he understands the separation of powers. Some may attempt to argue that this Bill actually increases this separation by transferring powers from the Police Minister to the Commissioner of Police. However, that argument overlooks two key facts: first, police commissioners are seen increasingly as political appointments, reacting immediately to requests from the Minister for Police as though they were operational directions and, therefore, perhaps being seen to muddy that line of separation; and, secondly, the essential transparency of a process which underpins the operation of the South Australian police will disappear under a layer of murk.

We will be left with processes of selection which will, as the member for Elder explained, allow a Terry Lewis to float to the top in South Australia and selections, transfers and dismissals that will never see the public light of day. At present, legislation, which provides for the administration of our police force, ensures proper and fair processes for staffing procedures. While they are perhaps not perfect, they are certainly superior in their totality to what is being proposed by this Minister and by the Olsen Government.

Whilst I have had only limited contact with our current Police Commissioner, everything I have seen convinces me that he is a decent, honourable man with honourable intentions for our police force. On behalf of the alternative Government, I take this opportunity to welcome formally the Commissioner Mal Hyde and his family to our State. I know from my parliamentary colleagues in Victoria that he had a high reputation in his former position with the Victorian police. Who knows what the future holds in terms of future appointments to the position of Police Commissioner. Transparency of procedure, particularly staffing procedure, is germane if systemic corruption in or of our police is to be avoided. There must also be significant and visible separation between police operations and the Police Minister, otherwise we will see continuous political witch-hunts, with the Executive arm of Government instructing the police to carry out their political dirty work.

I hope in South Australia we will never see a police force where a weak police commissioner does the Minister's political bidding or when, in order to secure promotion or reappointment at senior levels, we will see the blurring of the operational arm's length relationship between the police and the Government. I never want to see in South Australia police reports containing false, malicious or unproven allegations against individuals—including police in the past—are handed by senior police to politicians or their staff for use in this House or to journalists. That would be improper—even corrupt—if that were to occur. However, the replacement of tenured positions with contract positions will only increase the pressure on police to respond to the will of their political masters. Without security of tenure, individual officers will come under enormous pressure to curry favour with the Police Minister—particularly a bent one—and others to protect their futures inside or even outside the force.

There needs to be ongoing trust and cooperation between the South Australian police and other police forces around the country. I have already put on the parliamentary record concerns I had with matters surrounding the awarding of the

water management contract. On that occasion, following discussions I had with the National Crime Authority, that body handed over carriage of the inquiry to the South Australian police, which indicated a high level of trust in the integrity of our police by the national police body. But will that level of trust still exist if changes are made that impact negatively on the integrity of our police? I think not and, therefore, the operational effectiveness of our police force and other police forces will be compromised.

All of us would have followed the Wood Royal Commission in New South Wales. That commission placed great emphasis on the fact that, first, the police are entrusted by the community with great powers and responsibilities and, secondly, that the police must reciprocate this trust by achieving and maintaining high standards of integrity, professionalism, impartiality and performance. But let us remember that our police do not just have responsibilities and duties: they also have rights, individual and collective, and this Liberal Government and this Minister are seeking to substantially erode those rights. They are showing an extraordinary contempt for the police, particularly in the working ranks. Labor wants to protect the protectors, and that is why we are opposing this Bill.

The most surprising thing about the Government's approach to this legislation is the lack of awareness that police are, in effect, independent officers holding office under the Crown. It is exactly because of this status that all processes relating to staffing—and in this I include appointment, promotion, transfer, discipline and dismissal—must be thorough, transparent and, above all, fair. The Government's legislation fails all these tests. It is appropriate for me to pay tribute to the Police Association for its professionalism in consulting with the Opposition over this legislation. It has raised a number of major concerns with the legislation, in which Labor fully concurs. These concerns are that the changes to the Police Act will:

- unjustifiably widen the Commissioner's powers and increase informal processes in a number of new disciplinary codes of conduct in employment areas;
- allow the Commissioner to determine the number of sergeant and constable positions without ministerial approval as is currently the case;
- introduce term contracts, the terms of which are to be determined by the Commissioner;
- substantially lower standards of proof in disciplinary processes, allowing officers to be dismissed on the balance of probabilities rather than beyond reasonable doubt;
- give the Commissioner new powers to dismiss officers for unsatisfactory performance, without recourse to the Minister as is currently the case; and
- transfer officers without conducting selection processes.

I agree with the Police Association that in terms of human resource management the changes can at best be described as regressive, as they undermine fairness and accountability in the South Australia Police by investing power in a single office rather than in transparent processes. I cannot say that every clause in the two police Bills before the House is unworthy. Indeed, there are some initiatives that would streamline police procedures. But, given the Government's lack of consultation with the Opposition and others over the contents of this legislation, and given that the Opposition has concerns with the bulk of this legislation, it makes little sense to attempt to amend this Bill on the floor of this Chamber.

Rather, I anticipate that, when this Bill proceeds to the Legislative Council, commonsense will prevail and the Government will withdraw it and bring back properly considered legislation later in the year. The alternative for the Government is for the Bill to be referred to an Upper House committee which, following hearing from witnesses, could forge a consensus for change. I believe that the Police Association should be first in the queue in terms of the witnesses to be called. I urge the Minister, rather than proceeding down this road to nowhere, to withdraw this Bill and immediately enter into meaningful negotiations with all the relevant stakeholders to achieve the best result for South Australia. This Police Bill shows an extraordinary contempt for the best police force in this country. That is why Labor is opposing it.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE (Mawson):** I would like to put a few things on the record generally tonight before speaking specifically about the Bill. Whilst I understand that in more recent times it has been fashionable for members of Parliament to go out with police on patrol, I do not believe that that has been the norm other than over the past couple of years. Some five years ago and since then I have been on a couple of police patrols, so I have enjoyed the opportunity to actually spend eight hours on a Friday or Saturday night, when the shifts are often busier than during the rest of the week, experiencing at first hand what happens to police officers when they are out on the beat.

I also have had the privilege of attending numerous Police Association monthly Monday lunches and, if I had a little more time over and above my electorate duties, I would have attended more. The reason I highlight that to the House is that I have appreciated the opportunities that both the association and the rank and file have given me to understand what happens in the police force.

It was interesting tonight to hear the Leader of the Opposition suggest that there was an opportunity for the Government of the day of whatever persuasion to interfere, perhaps, with some of the matters that are normal duties of police management on a day-to-day basis. I happen to have a close family friend who held an extremely senior position, but I will not say which rank because members might recognise that person. I also watched with a great deal of interest the proceedings as they emerged in the Salisbury affair. I suggest to both the Deputy Speaker and my colleagues that, while it was not in black and white on the front page of the paper all the time, previous Governments—and I would not suggest they were of our persuasion—may have had a reasonable influence in the demise of a couple of very senior police officers in the past.

It is interesting for the Leader of the Opposition to suggest all of a sudden, when a modern management Bill is being introduced, that it will lead to corruption by the Police Minister and/or the Premier or Government of the day. I suggest that senior police officers have been handled badly in the past by, in particular, Labor Governments. That is a fact by which I stand, and I know a lot more about it than I am prepared to say tonight because I know a couple of individuals who were severely disadvantaged during that time—but members can read what they like into what I am saying.

I would also like to talk about a few other issues. I have been keen to see the police department provide opportunities for committed police officers to grow through the ranks. Recently, I had the privilege of being fully briefed, and I was

not backward in coming forward in asking the Police Commissioner some questions about which I had major concerns. I want to see committed, enthusiastic, honest, young police officers given the opportunity to grow through the ranks: I do not want to see police officers being rewarded because of their years of service. I do not believe, as we come into the next millennium, that is leading edge, best practice management. I want to see those people with ability given the opportunity to grow through the force—just as it should happen in the parliamentary arena or any other arena, that is, reward on merit; not like within the union system where, if you have been a good boy or a good girl for long enough, your ultimate reward will be to come into the Parliament, sitting in a comfortable blue ribbon Labor seat for the rest of your working life and retiring on a fat pension.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will have an opportunity to make a contribution.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I have had enough of that nonsense and I want to see police officers duly rewarded—officers who have been putting up with druggies and those people none of us wants to see on the streets, and who have had to put up with the sort of pressure that none of us here knows anything about. I believe that, with a little common-sense, less politicking and some clear and articulate direction by the Police Association, by members of this Parliament and by the Police Commissioner, the ultimate goal of this Bill will be in the very best interests of two particular groups of people in this State; first, the police officers; and, secondly, the community of South Australia.

What disappoints me at the moment is that I do not believe there has been enough open and frank debate without the politics between the association, the Police Commissioner and the Opposition. The Minister has told me that he has an open door policy, but I do not believe there has been enough dialogue. I want to see more dialogue in order to work through this matter with the association and the Commissioner, and some genuine fair trading with this Bill on the part of the Opposition.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** Well, you trade all the time, and the fact is that we should be looking at the issues I have just spoken about. We cannot work in the next millennium with a 1950s Police Bill. Most of the police officers I have spoken to have told me they have been sick and tired for a long time of not being able to have an opportunity to be involved in what happens in the development and management of the police force. According to what I have been told when I have been briefed, this will be a transparent opportunity for rank and file to have more input into what happens in the police force in the future. If members read the Bill and work through the issues, I believe that that can happen.

I have no problem with police officers not doing clerical work. One of the things on which I actually disagree with the Police Association is that they want to talk about numbers. What I am interested in as a member of Parliament is numbers of police in police cars on the beat policing and protecting the community. I am not interested in seeing highly-trained police officers sitting at a computer in offices typing reports, as I would, with two fingers. That is not protecting the community and allowing policing to occur in the best interests of the community.

Let us look at numbers on the beat. If the numbers on the beat are the way I have been told they are, and I will accept that, I want to see yet more police on the beat, particularly in

the south. That is where I want to see the police and that is what concerns me as a member of Parliament—not overall numbers, because today you cannot have highly-trained police officers sitting behind desks, and that is a fact. I would like to talk about a few issues with respect to human—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** You can say what you like. You will have your chance in a while. I would like to talk about some of my concerns. I have talked about the fact that I believe it should be merit-based selection, not just taken on years of service. I have been informed reliably by the Commissioner—and I will hold him to this, because I happen to believe that the Commissioner is an honest guy who is doing a good job in his position to build the police force into the next millennium—

*Members interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** The fact is that the Police Commissioner has told me that the merit-based selection process will be exactly that. They will be looking at police officers to come up through the ranks who have proven themselves and who have ability. There will not be any discrimination. There will be equal opportunity for promotion and advancement. One thing I have been concerned about is the opportunity for nepotism and patronage, etc, but he has assured me that that will not occur. What I would also like to say tonight—

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** If you look at what has happened in Queensland and places like that, we have been fortunate that we have not seen that. The only possible time I can recall that I have seen anything like it was with Operation Hygiene. I have said to plenty of people before, and I am happy to say it again now—and this applied under the current Act—Operation Hygiene was a whitewash as far as I am concerned. I have had police officers in my electorate who were very poorly treated and used, in my opinion, as scapegoats for senior ranks to whitewash the situation and bury it under the rug. Fortunately the police force has been so good that it has got on with the job. I remind members that that has occurred under the current Act.

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** If you do not agree with that and reckon that all those police who were scapegoats were not scapegoats, then say so. I happen to have quite a lot of evidence from genuine police officers who have said to me that Operation Hygiene, under a Labor Government, was a whitewash. You cannot say that things have been fair and equitable so far. With respect to contracts, I am advised that lateral entries—

**Mr FOLEY:** On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, this is a very serious matter that I would like to raise. The member for Mawson has just accused the former Police Commissioner, Mr David Hunt, of undertaking a political whitewash on behalf of the Labor Party. That is the most serious of allegations, and there may not be a specific Standing Order relating to people of the Public Service being defamed, but a former Police Commissioner undertaking a whitewash operation is the most serious of allegations.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I do not believe there is a point of order. I think the matters raised by the member for Mawson can be answered during the course of the debate.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I will set the record straight. In my opinion, some constituents who made representations to me were not handled correctly under Operation Hygiene. They

have paid the penalty. I have had a look at the matter, and I am happy to say what I said. I did not say that it was a Labor whitewash: I said that in my opinion it was a whitewash that put undue pressure, further sentencing and penalty on some police officers who I do not believe were fairly dealt with—and I stand by that. I come back to the Bill we are considering now. They are the sorts of concerns I have had with this new Bill. Whilst I have had some representation from police officers and have taken up their issues, I believe that those issues are not of as much concern as put forward by some of the police officers. Therefore, provided two matters are worked through further, as far as I am concerned as one member of Parliament—and the Minister is looking into those issues for me—I sit comfortably with this Bill.

I suggest that this Bill is about modernising old legislation, speeding up processes and about bringing us into line with best practice in human resources management. I do not see anything wrong with that because, whilst the police force may not be exactly like a normal Government agency, the fact is that we need to be modern, use best practice and give opportunities across the board to the police department (SAPOL) as a whole. The community also needs to be sure that checks and balances are in place if corruption or anything untoward occurs as a result of the actions of individual police officers. I have been assured that, from a disciplinary point of view, there is nothing in this Bill that will work more against the police officer than has been the case in the past. In fact, they do have a right of appeal to the Supreme Court—

*Ms Thompson interjecting:*

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I can say it simply, because they have a right of appeal to the Supreme Court. The member for Reynell may not understand, but they have a right of appeal to the Supreme Court, an independent arbitrator. I suggest that in many ways that is probably better than having the matter go before the Minister, because an independent arbitrator in the form of a judge is trained and highly qualified when it comes to assessing the situation. I do not believe that that is always the case with a Minister, irrespective of who the Minister may be. I think that most members would agree with that.

In the Police Association letter, which I received only yesterday, the association states that, if legislated, the draft Bill would be damaging to the South Australian Police Department and to the South Australian community. The letter states:

The proposed changes concentrate substantial power in the office of the Police Commissioner, undermining parliamentary checks currently in place in the administration of Police Acts and reversing efforts to improve transparency and accountability within the police department. The Association is moreover concerned that the proposed changes will exacerbate problems identified in recent reports that draw strong correlations between police officers' falling commitment levels and lack of organisational support.

I am the first to accept that police morale does need to be lifted. The last saga with the police department was a sad situation. It did not do the police any good. Sure, it did not help the Government, either, and it certainly did not do the general rapport between the community and the police any good whatever. I hope that this time there will be some sensible and clear discussion among all the parties. Just because a Bill provides that a matter has to be put before a Minister is not really a parliamentary check. We all know that, in reality, the Minister will only rubber stamp it. The Minister will rubber stamp 99.9 times out of 100 what is put before him or her by a Commissioner. That has happened in

the past; I am sure that it probably happens now; and under the current Act it will happen in the future. I want to refer to concerns that I had with contracting, because I for one would be absolutely opposed and would cross the floor if this Bill—

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I have done it before and I would do it again. If this Bill put all rank and file police officers on contract, I would cross the floor, because that would be absolutely ridiculous. For the reasons put forward in the letter and in the advertisements placed in the press by the Police Association, I would not support that for one minute. I would like my community to know that this is not about putting all police under contract: it is about putting Sergeants and above on contract. I would suggest that, when we give people senior positions, there is nothing wrong with having them under contract.

*Mr Conlon interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Elder has made his contribution. He will have a further opportunity in Committee to ask questions.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** Perhaps the reason some good police officers have not had the opportunity for promotion or why they have left the police department and have gone elsewhere into private practice or into security in the private sector or have sat there with two stripes and a bar on their shoulder for 10, 15 or 20 years is that under the current system there is not the pressure to perform best practice in the senior ranks. The counter can occur. The shadow spokesperson can look up at the gallery and shake his head, but he will try to oppose whatever we do to bring in a new Police Bill. I ask the House and the shadow spokesperson why is it that, if we go out and talk to rank and file police officers, they tell us they want a new Police Bill. I have not had one police officer tell me that he or she did not want new legislation. It is because they want better opportunities.

If one wants to exercise a bit of political muscle in this, and if Opposition members have a problem with one or two clauses, they should sit down and negotiate with the Commissioner, the association and the Minister and resolve those issues for the rank and file, but they should not knock the opportunity for good and hard working rank and file officers to grow up through the police force. I am concerned about bringing in non South Australian police officers. I refer to what the Police Commissioner said under 'contracts' in 'The Police Bill: The Facts', as follows:

Term appointments will be available as an option for commissioned officer positions and for members who enter SAPOL at NCO rank.

He then goes on to state:

Lateral entries will only be for special skill positions where those skills do not already exist in SAPOL.

I accept that, with modern technology in forensic science and other divisions of the police force at this moment, there might not be a police officer trained, and I have said to the Police Commissioner and the Minister that I accept that they would want to bring in such lateral entries. I have asked, and I hope the Police Association picks this up, for a real plan for the future of policing as a result of this Bill. Let us identify where the new opportunities are for policing, and let us encourage and show police officers who already have degrees and who are very skilful both academically and in handling people in difficult positions where there are opportunities in SAPOL's future and get them trained so that there will be a minimum of lateral entries. I would like to see police officers being

guided and shown where the opportunities are for advancement and then being given the right support to train for that advancement.

That has not happened in the past. When I spoke to officers six or seven years ago when I visited the gym and when they were walking the beat, they told me that that is the biggest angst that they have. They have had no clear direction, and I suggest that this Bill presents an opportunity. I have been told that in the business plan for the future direction of SAPOL there will be identification of these sorts of niche opportunities for police, and I encourage officers and the association to ensure that that commitment is enforced by both the association and the Commissioner so that police get a chance to grow through the ranks.

Finally, I thank police officers who look after the South Coast Division. I appreciate the difficulty that they work under and, as a member of Parliament, I will do all I can to make sure that they are given a fair go, are adequately protected when they are working and that they are given a fair chance to grow through the police force.

**Mr CLARKE (Ross Smith):** It is always a pleasure to follow the member for Mawson in a contribution in this place because, even if one spoke Swahili, it would sound like pearls of wisdom in comparison with what the member for Mawson had to say tonight. It also gives living proof to the old adage that a little bit of knowledge is a dangerous thing.

The member for Mawson spoke absolute nonsense tonight. The honourable member contradicted himself on a number of occasions and, indeed, a number of the points he made are not contained in this Bill whatsoever, and the safeguards he says do exist do not exist. He does not know the present practices with respect to the existing Police Act and police structure. As a former shadow Minister for Police, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to support the comments and observations made by our current shadow Minister for Police and the Leader of the Opposition with respect to the shortcomings of this legislation.

I will not take up the time of the House by repeating all that they had to say, except to say that I endorse every point that they did make. However, I will still use up my 19 minutes by making equally pertinent points. I will dwell a little on the member for Waite's contribution, whom I would tag the Augusto Pinochet of the South Australian Parliament in the way that he sees the role of the police force, under civilian control by a Minister, and his analogy with our defence forces. I understood the member for Waite to say, in his role as the chief of staff of the armed forces in Chile (the Pinochet rule), that the chief of the defence forces in Australia is, in fact, the head of the armed forces; that you do not have a Governor-General who is commander-in-chief of the armed forces; you do not have a Minister for Defence; and you do not have an Executive Council which authorises the various things that defence forces must do to initiate any action on the part of those particular defence forces.

The member for Waite is saying, 'Look, what we have in the defence force is what we should have in the armed forces', except that we do not actually have it in the defence force because the Governor-General is the commander-in-chief. We have a Minister for Defence and we have an Executive Council and the armed forces are subservient, or at least we hope they are, to civilian rule. Although, given what the member for Waite said, I will check the Constitution just to see whether it is being carried out. The member for Waite would have us say, 'Repeal all of these police force

powers. Put the hiring and firing and putting people on contract and the conditions of service, and so on, into the hands of one person—a Police Commissioner—and trust that he or she will do the right thing.' Of course, that is a nonsense.

We also heard from the member for Waite, as we did from the member for Mawson, these hackneyed clichés about long and overdue restructuring of the management of the police and bringing it up to world's best practice. Frankly, every time I hear the term 'world's best practice' I want to head for a gun, except that they have been confiscated and I cannot get one. The fact is that they are overused—

*Mr Venning interjecting:*

**Mr CLARKE:** The member for Schubert should not interject. The honourable member should consult with the member for Chaffey about whether he can be admitted into the National Party and become its Deputy Leader in the South Australian Parliament. That is what I think the member for Schubert should be concentrating on.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr CLARKE:** I digress. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The member for Waite did not ask in any detail in this debate today whether the existing practices were falling down. I am not saying, and nor is anyone else in this Opposition, that there cannot be improvements to the Police Act and that streamlining, and all those other hackneyed phrases, cannot be brought in to make a better management structure as far as the police force is concerned. Neither, as far as I know, is the Police Association saying that. It is not saying that the present Act should remain unchanged.

Indeed, when I was the shadow Police Minister one complaint of the Police Association was that it had been promised a new Police Act so many times by this Government that it was very tired of waiting for it. The association wanted a Minister who would get on and do it. The trouble was that, every time a new Police Minister was appointed and started to understand the police force, there was another leadership upheaval in the Liberal Party and a new Minister appeared.

If we go back over the history of the Brown Government, we see that we had Wayne Matthew, the outrider, heading up the police force. He loved the sound of sirens and motor cycle escorts. He was absolutely obsessed with them. Then he suffered as a result of the leadership coup. Stephen Baker, when he was Deputy Premier, was Minister for Police for a period of time as well as being Treasurer and various other things. Then he was axed as a result of the coup by the current Premier.

Then we had the most effective Minister of the Olsen-Brown team, namely, the former Deputy Premier, the member for Bragg, who was the Minister for Police for about nine months. He also enjoyed the job and antagonised police officers at every possible opportunity, and I must say as shadow Minister that that helped us enormously during the election campaign, particularly in the area of Focus 21 when they wanted to cut back on the number of police officers in a whole range of police stations right across the State, but in particular at Para Hills, Henley Beach and so on. That brought us huge bonuses in terms of votes for the Labor Party.

The Brown-Olsen Government did what I thought was very near impossible; that is, it alienated a conservative bastion of voters (in terms of the more younger police officers over the past 20 years) who more often than not traditionally tended to vote for the Liberal Party rather than

for us. However, this Government was so inept in its handling of matters that it even managed to turn them into staunch Labor supporters. Now with this present piece of legislation what the Minister has done is turn them into the equivalent of the maritime union, because the Police Association is so repulsed (as are its members) by this type of draconian action that his Government is undertaking.

I refer to some clauses of the Bill which have already been briefly referred to by our shadow Minister; that is, clauses 20 to 23 of the Bill. Clause 20 provides:

The Commissioner may appoint as many commanders, superintendents, inspectors and other officers of police as the Commissioner thinks necessary.

I wonder who the hell is in charge of the Treasury because these are expensive items. The fact is that under the existing legislation it is the Minister who sets the budget and the Minister has to go cap in hand to Cabinet to try to get the money necessary to appoint those particular ranks. Is this Minister telling the Parliament that the Commissioner, an unelected person on a five year contract, can make 3 500 police officers—if he wanted to act like George III or some other lunatic former head of State of the British Empire—commanders, superintendents and inspectors?

In other words, we could have a Ugandan style army where there are no lance corporals and everyone is a general with a row of ribbons on their chest—and all at considerable price. Surely that is not what the Minister is telling us in this Bill: that the Commissioner of the day has that sort of discretion. However, if members read the legislation, they will see that it says in black and white that the Commissioner can do as he pleases with respect to those types of appointments. Of course, it lends itself to all types of nepotism, cronyism and so forth which we have seen happen in Queensland, as has been eloquently explained tonight by the member for Elder.

We also see in clause 21 that not only may the Commissioner appoint as many commanders, superintendents and inspectors and so on but also that he can appoint as many sergeants and constables as he thinks necessary. So, it does not involve the Cabinet or the Treasurer, who has to try to find the money. Quite frankly, we would all like a police officer on the corner of every street in terms of fighting crime, but we know that is not affordable. What this Government is saying in this legislation is, 'To hell with Executive Government, to hell with accountability before this Parliament: the Commissioner standing alone, and unelected, will be able to appoint as many people as he likes to these not inconsiderably priced positions within the police force.'

In addition, the Commissioner is able to make further divisions in the ranks—officers and other members—as he sees fit under the regulations which, as the member for Elder pointed out, are not subject to parliamentary scrutiny in the sense of their being able to be disallowed by either House of Parliament. The member for Mawson made an absurd point suggesting that, from his point of view, he might cross the floor if it meant that a whole range of ordinary rank and file police officers could be turned into contract employees, and hell might freeze over as well! Clause 23 provides:

An appointment of an officer, or an appointment of a person who is not a member of the SA Police to a position in SA Police of or above the rank of senior constable, may be made. . .

It then goes on to deal with the conditions of the contract of employment that could be engaged in. From my understanding, that is almost half the number of sworn police officers in this State. If the member for Mawson was fair dinkum

about his statement, he would cross the floor on that clause on its own.

I am discussing these matters quickly because we will deal with this in more detail in Committee. Clause 28, which relates to performance standards of officers, provides:

It is a condition of appointment as an officer below the rank of Assistant Commissioner that the officer is to meet performance standards as set from time to time by the Commissioner.

What will be the subjective tests with respect to performance standards? What does it mean in the modern police sense? Can the Police Commissioner set different standards of performance for different ranks, for different individuals and for different circumstances throughout the State, because they are all different? Marree is a one-person police station, yet it is probably the largest geographical area that a police officer on his own has to patrol anywhere in the world. It is a huge geographic area that that officer is expected to police and protect.

What will be the standard of performance? Who will keep an oversight of what the Commissioner does? This Bill is predicated on the fact that, as Police Commissioner, the Government is going to recruit Jesus Christ. The Commissioner will be right in all his decisions and he will not act in any way other than totally impartially, totally honestly and totally aboveboard. I wish the Minister luck in finding Jesus Christ to appoint as Police Commissioner. I do not think that person exists in this mortal world.

This Government is so obsessed with outsourcing that the Minister, who is such an acolyte of the Premier and of the economic rationalism of his Leader, wants to outsource himself. He does not want to be a Minister. Yet this morning we were told that he was seriously touted as Deputy Premier. He does not want even to be a junior Minister for Police: he wants to hand over all his remaining powers as Minister for Police to the Police Commissioner. Why have a Minister for Police whatsoever? The function of the Minister for Police is to ensure that there is civilian control over a very important instrument of the State, namely, the police, in order to ensure that the laws are enforced, that they are carried out impartially, and that there are checks and balances in our system.

Under our existing legislation, we do not have, should not have and cannot have lawfully a situation where a Minister can interfere in the day-to-day operations of the police department, because that is the prerogative of the Police Commissioner. On the other hand, the Police Commissioner does not have untrammelled powers in terms of hiring and firing, putting police officers at risk or, if they are only on a five year contract, threatening them that if they do not do something action will be taken. The equivalent of Russ Hinze would come out or a map of South Australia would be displayed on the front of a motor vehicle and the officer would be asked, 'Which part of the State would you like to transfer to, son, because you have offended someone high up in politics or within the police force?'

We just cannot allow that situation to occur. We must have a situation where those checks and balances are applied to the police, who have exceptional powers in our society, to ensure that at the end of the day civilian rule is maintained, that the police force can be held accountable and that the Police Commissioner is also accountable. I am glad that the member for Chaffey is here. I understand that she has been or will soon be approached by police officers who are constituents of hers in the Riverland. I hope she will adopt the same sensible attitude as she has adopted with respect to the sale of ETSA and Optima Energy, and I hope she is able to



persuade her other two so-called Independent Liberal members in this place to vote against this Bill.

If you exclude the Commissioner and a few of his management people, the police force to a person is opposed to this legislation. It diminishes the rights of every police officer and it unfairly enhances the powers of the Police Commissioner to an unparalleled level in this State that has never applied before to the extent where, for all intents and purposes, civilian rule and executive control are removed.

We might as well not have a Minister for Police: we might as well just bring in the Police Commissioner for Question Time every day. That will be of more benefit to us in trying to control the police force than questioning the Minister for Police. Under this Government's own Bill, the Minister for Police is almost non-existent. I realise that the Minister may be a bit upset that he was only a junior Minister when he was appointed as Minister for Police, and perhaps that is why he wants to get rid of his portfolio, but there are other ways of going about enhancing your own future without destroying the fabric of the police force in this State.

As the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Elder have urged the Minister, I would suggest that this Bill will hit a brick wall when it is debated in another place. That is unfortunate, because the Police Association and the police officers want a decent Bill and this will only put the process back even further. The Minister will need greater consultation and he will have to do that whether or not he likes it.

I cannot understand this Government's adopting the attitude it has taken. It is alienating the public generally over ETSA and Optima Energy, it is alienating the police and it is alienating just about every normal, conservative pillar of South Australian society who has been a traditional supporter of and voter for the Liberal Party in this State. From a purely political point of view, I can welcome that; it means more votes to us. I cannot understand the political madness of your own Government. No doubt the member for Chaffey will seek to exploit that, and these antics of this Liberal Government are the reason why the member for Schubert is seriously contemplating joining the National Party. Again I urge the Minister to withdraw his Bill and save us all a lot of time, sit down, start again from scratch, produce a Bill of which we can all be proud and maintain the fine police force that we currently have in this State.

**Mr VENNING (Schubert):** I will speak only briefly to this Bill, but it is very important and I wish to make known my support of it. I take this opportunity to pay the highest tribute to the South Australian police force, as have most members of this House. It is well worthy of its reputation as the best in the land. Whether it be the police on the beat in the city, the Police Greys on parade, a country police officer as a leader in his or her community or the South Australian Police Band of world fame, we should be and are proud of our police force.

When researching this Bill, I rang various members of the force in my electorate. I did not find many problems with it: in fact, it had general support. A senior police officer in the Barossa whom I know well has no problems with this Bill. I very much appreciate the communication that he, as the chief police officer in my electorate, has established with my office. I am assured that it is a good idea that accurate performance measures be put in place, as this Bill does, which is what we expect in relation to all careers today. This Bill brings the Police Act right up to the current time: in fact, it should continue well past the year 2000. It has been a long

time since this was done. Objective measures are a good initiative so that efficiencies and inefficiencies within the department can be identified. There are some concerns about the decision as to what or how hard these performance measures are.

There is a definite need to update and amend this legislation, which has not changed since 1952, a period of 46 years. That is the same age as the member for Ross Smith. It is a long time ago. It brings our police into line with operations in other States, giving us uniformity across the nation.

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**Mr VENNING:** I do, too. And I had more hair then. I support this Bill because it encourages the interstate transfer of officers, particularly when they are seeking a career promotion, and many members of the police force have gone interstate. If the rules are the same, it makes it very easy for career police officers to go from State to State. It is a commonsense move. I hope that this improves the career path for our police officers, because in the past it has not been very good.

The tightening up of the management of the police, including the flexibility of management, is appreciated. A few weeks ago I went to Fort Largs, where I was a guest at the officers' mess. I was very privileged to be there with the officers of the force and both the current and the past Commissioner. It was a unique opportunity. I was there as a guest of my cousin, Inspector Milton Clark, who is a career officer. My family and I are very proud of him. He is certainly a police officer of great merit, and I appreciated meeting his friends. That is an occasion that I remember with fondness.

We have to encourage fairness and equity in all the ranks and bring the force up to the modern codes of practice. A question I have of the Minister is: how will these contracts, particularly the specific contract, work when it comes to police work?

**Mr Foley:** That is for the Committee stage.

**Mr VENNING:** I merely flag the question. We must have trust in our Commissioner, and I am most impressed by Mr Hyde. He has settled in very well and has the respect of his force.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**Mr VENNING:** I have met him on more than one occasion—that night at Fort Largs and again last week. We have given the Commissioner more autonomy over the management of the force, which I believe is a reasonable thing to do and which is included in this Bill. The Commissioner will be subject to ministerial direction and not, as is currently the case, the Governor. To me, that is commonsense, because it makes the channel of command more direct, and the Minister of the Government of the day—whether it be a Liberal or a Labor Government, or whatever—is able to give the Commissioner of the day some direction.

I thank the police for the wonderful job that they do across the whole State, in small communities and in rural towns. Whether it be a football match or an agricultural show, they are there. So, I believe this is a fitting time to pay tribute to the work that they do.

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr VENNING:** The member for Hart laughs: I cannot see what is funny. It is difficult to join into the local community and be the law enforcer at the same time: that is a problem. However, some of our policemen are unique characters and can do just that: they have the respect of their community and also are law enforcers. It is a real balancing

act, but they do a great job. I regret the recent incident at Burra where there was a bit of conflict, but I think that, at times, these people are sent along just to make us appreciate the fine balance that we have. In recent days we have heard discussions about a zero tolerance policy when it comes to crime—an interesting concept that is in vogue in the United States. I believe it has proved to be very successful in big cities, particularly New York.

In conclusion, I appreciate the work of the Commissioner of Police, Mal Hyde. Someone tonight mentioned the Salisbury affair. That is very vivid in my mind, because I was much younger and pretty impressionable in those days.

*Mr Foley interjecting:*

**Mr VENNING:** I can more than remember the Commissioner; I have a personal letter from him, which I have kept to this very day, praising me for the work I did to assist the police. That letter is very special. I hope that such an incident never happens again in any future Parliament of South Australia and that we never again have a Premier or even a Minister in such conflict with a respected Commissioner of Police.

I believe that the core of this Bill is the principle of reward and promotion on merit, and that that is the only way to go. The Bill also addresses the area of police complaints, something which will always exist and which is necessary. I hope that the legislation in this area is fair and equitable for everyone. I was also concerned at the recent police pay dispute. I regret what happened then. As the member for Ross Smith correctly said, we have a lot of fine supporters in the force. We certainly tried them out. With a Bill such as this, I am sure we will win back a lot of them, because we are providing them with modern parameters within which to work. I support the Bill.

**Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** The members of the Government who have spoken so far seem to have unearthed the few policemen or policewomen who actually support this Bill. I do not know where they got them from. If members of the Government are so convinced that the police force in bulk supports the Bill, I ask them why the Minister did not consult properly on this Bill and ask the police force what it wanted rather than rely on the member for Schubert and the member for Waite to ring around to a couple of the policemen and policewomen in their patch to tell them to give it the big tick.

This is a consistent problem with this Government. We hear over and over again that the Government failed to consult the people who are most involved with the major Bills which it brings in here and for which it tries to get a bit of support. The police have not been properly consulted either through the Police Association or directly. The Leader of the Opposition referred to the fact that this Bill was not put to the Opposition for consultation. That made it difficult for us to deal properly with amendments to this Bill. How much worse is it that the Government has not even properly consulted with the people directly affected by this Bill: the Police Association and individual members of the police force.

The Leader of the Opposition also referred to the rights of members of the police force. I must agree with that. The police have a right to have their say about what is to happen to them, to their job and to their career prospects. I am sure the Minister has consulted with the Police Commissioner, the result of which seems to be in the nature of a wish list for the Police Commissioner, but I am also sure that he has not

consulted with the ordinary rank and file members of the police force or the Police Association that represents them.

I do not always agree with police actions in my area, but I usually do. In any case where I have had a disagreement, the police at Elizabeth have dealt with it very well. They have negotiated with me, and they have explained the situation. Sometimes we have agreed to disagree; sometimes we have reached agreement on my problem. I have generally found the police at Elizabeth to be sensible, intelligent and dedicated men and women. The Minister could safely go to them and seek their opinion on this Bill, and they would give a sensible and intelligent response. The Minister might find that he ended up with a Police Bill that was far more workable and equitable. It would be a better Bill for the future than the one before us, and it might have some chance of getting through both Houses of Parliament.

The men and women of the Elizabeth Police Station have an extremely difficult job, and other members have talked about this. They cover the Elizabeth area, which is a large area, spanning from Gawler through to Elizabeth. They deal with horrific incidents of domestic violence, and disputes and crime in the area. They deal with this on a day-to-day basis and they deal with it very well with the limited personnel they have. It is worth going back and talking to these men and women and seeing what they feel might be the best structure for their police force.

A lot of those policemen and women are constituents of mine. They live in my electorate. They have bought houses in some of the nice new housing estates in my electorate. In fact, the very word 'contract' probably gives them the shivers, as it would anyone else in my electorate who has had experience of contract employment. It has been described by the Government as a modern structure, and modern it is, but that does not necessarily mean it is good. Contract employment means that it is far more difficult to get long-term loans, to budget and to decide how and where you family will go or live, or, indeed, whether they will buy a house at all.

The Government gives us all sorts of assurances, and no doubt the Police Commissioner has given all sorts of assurances that it will not be a problem. However, this Government has given assurances before, and they have been worthless. A lot of people in this community have difficulty in believing this Government's assurances. If the Government had gone to the Police Association and back to members of the police force, it might have found that it could get the streamlining of the structure that it wanted without going to the extent of contracting and taking away of rights of appeal and review. It is interesting to note that a couple of Government members have mentioned the pay dispute and said that they have regretted the difficulties and problems caused during that dispute. It is interesting to see that the errors of that dispute are repeated here with this Bill, because the pay dispute was a matter of the Government, in a born to rule mentality, trying to crash through with its ideas and structure. Again, we see it repeated. Again, we see the Government not listening. It is alienating more and more of the community in its actions.

It is not good enough for the Government to talk to the Police Commissioner and impose upon our South Australian police force a structure which it will not like. What we want to do with our police force is recruit intelligent, sensible men and women who will be dedicated to our community. They will not do that if people who the Government wants to recruit into the police force see a structure which is disliked by the existing force and which will not guarantee them the

permanency which they deserve and which they have a right to deserve because of the dedication they have to their job.

This Government is creating a structure that makes it more difficult for them to recruit the sort of people they need to recruit into our police force. The member for Elder (the shadow spokesman on this matter) has already gone into the avenues of corruption that such a structure might open up. It is important that the South Australian public have complete faith in its police force. Where you have a structure under which police officers are likely to become disgruntled, surely the possibility of corruption increases as members seek other ways to get what they believe they deserve. By its lack of consultation, this Government has again brought in a Bill that is impossible for the Opposition to be able to work with, to be able to amend to produce a reasonable structure.

I must say that I am very disappointed with the Government contributions so far. We always hear about Liberal members of Parliament not being bound by Party policy. They claim to be independent and to be ever ready to cross the floor in the interests of their electorate and their constituents. Yet, here we see a Bill which is particularly important and which we know, despite Government members' protestations, is deeply unpopular with members of the police force; here we have a Bill that cries out for a bit of strength of character from some of the Government members in calling the Minister and the Cabinet to account and saying, 'This will be massively unpopular with the police force and with our constituency; you must go back and modify it. You must go back and modify this Bill, otherwise we will cross the floor. We will not let you as a Government make another major error. We will not let you as a Government drive down our popularity even further.'

I believe that most Government backbenchers are hard working and care for their community. They have been let down time and again by their leadership. But they need to stand up to their leadership and say that this Bill is unworkable and unpopular and that it is impossible for them to support. I hope that several of them do.

Mr HILL secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services):** I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

**Ms KEY (Hanson):** I want to raise two issues in this grievance debate tonight, the first of which reflects on the discussion we have just had about the Bill before us. On Saturday night I was at the North Terrace crossing adjacent to the railway station and, unfortunately, witnessed a pedestrian being knocked over when she crossed the road on a red light to pedestrians but a green light to motorists. She was knocked over and injured, and the driver of the car and I tried to ascertain the level of injury and also to call an ambulance and police. I am pleased to say that they were nearby and managed to assist almost immediately.

The only blight to the whole situation was that a photographer who claimed he was from the *Advertiser*—whether or not he was, I do not know; we did not see any identification—insisted on photographing this woman while we were trying to assist the ambulance officers to administer oxygen and to ensure she did not have a broken neck or other injuries. All of us asked the photographer to go away so that we could

get on with the dilemma before us, but he insisted on taking photographs of the woman laid out on a stretcher. He refused to take any notice of anybody, including the police or ambulance officers.

When I asked the officer in charge whether he could take this person's name or whether we could do anything about it, he said that he was not in a position to take any action but agreed with me that it was an intolerable situation. I did get the motor vehicle registration of the person who claimed he was a photographer from the *Advertiser* and I intend to follow this up. He not only interfered in the privacy of this woman who had been struck down moments before but also impeded all of us trying to assist her. That is a matter I will follow up at a later stage, but I should compliment both the ambulance officers and police officers for their wonderful work, as well as the car driver concerned.

The other issue I want to highlight tonight relates to vineyard workers who telephoned me from Lucindale. They are on a training scheme with a group training company called Villiers. They telephoned me because until recently they had not been members of a trade union and were not sure where to go to get assistance. Some 46 workers were employed under this group training scheme, six women and 40 men. They were concerned about their accommodation. These trainees are of different ages and came from all around the State. Having been unemployed for a long period, they were very keen to take up the job opportunity offered by Villiers, the group training company. I understand that they are being paid the award wage, but their hours of work and the conditions under which they are working are quite severe.

Accommodation is a problem for these workers. The male workers, as I understand it, are housed in ATCO huts. Electricity is connected but there has been a power failure for three days, so they have had no electricity. There is one toilet for 40 workers, no running water, and no facilities to cook food. They are also working from dark in the morning until dark at night, and just recently have been asked by the group training company to work an extra half hour at night to about 7 p.m. so that they can make up time for the training, which is supposed to be part of the traineeship.

The workers also say that the group training company is suggesting that it wants to charge the workers \$10 a day for accommodation when they do have better facilities in the ATCO huts. This is an intolerable situation. Fortunately, these workers have recently joined the relevant trade union and are working with the union to determine their rights under both the award and the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act. The lack of accommodation for these trainees has also been raised.

We have had a lot of discussion about privatisation in this Chamber and what was or was not Playford's vision for the future, but it is my understanding that public housing was to be made available to country workers to encourage them to settle in country South Australia. It is unfortunate that workers have come from all around South Australia to take up this position in Lucindale only to find that they not only are separated from their family but also have to live in poor conditions.

When speaking to the member for McKillop, because I am advised that Lucindale comes within the McKillop electorate, he said that these facilities should be sorted out within the next day or so. However, if this is not the case, I believe that these workers are being pushed to the limit, and it is totally unacceptable that in 1998 we have workers living in basically a camp with no facilities whatsoever.

The only good news about the whole situation is that the women workers are temporarily housed in a hotel-motel nearby, so their accommodation facilities for the time being are quite reasonable. I ask again: what sort of provisions will be made available to these workers so that, if they do decide to take up work in this area on an ongoing basis, they can actually relocate with their family, first of all and, secondly, live in decent conditions to encourage them to stay in that area?

**Mr MEIER (Goyder):** Earlier today I highlighted to this House the opportunity that I have had to visit many of the service clubs in my electorate. I particularly highlighted that of the Apex Club of Maitland and directed general comments in relation to Apex as a whole. On that occasion I mentioned the number of service hours that this club has completed over the 12 months (in excess of 1 100 hours), but what I did not refer to was the thousands of dollars it has raised for community projects during the past year and certainly the tens of thousands of dollars over many years for its community projects. That is indicative, not only of the Maitland Apex Club but of so many Apex clubs in my electorate and throughout South Australia.

I also mentioned earlier today the fact that my wife and I have had the opportunity to visit other service clubs, and we are very thankful to them for inviting us to their changeovers which occur generally at this time of the year. I mention secondly the work of the Lions clubs throughout the electorate of Goyder. The Lions clubs we have attended most recently were those at Port Broughton and Balaklava. Again, in both cases, they are very active clubs, and certainly give to their community in a way that many people would marvel at in terms of their voluntary commitment and the contributions to the community as a whole.

Lions derives from one Melville Jones back in 1917 in Chicago, Illinois, USA. Melville Jones saw Lions as being a world club group dedicated to service to humanity. It is quite remarkable the way that club has grown over the years. In fact, it did become the largest service organisation in the 1970s. Whether it is still today, I am not quite certain. The Apex clubs were founded by Ewen Laird, Langham Proud and John Buchan in Geelong in the State of Victoria.

In both cases, people saw the need for work to be done in their community, for voluntary-minded men to serve their community in such a way that they would benefit accordingly. Of course, things have progressed today so we have not only men involved, particularly in the Lions and Rotary clubs, but also many women are active. In fact, at the changeovers we attended recently at the Balaklava and Port Broughton Lions clubs, women presidents were inducted. In fact, there are approximately five women presidents in the Lions clubs in my electorate at present.

Lions International came to this country in 1947 through a gentleman called Bill Tresise. Bill had been involved in the Apex clubs back then but, because he had reached that magical age of 40, he decided that he still wanted to contribute more to his community. So, he instigated the formation of Lions International in Australia—and how it has grown since that time. When I resided at Yorketown I was very privileged to become a member of the Yorketown and District Lions Club and to become a branch President of that club. In more recent years I have had the privilege to become a member of Rotary, but because of parliamentary duties I have not been able to serve the club as well as I could have, and I am very thankful to the club for making me an honorary

member. I know that quite a few members of this Parliament are honorary members of Rotary.

Returning to the Lions Club, it is interesting to highlight to this House some of the things that it undertakes. I will quote from the *Balaklava and District Lions Magazine* for this last financial year in which, under the heading, 'Fundraising and social committee', it is reported that it had a number of fundraising events during the year which included: car parking at Mallala Motor Sport Park (\$1 680); annual Christmas cake sales (\$789); various raffles (\$1 415); trading table and Badge Day sales (\$506); Lions mints (\$270); and the entertainment of Henry Szeps (\$1 000). So, these organisations raise and contribute back into their local communities many thousands of dollars. We must give credit to them.

Basically, wherever I go around my electorate at different functions there are usually people from the service organisations, be it Apex, Lions or Rotary, who serve in a voluntary capacity. Invariably, during the day I have somewhat of a hunger, and whether I go to their doughnut van, the steak sandwich van or whatever I find members of the service organisations seeking to satisfy my hunger needs in that respect. They do it voluntarily and they do it to raise money for their particular organisation.

Again, the Rotary clubs throughout the world are a great organisation that these days tend to provide a little more towards the slightly older age group. Apex looks after the under 40s, Lions tends to look after people who are a little younger than 40 and Rotary probably caters for those 50 years of age and older—although I acknowledge that there are many members who are younger than that, too. In fact, I was younger than that when I first joined Rotary. But the particular person who needs full acknowledgment in the Rotary organisation is Paul Harris. Again, he was an American, but he saw the need for a service organisation which would serve the community and which would ensure that business people upheld the correct business traditions for the betterment of their community. I want to pay full tribute to Paul Harris.

It is interesting that in this day and age people who have served their Rotary club exceptionally well or who in some cases have served their community well have been made a Paul Harris Fellow. To receive a Paul Harris Fellow is something very special. Certainly, many of the Rotary organisations in my area have made people who have made an outstanding contribution to their community Paul Harris Fellows.

This Parliament can learn something from the service organisations that we in this State have. As I have already indicated, they work voluntarily; in fact, both the members of the Balaklava Lions Club and the Maitland Apex Club worked for in excess of 1 000 voluntary hours. If we added up the millions of hours of voluntary service worldwide, one wonders where our country and this world would be if we did not have these voluntary organisations.

We, as members of Parliament, can also learn from that. Whilst the Government is there to ensure the community and society runs smoothly, whilst we certainly need an income and to spend money accordingly, let us not forget that a lot of our work is complemented by many voluntary organisations to which we do not give sufficient credit. I would say to Apex, Lions and Rotary, in particular, 'Keep up your good work.' I know it is disappointing at times that occasionally membership drops, but I have seen time and again where clubs had fewer members than they liked but, with hard work,

they have brought themselves up with a strong membership, and I believe they have a very important role to play in our society.

Motion carried.

At 10.16 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday 8 July at 2 p.m.