

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 21 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 121, 123, 141 and 147; and I direct that the following answers to questions without notice be distributed and printed in *Hansard*.

## UNITED WATER

In reply to **Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition)** 27 May.

The **Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE**: Lyonnaise Des Eaux (LDE) in connection with a Jakarta based company (the Salim Group), and Thames Water in connection with a company of a son of former President Suharto, signed contracts in 1997 to operate the water supply for the respective halves of the Jakarta area.

- Many contracts in Indonesia involved such arrangements as part of the process of moving contracts forward.
- It is well publicised in the Indonesian press that a number of such contracts are under review or have been terminated.
- It is now understood that Thames Water and LDE have been advised that their contracts are to continue with new Indonesian partners.
- Thames Water is a major British water company of good standing and reputation and the confirmation of their Indonesian contracts serves to repudiate any allegations of questionable business practices.

NATIONAL ELECTRICITY (SOUTH AUSTRALIA)  
(COMMENCEMENT) AMENDMENT BILL

In reply to **Ms HURLEY (Napier)** 4 June.

The **Hon. M.R. BUCKBY**: The Treasurer has provided the following information.

The honourable member has sought additional information on the factors impacting on the start of the national electricity market (NEM).

The delay has been necessary to ensure that the National Electricity Management Market Company (NEMMCO) is ready and able to take over the operation of the NEM from existing State-based organisations that currently manage the supply of electricity.

To assist in defining when NEMMCO is ready to take over control of the NEM, jurisdictions and network service providers have defined approximately eighty preconditions, which must be met before the NEM can start. These cover a range of issues including implementation of a project management system, effective operational arrangements, development of communication interfaces between participants and NEMMCO and appropriate metering arrangements. The complete list of preconditions is published on the NEMMCO Internet Web site. A rigorous testing plan is being implemented to demonstrate that each precondition will be satisfied.

The honourable member also inquired if other States had enacted the National Electricity Law. New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory have all enacted their own legislation to apply the National Electricity Law [Part 2 of the National Electricity (South Australia) Act 1996]. However, at this stage only the Queensland law has been proclaimed. It is intended that South Australia and other States will proclaim their legislation when the testing plan has demonstrated that the NEM can start.

## PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

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

Corporation—By-Laws—  
City of Port Augusta—  
No. 1—Council Land  
No. 2—Moveable Signs  
No. 3—Flammable Undergrowth  
No. 4—Waste Management  
No. 5—Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden  
Town of Gawler—  
No. 3—Streets and Public Places  
No. 6—Dogs  
No. 7—Poultry and Birds

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

Road Traffic Act—Regulations—School Zones

By the Minister for Government Enterprises (Hon. M.H. Armitage)—

Rules of Court—Supreme Court Act—Supreme Court—  
Criminal—Obtaining Evidence Interstate

By the Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training (Hon. M.R. Buckby)—

Technical and Further Education Act—Regulations—  
Revocation of Regulation 66

Motor Accident Commission—Charter, 30 September 1997.

Public Corporations Act—

ETSA Corporation—Charter

SA Generation Corporation (Optima Energy)—Charter.

## PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE

The **Hon. M.K. BRINDAL (Minister for Local Government)**: I bring up the report of the Privileges Committee and move:

That the report be received:

Motion carried.

The **Hon. M.K. BRINDAL**: I move:

That the report be adopted.

Mr Speaker, on 2 July 1998, you found a *prima facie* case in allegations concerning a possible breach of privilege by the honourable member for Bragg in his capacity as Minister for Racing. The allegations stem from statements made by the member before a parliamentary Estimates Committee on 18 June 1998, in subsequent answers to questions from the Opposition and a ministerial statement made in the House on 1 July 1998. This led the member for Ramsay to move:

That this House establish a Privileges Committee to investigate whether the Deputy Premier has misled the House in relation to matters related to his activities as Minister for Racing, that the committee shall operate under the guidelines of a select committee of this House, that the committee shall prepare a report of its investigations for the consideration of this House by 30 September 1998 and shall have the power to send for persons, papers and records, and to adjourn from place to place.

As a consequence of the House passing the motion, amended to provide for reporting within 21 days, a Privileges Committee was established. The House elected the members for Unley, Stuart, Gordon, Hart and Elder to the committee. At its first meeting the committee elected the member for Unley as its Chairman. The committee met on the following occasions: 2 July, 7 July, 8 July, 13 July and 21 July 1998. The committee was conscious that it was the first committee of privilege established by the House of Assembly in South Australia's history. Its task was made more difficult because most parliaments have followed the premise laid down by Erskine May, and I quote:

Generally speaking, any act or omission which obstructs or impedes either House of Parliament in the performance of its

functions, or which obstructs or impedes any member or officer of such House in the discharge of his duty, or which has a tendency, directly or indirectly, to produce such results may be treated as a contempt even though there is no precedent of the offence.

The Commons may treat making a deliberately misleading statement as a contempt. In 1963 the House resolved that, in making a personal statement which contained words which he later admitted not to be true, a former member had been guilty of a grave contempt.

It should, however, be borne in mind that in 1978 the House of Commons resolved to exercise its penal jurisdiction as sparingly as possible, and only when satisfied it was essential to do so.

Additionally, in David McGee's *Parliamentary Practice in New Zealand* we find the words:

Although no member of the House has ever been held to have committed a contempt for deliberately misleading the House, such allegations have been made from time to time and it is recognised that if a member misleads the House deliberately this may be treated as a contempt.

Further, we found in the second edition of the *House of Representatives Practice*:

Whilst claims that members have deliberately misled the House have been raised as matters of privilege or contempt of the House, the Speaker has not, to date, accepted such a claim.

In its deliberations the committee was guided by the principles laid down in Erskine May but stated most clearly in McGee, and I quote:

There are two ingredients to be established where it is alleged that a member is in contempt on this ground: the statement must in fact have been misleading and it must be sustained that the member making the statement knew that it was incorrect and that, in making it, the member intended to mislead the House. The misleading of the House must not be concerned with a matter of little or no consequence. The standard of proof demanded is the civil standard of proof on the balance of probabilities, but requiring proof of a very high order having regard to the serious nature of the allegations. Recklessness in the use of words in debate, even though reprehensible in itself, falls short of the standard required to hold a member responsible for deliberately misleading the House.

The question of misleading the House is one of the most important which can come before it, because by omission, or commission, it is a constructive contempt which impinges on the House's undoubted claim to freedom of speech, and thereby access to information, without which the ability of the House to function is seriously compromised. Thus a Privileges Committee examining the possible misleading of the House by a member must consider three elements:

1. Was the statement of itself misleading;
2. Whether the member, in making the statement, did so deliberately; and
3. Is the misleading of the House a matter of little or no consequence?

Having deliberated on the evidence (which is recorded in *Hansard*), the committee felt compelled, as a matter of natural justice, to write to the member for Bragg, informing him of our preliminary evaluations and possible consequent courses of action. The committee regrets that public speculation suggested that its correspondence was an ultimatum: the committee wished solely to give the member for Bragg some right of determination over process. The committee acknowledges that the nature of the member for Bragg's reply in not challenging the statutory declaration of Rob Hodge enables this committee to report to the House today rather than go through the cumbersome and uncertain process of calling for witnesses, papers, etc.

I refer to the Estimates Committee of 18 June 1998 and the question of the member for Hart and the reply from the member for Bragg, as follows:

Mr Foley: Did you have discussions with anyone involved with the South Australian Thoroughbred Racing Authority where you requested and indicated your preference for Mr Hill's contract to be terminated?

The Hon. G A Ingerson: No.

In the House on 1 July 1998, the Minister made a statement to the House in which he clarified previous answers. In that statement, he admitted that telephone calls had taken place with Mr Hodge and that he would have had conversations with Mr Hodge about the racing industry, and he said that, because of industry criticisms of Mr Hill:

I remember...indicating I could not understand why Mr Hill was being appointed as Chief Executive of SATRA in view of the widespread industry concern.

Without requiring any examination of the statutory declaration of Mr Hodge, the answer given by the Minister on 1 July 1998 clearly indicates that the Estimates Committee was misled on 18 June 1998, and the Committee of Privileges finds accordingly. This finding is based on the member for Bragg's own statement of explanation to the House.

As to the more substantial matter of intent, the committee remains divided in its view. The Chair and the member for Stuart believe that the actions of the Minister cannot be construed as deliberately intended to impede the business of the House, since in his answer to the 10 subsequent questions on 1 July 1998, and in his statement of that evening, the Minister consistently argued that he had no statutory or other influence over SATRA. Legal opinion has been sighted to confirm this assertion. The committee resolved:

On his own admission, the member for Bragg has given an incorrect statement to the Estimates Committee. He later corrected the record. He has provided an explanation of reasons why he gave the answer to the first question. The committee is of the view that the member for Bragg's 'categorical denial that he exerted any pressure' on Mr Hodge was itself misleading. The majority believe it was deliberate.

The majority believe that this was not a matter of little consequence. Accordingly, the majority view of the committee is that the member for Bragg deliberately misled the House, and finds accordingly. The committee believes that the matter is most properly left to the jurisdiction of the House. However, the majority believes that this does not warrant the most severe penalty, noting that penalties can include gaoling, suspension and expulsion.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition):**

Today is a test for this Parliament and for the leadership of this Premier—a test of whether this House and whether this Premier are willing to do what is right and proper in terms of upholding the standards of behaviour which the public cries out for, and of upholding the principles of ministerial responsibility and parliamentary accountability upon which the Westminster system of government and democracy is founded.

The case against the Minister has been proven. All committee members, as I understand it—Liberal, Labor and Independent—have found that the Minister misled this House. A majority of committee members, I am told, found that he did so deliberately. It is a grave contempt that was compounded, and compounded again. Guilty as charged! But the Minister has not yet been sentenced, and he now wants to plea bargain this afternoon following the debate. So, we again have to look to Westminster precedents to do the right and proper thing as a Parliament.

To deliberately mislead the House is, indeed, a grave contempt. There was the Profumo case. Despite all of its

attendant intrigue, it is the precedent for the cardinal sin of deliberately misleading the House. The motion which was carried by the House of Commons in 1963 was:

That Mr John Profumo, in making a personal statement to this House on 22 March 1963, which contained words which he later admitted not to be true, was guilty of a grave contempt of this House.

It is fundamental because the decision says and means that the Minister has lied to the Parliament. In some ways, however, this case, the Ingerson case, is worse than the Profumo case because at least John Profumo, when he knew that his number was up as a Minister, fell on his sword. He did the honourable thing. That was before the House of Commons even considered the motion regarding his misleading of the House. He did not have to be dragged kicking and screaming to do the right thing. And Profumo finally admitted his guilt. By contrast, in statements to this House, so far we have seen no sign by this Minister that he admits he has done anything wrong whatsoever. Profumo, in his personal statement which led to his downfall, said:

Miss Keeler and I were on friendly terms. There was no impropriety whatsoever in my acquaintance with Miss Keeler.

Wrong, Mr Profumo. The former Deputy Premier of South Australia, when asked, 'Did you have any discussions with anyone involved with the South Australian Thoroughbred Racing Authority where you requested and indicated your preference for Mr Hill's contract to be terminated?' said 'No'. And he repeated it again and again. Wrong, Mr Ingerson.

In fact, continuing the Profumo analogy, what surprises me most is that Mr Hodge, when told of the Minister's replies to the committee and to the Parliament, did not echo Mandy Rice-Davies in her famous reply, 'Well, he would say that, wouldn't he?' The Opposition has been told that the Government, assisted by a couple of QCs, had decided to tough it out, following the Minister's discussions in a Barossa hotel. The deal was to attack the credibility of Merv Hill and former Liberal Vice President Rob Hodge and to accuse the latter of malice because he had not been reappointed.

Then, reminiscent of John Lamb's intervention to save the Minister over the Anne Ruston case, the cavalry—this time the horses—would be called in to say how much they wanted Graham Ingerson to stay on as Racing Minister. But whether the Minister is liked or disliked, whether he has mates or enemies, is totally irrelevant. What counts is whether or not he tells the truth to this Parliament.

The people of South Australia want a Government that puts our State first, not its Party first. For weeks now, this Premier and this Minister have tried desperately to avoid and postpone the judgment of this Parliament. But whatever happens today, they will not change the people's verdict about a Government that simply will not tell the truth, whether it is about ETSA or anything else. We are today discussing one incident among many. The Minister has lurched from crisis to crisis, from Anne Ruston at the National Wine Centre to Michael Gleeson and Rod Hand at the Tourism Commission, to the Hindmarsh Stadium debacle, from misinformation about ETSA's \$97 million write-down to their pre-election plans to privatise ETSA which they have denied but which we know to be true. We are looking at a Minister with the political smarts of a Dan Quayle and the grace and poise of a Boris Yeltsin.

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker, the matter before the House is the noting of the report of the Privileges Committee, and I wonder whether the

Leader is straying into an area not covered by the Privileges Committee.

**The SPEAKER:** First, as I heard the motion, it is for the adoption of the report, not the noting of the report. This is a wide-ranging report. At this stage I believe that the Leader of the Opposition is in order.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Today we are not just deciding the fate of a Minister. We are determining the ultimate future of a Premier. Any Premier—

*The Hon. J.W. Olsen interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** He laughs about it: he laughs about his lack of moral responsibility and moral leadership, because that is the test of a Premier—to lead, to make judgments and to exert moral authority, and that is what he declines to do every single time. If he had shown any moral leadership or moral—

*The Hon. R.B. Such interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Fisher.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:**—authority, then the Premier would have disciplined and got rid of this Minister weeks ago. But he did not because he could not. He was faced with a situation where, we are told, the Minister had threatened to bring him down as well if he was dumped. If forced to go, we are told, the Minister would tell the truth about the Government's plans to sell ETSA before the election. He might even reveal one or two of the 1 200 ETSA documents that have been suppressed from consideration by this House, which will show that the Government deliberately misled the House and the people of this State about its plans to sell ETSA before the election. So instead of leadership resolve—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader will resume his seat.

The Leader is now starting to stray away from the subject of the motion, which is the adoption of the report, and I ask him to come back to it.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** I will go straight to the issue of the consideration of this report. There were bizarre and emotional discussions at the Rams match at Hindmarsh Stadium, where a weird compromise was concocted. Go from the Deputy's position but stay on as a Minister. That will do the trick. That will feed the chooks. That will satisfy them. But instead of stalling momentum or taking the heat out of this privileges inquiry, this shabby deal only exposed what was really going on. It was not about the Westminster system; it was not about parliamentary or ministerial accountability. It was about the numbers for the leadership and what would happen if the Minister not only resigned from Cabinet but resigned from Parliament.

All the Premier's men, plus Joan Hall, with Vicki Chapman as the candidate if there was a by-election in Bragg, would mean one more vote for Dean Brown which could clinch it. That is why we have gone through this farce, this spectacle, in recent weeks. If the Minister went, the Premier goes—if not now, then later. The death of a thousand cuts. Let us not kid ourselves that the Government in its defence of Graham Ingerson today has anything to do with loyalty to a colleague, let alone the truth or ministerial and parliamentary propriety. It is really about the numbers, and for this Premier there is only one number and that is number one—it is about him.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader will come back to the motion.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** The Privileges Committee can, it seems, tell the difference between a truth and an untruth. But it is clear that the Minister cannot, and the test now is whether the Premier can. I suspect that the public will not be

overly surprised if, later this afternoon and tomorrow, the Premier squibs and leaves the former Deputy Premier on his front bench in defiance of the views of the majority of people in this House, if they are honest in their beliefs, and certainly the public. I am told that the Government wants to use the Denver Beanland precedent to defy Parliament if at some stage during the week a no-confidence motion is successful. But Denver Beanland was not ever found guilty of misleading the House—a different crime, a different precedent, a different sentence.

We must consider the invidious position in which our Governor would be placed if the Minister remains. The Governor would need to take advice in Executive Council from a Minister in whom the House, from where the Government is formed, has no confidence and has found that he deliberately misled the Parliament. If the Government ignores this committee, or defies this House, or defies precedent, it will simply prove what most South Australians suspect—that this Government is not just rotten to the core but rotten from the core. The real question is not whether the Minister is some kind of a fool or a fall guy. It is whether the Premier is a leader. Rather than follow his directions from ‘down the Hall’, so to speak, the Premier must lead, must be decisive and put the interests of the State and the parliamentary system above his own leadership problems.

The case that the Minister has deliberately misled the House before the Estimates Committee and again before this House on 1 July is proven. To quote the Profumo case again:

It was said of Profumo at the time, ‘He has left the Government. He has involved himself in the probably irretrievable ruin of a quite distinguished political career. He has surrounded himself with public obloquy of a serious kind, which it will take him a long time to live down.’

By the Minister refusing to resign his commission, today or tomorrow, and by the Premier refusing to enforce it, we are seeing the denial of good, accountable government. The appropriate price is neither being paid nor being seen to be paid. This issue is as old as the Westminster system and as clear cut as this Premier’s own code of conduct before the last election, which is as follows:

All Ministers will recognise that full and true disclosure and accountability to the Parliament are the cornerstones of the Westminster system which is the basis for government in South Australia today. The Westminster system requires the Executive Government of the State to be answerable to Parliament and through Parliament to the people. Being answerable to Parliament requires Ministers to ensure that they do not wilfully mislead the Parliament in respect of their ministerial responsibilities. The ultimate sanction for a Minister who so misleads is to resign or be dismissed.

That is this Premier’s code of conduct. The question is whether he has the leadership or the morality to stand by his own code of conduct or to enforce his own code of conduct. It is time for the Premier to do the proper thing, the right thing, and it is time for this Minister to go—full stop.

**Mr McEWEN (Gordon):** ‘This action has dealt a savage blow to the whole concept of ministerial responsibility.’ They are not my words but a quote from Jennifer Cashmore, when she commented on a successful no-confidence motion in the then Minister for Health, John Cornwall. I might add that it was a motion on which absolutely no action was taken by the Government of the day. There are many other examples—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr McEWEN:**—in the record where selective memory, selective quoting, has caused later difficulties for all of us in

South Australia: Klunder over Scrimber and Bannon over ETSA. The act of omission prevails to this day, and I will give a couple of examples in relation to the present Government not to single out individuals but just to make the point that the culture that Jennifer Cashmore described is a culture that still exists today. It is important that, when we deal with this specific issue later in the day, we come to grips with the fact that it is not something out of the ordinary in terms of a Parliament that is probably moribund. Acts of omission prevail to this day. Minister Armitage, when answering an Estimates Committee question of the member for Chaffey, had to follow up with written correspondence because there were some bits missing. Minister Kotz again had to correct the record in relation to a question about whether or not a particular individual had discussed a water board with her.

The Leader of the Opposition talked about rotten Government. Perhaps I am talking about rotten Parliament, because I am reflecting more broadly on the culture and the climate that is beginning to prevail in this State. I watch people come into this place and pool their collective ignorance. I watch the reckless debates, and I see some of the literature that comes out of this Parliament and of the Government. We had Minister Lucas retracting a statement he made about ETSA. I wrote to Minister Buckley about a statement that he had made in a press release as follows:

For every day the Labor Opposition denies the sale of assets, including ETSA and Optima, it will cost South Australian taxpayers an extra \$2 million in interest payments on the State debt.

Again, it was an answer to a hypothetical and was misleading. We all know that the best we will do out of the savings if ETSA is sold is perhaps to reduce that by about \$1 million, not \$2 million. Again, we just put the wrong spin on things, and we do not project the truth as it is. Then we wonder why we are not held in such high esteem by those people in South Australia who elect us to this Chamber. This is the culture that has been operating for many years, I believe. It is a culture I have begun to experience only in the past 12 months, and I do not find it a pleasant culture to be part of. I came out of another level of government where this just would not have happened. It is about short-term expediency.

I am sure that others who have had experience in local government will tell you that they put the interests of the community ahead of short-term political gain and point scoring. The hypocrisy that prevails in this place concerns me. It is within that environment that we judge today a matter which I believe was a deliberate misleading of Parliament. When the Minister came back into this House and categorically denied an event, after the Speaker had already ruled that he would go away and consider whether a Privileges Committee would be formed—it was actually a matter on which some time was spent—it was a deliberate act. That notwithstanding, I want this matter to be judged within the culture and environment of this place, and it is not a culture of which I am proud to be part.

I want today to be a watershed for this Parliament in terms of acknowledging where we are and stepping forward collectively and saying that we all accept at the end of the day that we have a responsibility of leadership, no matter how we got here, and of leading this State forward. It is time to move on, to heal some wounds and to focus on our richly imagined future for this State.

**The Hon. G.A. INGERSON (Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism):** Before I address the substance of the

report tabled in the Parliament today, I will raise a few matters of concern in relation to the Privileges Committee process. I note the findings of the committee and make clear that my concerns relate to the process and not to the individuals on this committee. However, this whole process has raised an important matter that the Parliament should address before another such Privileges Committee is conducted. The Parliament should draft guidelines for the operation of such a committee to ensure that natural justice is served.

For example, I do not believe that a person who is the main accuser should be elected to the committee to then become part of the jury. Clearly, there needs to be a more satisfactory process when dealing with a privileges motion, and I simply want to highlight to the House that the present model in my view is not an ideal one.

In relation to the matter before us today, I note the findings of the committee in its report and state clearly to this House that in answering questions before the Estimates Committee I made a mistake. I apologise to the House for this mistake. It was not my intention to mislead. I have since corrected my statement in the House, as this committee acknowledges in its letter to me on 8 July.

However, I have consistently maintained that I had no power to direct SATRA or Mr Hodge and that my conversations with Mr Hodge did not affect the termination of Mr Hill's contract. Indeed, in subsequent questions before the Estimates Committee I made clear that it was not my role to get involved. Mr Hodge even admits that he did nothing about the views I passed on. In his statutory declaration to the member for Hart on 24 June 1998 Mr Hodge says:

He [meaning me] demanded that we rescind that minute and the contract with Mr Hill. We did not.

It is clear from the sworn affidavit of Michael Birchall, Chairman of the South Australian Jockey Club, that he terminated Mr Hill's contract without ever discussing it with me, and it is important to remember that this was some months after my telephone discussion with Mr Hodge. The actual termination by SATRA was in September. The simple reality is that the SATRA Board made a decision to employ Mr Hill and later changed its mind.

I note in the letter to me from the Privileges Committee of 8 July 1998 its concern regarding my categorical denial that I exerted any pressure. From the very beginning of his questioning during the Estimates Committee the clear inference of the member for Hart was that I had corruptly, illegally or improperly influenced Mr Hodge. It should be understood that it was that inference from the member for Hart that I vigorously sought to deny in my personal statement to the House on Wednesday 1 July. My categorical denial was intended to answer the substance of that inference of improper conduct. It was not intended to mislead the House.

The majority of the committee have concluded that they believe I misled the House deliberately. I am personally disappointed with that finding. I made a mistake in answering a question before the Estimates Committee, which I later corrected, and I apologise without reservation to those who believe that I have deliberately misled the House. I never intended to do so.

**Mr FOLEY (Hart):** This is a very disappointing day, because it could have been avoided. The need for a Privileges Committee of this Parliament easily could have been avoided.

On 18 June I asked the Minister for Racing a very simple question:

Did you have discussions with anyone involved with the South Australian Thoroughbred Racing Authority where you requested and indicated your preference for Mr Hill's contract to be terminated?

The former Deputy Premier said that he felt that I had asked those questions with the clear inference that he had corruptly, illegally or improperly influenced Mr Hodge. Anyone who reads *Hansard* will know that was not the intent of my question. The Minister simply answered my question, 'No.' That afternoon, in further questions from me, the Minister continued to repeat that it was not his role to be involved and that he was not involved. That was repeated many times.

During the Estimates Committee, the Minister had all the afternoon and all the evening to correct his statement, but chose not to until we made it an issue in the Parliament when we resumed on 1 July. On that occasion the then Deputy Premier admitted that he had made telephone calls and that he had indicated to Mr Hodge how unhappy he was with Mr Hill, and passed on to Mr Hodge widespread industry concerns about Mr Hill's suitability. That was weeks after my initial questions in this Parliament.

The Privileges Committee in its deliberations found that, on the available evidence before the committee—that was, the *Hansard* report—on the Minister's own admission he had misled the Parliament. On that the committee was unanimous. The committee then went on to say that the Minister compounded his problems that evening when he made the statement: 'I categorically deny that I ever exerted any pressure.' The committee found that, weeks later, the then Deputy Premier under his own hand further compounded the problem, further compounded his misleading of the Parliament. That was found by a majority of the committee to have been deliberate.

The then Deputy Premier would have us believe that it was an unfortunate mistake, that he did not do this deliberately and he apologises. If he wanted to apologise, if he did not feel as though he had given the correct answer, he had many hours on the day—perhaps five or six hours—after I asked that question on 18 June to correct the statement in *Hansard*. He then had the opportunity by way of ministerial statement before Question Time on 1 July, but he chose not to take that opportunity. He waited until he was caught out to react. By way of reacting to the moves by the Opposition, he prepared a statement late at night.

In that statement the then Deputy Premier acknowledged his own guilt but compounded it by continuing to assert that he had exerted no pressure on Mr Hodge, when at the same time I had produced to this Parliament a statutory declaration from Mr Hodge, a former Chairman of the SAJC and SATRA, and a former vice president and prominent current member of the Liberal Party. At the end of the day, the Minister was caught out. As I said, this could have all been avoided.

*The Hon. M.K. Brindal interjecting:*

**Mr FOLEY:** Sorry, Mark, say that again. If I had been promoted? This is very serious, Mark, and I would hope that you would treat it that way.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member will address Ministers opposite by their ministerial title.

**Mr FOLEY:** I will accept interjections from the Minister because he has reasons to be aggravated, but the Chairman of the Privileges Committee should listen. The matter could have been avoided. I was simply going through the process as a member of the Estimates Committee asking questions.

If the Minister had answered 'Yes' to my question and explained his actions, I would have been able to obtain the information that, as shadow Minister for Racing, I was entitled to receive. For whatever reason, the Minister chose not to give me that correct information.

Let us look also at the matter in hand, because we are not talking about a simple matter here. We are talking about a person, Mr Merv Hill, whose contract was terminated by the South Australian Jockey Club and the South Australian Thoroughbred Racing Authority. We heard that the then Deputy Premier made telephone calls attempting to influence the Chairman of one of those authorities. At the end of the day, \$120 000 of taxpayers' money was expended in terminating Mr Hill's contract, and that is correct.

*The Hon. G.A. Ingerson interjecting:*

**Mr FOLEY:** It is about \$107 000 to \$110 000—I might have been \$10 000 short—but at the end of the day over \$110 000 of taxpayers' money was spent in terminating Mr Hill's contract. If you look at the circumstances—and, Mr Speaker, I know that this is a matter—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I must interrupt the honourable member. Would the camera crews please remember the rules: they may film members speaking on their feet but no other member in the Chamber.

**Mr FOLEY:** Thank you, Sir. As you would recall as a former Minister for Racing, Sir, and as a racing enthusiast, this is a substantial issue, because Mr Ingerson, the Minister for Racing, authorised the payment of \$50 000-odd to the South Australian Jockey Club for the termination of Mr Hill's contract. He also authorised the payment of \$50 000-odd for the termination of Mr Hill's contract with the South Australian Thoroughbred Racing Authority. The point is that, if the Minister had no influence or involvement, why was the taxpayer giving over money to an independent sporting body such as the SAJC?

I note with interest Mr Birchall's signed statutory declaration to this Parliament, and perhaps that warrants further investigation as to the correctness of those statements. At the end of the day, I want to ask why the taxpayer was paying money to the SAJC if the Minister or the Government had no role in terminating that contract. That is a very interesting question.

The Privileges Committee, as was indicated, gave an interim finding to the then Deputy Premier, and the Deputy Premier was given an opportunity to challenge that interim finding. Had he chosen to challenge the interim finding, the Privileges Committee would have taken the decision to have a full process of calling witnesses. Before the committee we would have had Mr Hodge, I believe that we would have had other members of the South Australian Thoroughbred Racing Authority, and Mr Merv Hill would have been given his opportunity to put his account of events on the record, but the then Deputy Premier chose not to challenge our interim finding.

It does not matter what members now say about Mr Hodge's statement or the facts of the matter. The Minister chose not to challenge the veracity of the signed statutory declaration of Mr Hodge. I think that says it all. If the Minister felt that Mr Hodge had misrepresented his position, the Minister could have challenged it and we could have had Mr Hodge's evidence, we could have had evidence from other members of SATRA and we could have had evidence from Mr Hill. The Minister has made much of the fact that Mr Merv Hill was dismissed some months after this series of events and after Mr Hodge was no longer the Chairman of

SATRA, but the reality is that a new Chairman was brought on stream and shortly thereafter Mr Hill's contract was terminated, having just some months earlier been signed up for three years.

We are talking about an authority that signs a contract with a Chief Executive Officer for three years and then, within one phone call and a month or two, that Chief Executive Officer is given his marching orders with no explanation and a taxpayer-funded severance package. It has been a most unpleasant time and, whilst the former Minister for Racing has been the subject of much criticism and fire on this issue, I ask members to spare a thought for people such as Merv Hill who was undertaking his role as the head of a statutory authority and who found his contract torn up within months of its being signed.

As members of this Parliament and Executive Government we must be careful about the way in which we exert influence and control over agencies. If people sign contracts in good faith in terms of employment, it is very dangerous if Ministers choose to exert influence over those appointments. There is a very fine line between Ministers' observing the protocol of allowing contracted employees to go about their work and to be answerable to the boards that employ them and boards being ultimately answerable to the Minister. For the Minister to attempt to influence boards in that manner, of course, is an issue of some moment.

At the end of the day this all could have been avoided and today's events could have been unnecessary had the Minister simply answered 'Yes' instead of 'No'. He chose to mislead deliberately this Parliament, and for that he has been found guilty by the Privileges Committee of this Parliament—the first such committee in the history of this Parliament. As the Leader of the Opposition did earlier, I refer the House to the Cabinet Handbook of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, dated 9 September 1997. This is the handbook of the Government's Cabinet in which the Premier states:

The Westminster system requires the Executive Government of the State to be answerable to the Parliament, and through the Parliament to the people.

Mr Olsen further states:

Being answerable to Parliament requires Ministers to ensure that they do not wilfully mislead the Parliament in respect of their ministerial responsibilities. The ultimate sanction for a Minister who so misleads is to resign or be dismissed.

The ethical and effective working of Executive Government in South Australia depends on Ministers having the trust and confidence of all their ministerial colleagues in their official dealings and in the manner in which they discharge their official responsibilities.

There is no higher authority in this State than Premier John Olsen's own guidelines for ministerial conduct and behaviour of which this Minister has been found guilty today by the State's first ever Privileges Committee of deliberately misleading the State Parliament. The Minister is now in contravention of Premier Olsen's own standards of accountability, yet the Premier will allow this Minister to continue to serve in the Cabinet of this State.

*The Hon. M.K. Brindal interjecting:*

**Mr FOLEY:** Well, he may not. The member for Unley asks how I know. Well, the Minister is still sitting in Cabinet. If the former Deputy Premier is still sitting in Cabinet this time tomorrow, it may well be time for the Parliament to act. If he is still sitting in Cabinet it may well be time for this Parliament to make a decision as to its view and will on this matter. But no clearer case of misleading this Parliament has been proved for many a year. It is in direct contravention of

the Premier's own guidelines. This matter has now been with us for weeks. This Minister on at least two other occasions has been found to have inadvertently misled the Parliament.

The time for the Premier to act is now. If the Premier fails to dismiss this Minister from Cabinet, after all that has come before—and I need only remind members of the exercise involving ETSA and the \$97 million write-down; an issue that plagued this Minister and Government for many weeks and, following so quickly on the heels of that issue, now this quite blatant deliberate misleading of the Parliament—it will mean that this Parliament has no decent standards of ministerial conduct. I appeal to the Premier for good governance of this State.

The Opposition accused the Minister of misleading the Parliament, and the Privileges Committee has found the Minister guilty of misleading. The Premier's own guidelines state that the Minister should be dismissed. His failure to act is a failure of his own leadership. Ultimately the Parliament is worse off and, unfortunately, the State of South Australia is worse off because it has a Government and a Premier incapable of decent, effective and proper leadership.

**Mr CONLON (Elder):** The motion before the House is for the adoption of the report of the Privileges Committee. I have noted with great interest that, so far, we have not had an indication whether Government members will support that resolution. I suspect that they will not because, in adopting the resolution of the Privileges Committee, the House will be finding that the member for Bragg has deliberately misled the House on a matter of moment. Despite the fact that members opposite are not likely to support the adoption of this resolution, there is deathly quiet from that side of the House.

It is deathly quiet because they know that, in not adopting the resolution of the Privileges Committee, they are adopting an appallingly low standard of behaviour for this House. The member for Gordon touched briefly upon a couple of points I would make having been a member of the Privileges Committee. I say in all seriousness that seldom in my life have I seen this most important institution in our democracy—and parliaments around Australia for that matter—held in so little regard. Whether or not they are right, the people believe that standards of behaviour from our parliamentarians and our Governments are not what they should be, particularly given the betrayal of promises by this Government, the Government in Canberra and a number of other Governments in recent times.

There have been gross betrayals of promises, and we need only refer to the ETSA promise. People believe that parliamentarians do not tell the truth, but it is my view that parliamentarians tell the truth more than most callings of life. However, that is the view in the community. I say to members opposite that they should not consider fiddling while Rome burns. When I was younger it used to be a bit of State sport to poke fun at politicians and to call them liars. It is not any more. People believe that with a vehemence bordering on violence, and that is how this matter should be addressed.

It is the duty of the Opposition—I will not be cynical—to put the Government under pressure, to pursue Ministers of the Crown and, if possible I dare say, to take a scalp, but this matter goes beyond that. I should say that there is nothing wrong with that. That is what makes Parliament accountable, and that is what makes it work. But this goes beyond that. If we do not act upon this—and I say that it is the attitude of the Opposition to leave it with the Premier with a certain space

to act, because that is proper—we raise very serious questions about the standards we set in this place.

I turn now to what was considered by the Privileges Committee in finding that the member for Bragg, as the Deputy Premier and a Minister of the Crown, misled this House. The issue first began with a question on 18 June to an Estimates Committee when the Minister was asked:

Did you have discussions with anyone involved with the South Australian Thoroughbred Racing Authority where you requested and indicated your preference for Mr Hill's contract to be terminated?

That was not a difficult question to understand. The Minister's answer was 'No'—a position from which he did not resile. As we now know, that was the Minister's first misleading of the House. The former Deputy Premier and the member for Bragg elected not to challenge the statutory declaration of Bob Hodge before the Privileges Committee wherein he said that he was pressured by a very agitated member for Bragg to dismiss Merv Hill. But did the member for Bragg come back to the House and attempt to clear up that assertion? No, he did not. Instead, on 1 July, he was asked about that answer because by then, if he did not, we at least knew that it was not correct.

He was again asked whether he stood by the answer he gave as to whether in fact he had placed any pressure on the people concerned, and he said, 'I have answered the question before the House,' and he stood by the answer he gave in the Estimates Committee. He misled the House a second time. His explanation now is that he did not understand that he was misleading the House. However, I would have thought that the question being raised with him a second time might have served to focus his mind. But it apparently did not, and he misled the House again.

He did not try to clear up that misleading until such time as the statutory declaration of Rob Hodge was provided. I stress that the opportunity was offered, and it was never challenged. The statutory declaration states, in part:

On June 25, 1997 Mr Ingerson rang me, outraged at our unanimous decision. He demanded we rescind that minute and contract with Mr Hill. We did not.

He was apprised of the existence of the statutory declaration on 1 July, so he came back to clear it up. He decided that it was time, that he did remember something now and he came back to clear it up. He cleared it up, and he gave an explanation that borders on incredulous. But then he went on in his explanation to the House to aggravate his crime and, after giving his explanation, he said:

I categorically deny that I ever exerted any pressure.

That is the finding of the Privileges Committee: that on the third occasion, having been given two chances to clear up his misleading of the House, he deliberately elected to mislead the House again. If you did not, you may well have to answer to this House why you did not challenge the statutory declaration of Rob Hodge. Your answer was, 'I categorically deny that I ever exerted any pressure.' The statutory declaration of Rob Hodge, which you will not challenge, and you have never challenged—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member will direct his remarks through the Chair and not across the Chamber.

**Mr CONLON:** I apologise, Sir. The statutory declaration of Rob Hodge that remains unchallenged by the member for Bragg states:

On June 25, 1997 Mr Ingerson rang me, outraged at our unanimous decision. He demanded we rescind that minute and contract with Mr Hill.

An opportunity was afforded the member for Bragg to explain how there could be such an egregious difference between his statement to the House and the statutory declaration of Rob Hodge. He elected not to challenge that statutory declaration, and I invite every member of the House through you, Mr Speaker, to consider why that should be the case. Why would he not challenge the statutory declaration of Mr Rob Hodge? There can be only one conclusion: because the statutory declaration of Rob Hodge was the true set of events. Again he misled the House. The cock crowed the third time but, unfortunately, the House cannot be expected to extend the same forgiveness given by God to St Peter, because we live in a far more difficult world than that.

*Mr Atkinson interjecting:*

**Mr CONLON:** And, as the member for Spence says, I am not completely Christ-like. That is the egregious, aggravated misleading of the House. It occurred when the Minister was called to account before the House, with the threat of a Privileges Committee hanging over his head. With the threat of a Privileges Committee hanging over his head, he came in and said, 'I categorically deny exerting any pressure.' And he would have us believe that he did not intend to mean that. If his mind was not focused on the meaning of his words, with the threat of a Privileges Committee hanging over his head, when will it be focused? The simple truth is that on that occasion, as found by the Privileges Committee, when given an opportunity to correct his misleading of the House, the member for Bragg further misled the House, and he did so deliberately.

That brings me to the question of the standards that we adopt in this place. I say this—and it can hang over my head for the rest of my political career: Graham Ingerson, in your position I would have done my Party a favour, I would have done the Parliament a favour and I would have resigned as a Minister of the Crown. That is what the member for Bragg should have done. By him electing not to do so, we now have the space for the Premier to act.

Much has been made in this House of the Premier's code of conduct. I, in fact, will not make much of that, because it is exactly the Code of Conduct that is expected in any Westminster system. In any Westminster system in the world, Ministers of the Crown are not supposed deliberately to mislead the Parliament. There has only ever been one remedy for that, and it is in the Premier's hands. As I have said, we have left this in the hands of the Premier. It was left in the hands of the member for Bragg for some time, but he has declined to act.

The resolution referred to by the member for Gordon states that the House will not consider the most severe penalties, and neither we will. We are not moving that the member for Bragg be expelled or suspended from this House. Frankly, I would say that being removed as a Minister of the Crown is not a serious penalty, in light of the offence. This is very instructive as to the mind-set of the Liberals, because the member for Unley laughs. He does not believe that it is a penalty because he will be on the back benches. I tell the member for Unley—

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. The honourable member misrepresents me. I was doing nothing at the time, and I certainly did not laugh.

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

**Mr CONLON:** As I said, there are people in the community who would think that getting a backbencher's salary for being caught out in a deliberate lie on a matter of moment is not a bad outcome. If the Premier allows the member for Bragg to remain on the front bench, he is diminished; unfortunately for him, his Party is diminished; but, undeservedly on this side, the Parliament is diminished. It is in the Premier's hands.

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Premier):** The Privileges Committee has delivered its verdict. I do not intend to argue with, criticise or debate that verdict. What I do ask is that, whatever view this Parliament now comes to in relation to Minister Ingerson, it comes to that view after giving due and careful regard to what is and what is not ministerial responsibility. I ask that all of us in this House consider very carefully where ministerial responsibility ends and where interference or undue influence begins—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Chair will not tolerate any interjections in this debate.

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** I ask also that we consider very carefully where neglect of duty could begin, because Ministers become nervous at being accused of interference or undue influence. I ask that in this context: that we consider how secure we want Ministers in our State to feel in their confidential day-to-day communications within their portfolio areas and their duties.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the Leader of the Opposition and I caution the member for Spence. We will not have any interjections during this very serious debate. If people want to be here for the vote, I suggest that they heed my warnings.

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** We need to come to a view, as members of Parliament, based on a full and true understanding of the particular case before us, not the range of circumstances brought into the debate by the Leader of the Opposition, to which I would simply respond by saying that he missed his calling as a fiction writer. Talking about dinners in the Barossa Valley and attendance at the Rams match has no relationship whatsoever, and it clearly underscores the points made by the member for Gordon in relation to the standards and conduct of the procedures of this House.

I do not consider that any of that is too much to ask of any person here today. We are all just people. I therefore consider that we see justice within the Parliament as one of the pillars of the Westminster system, and I believe we would all want justice in this matter—justice where the punishment fits the crime, not where the punishment fits the political passion of the moment. Because this punishment, this moment, will not only affect Minister Ingerson but it will be a benchmark in the South Australian Parliament. I say all that because, while as Premier I accept the findings of the Privileges Committee on an event taken in isolation—that is, Minister Ingerson answered that he had not made a phone call when in fact he had—I see it as essential that all of us in this House today, no matter what our Party affiliation, also consider the committee's verdict in the broader perspective than whether Minister Ingerson made this phone call and then misled Parliament by denying that he had done so.

This does not mean I am asking that we ignore the committee's verdict. Far from it. Rather, it is a statement made in the knowledge that nothing in this issue is as black and white as we have set out to portray it—or certainly as



some have set out to portray it. It is a statement made in the knowledge that each and every one of us in this House who has served as a Minister knows full well that we will, at one time or another, have answered a question to the best of our ability and honestly, yet wrongly, because we have analysed the question to mean something other than the questioner intended and we have been mistaken about that. Minister Ingerson still insists that he did not in some way illegally or improperly influence Mr Hodge on Mr Hill's position.

**Mr FOLEY:** On a point of order, Sir, the Minister and former Deputy Premier, the member for Bragg, together now with the Premier have made a statement—

**The SPEAKER:** What is your point of order?

**Mr FOLEY:** My point of order is this very important and very serious matter. They are saying that I inferred in my question at the centrepiece of this that Mr Ingerson had acted corruptly, illegally or improperly. That is a reflection on me—

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order.

**Mr FOLEY:**—and that is absolutely untrue.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member will resume his seat. There is no point of order.

*Mr Foley interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** It is a debating point but not a point of order.

*Mr Foley interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I caution the honourable member for interjecting.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Certainly not you. The honourable member for Hart.

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** Minister Ingerson still insists that he did not in some way undertake an illegal or improper act. Minister Ingerson therefore stands by his—

**Mr FOLEY:** On a point of order, Sir, I have never accused the Deputy Premier—

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr FOLEY:**—of an illegal act.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member will resume his seat. There is no point of order. There is a point of order regarding members calling points of order that are not points of order. They are debating points.

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** Minister Ingerson therefore stands by his statement that he answered the member for Hart's question in the Estimates Committee with no intent to mislead. Minister Ingerson says that he did not take the member for Hart's question to mean he had never under any circumstances rung Mr Hodge on the controversy surrounding Mr Hill. He says this because it should have been obvious to anyone close to his racing portfolio, as the shadow Minister clearly is, that of course he would have had contact on an issue as controversial within the racing industry as this one.

I happen to agree with Minister Ingerson's viewpoint—that for him not to have contacted Mr Hodge on the subject would have been a dereliction of duty. Industry disquiet at such a level cannot simply be ignored at ministerial level. Let me take some examples. Should the Treasurer pretend nothing was happening if there was a controversy at ETSA and Optima which the Chairman should know about? Should Minister Armitage, for example, ignore an issue related to SA Water which the Chairman should know about? We all know that that is not appropriate. As Ministers, it is still their duty to stay in touch with the chairman of their independent boards

and to have a full and frank, ongoing, two-way communication on any difficulties and controversies.

Who among us can honestly answer that, as a Minister, we should sit back and ignore numerous industry and public concerns within one of our portfolio areas? Would we not have an obligation to alert a board chairman to what we are hearing, the disquiet we have been contacted about?

**Mr Foley:** Why didn't he tell me that when I asked him the question?

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** Of course we would.

**The SPEAKER:** I warn the member for Hart.

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** To me that is ministerial responsibility. It is not interference. Let us very carefully consider, because we cannot have it both ways in this State. This Parliament and this State's media cannot attack a previous Racing Minister, as was done—and you would understand that, Mr Speaker—for allegedly staying at arm's length from a previous racing industry altercation and then attack Minister Ingerson for relaying—

**Mr CONLON:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I note that the Leader of the Opposition was called to order on terms of relevance—

**The SPEAKER:** What is the point of order?

**Mr CONLON:** My point of order relates to relevance. The Privileges Committee was never established to examine whether or not it was proper for the Minister to contact the Chairman of the board of SATRA. It was established to find out whether we had been misled over that. I would ask the Premier to return to that question.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member will resume his seat. The Chair has had some degree of tolerance to both sides of the Chamber. It is a serious subject. The Minister was heard in silence. The Premier has a right, as the Leader, to put a case in defence of his Minister. I demanded silence for the Leader of the Opposition so he could put a case. All members should respect the sensitivity of what is unfolding here this afternoon and give everyone, in the interests of fair play, the opportunity to put a point of view whether it is for or against the motion before the House.

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** I want to repeat that comment. It should not be forgotten that there is a big difference between raising issues and interference or undue influence. Minister Ingerson, I would put to this House, has already paid a heavy price for giving a narrow answer to a broad question in the Estimates Committee—for replying specifically rather than generally. He was wrong to do so. He has admitted that he made a mistake. He says it was unintentional. An inquiry by the Privileges Committee has found otherwise.

Minister Ingerson is no longer Deputy Premier of this State. That is a significant penalty in itself. He is no longer the Racing Minister. The irony for me in reassigning the racing portfolio is that the industry has since written to me to protest at this action. The industry claims that Minister Ingerson has been a Minister knowledgeable, interested, determined and keen to work with it for a better future. In other words, he has been a good Minister for Racing. I would disagree with anyone who says that this is irrelevant to the question of misleading the House.

Minister Ingerson claims he misled the House because he understood the member for Hart's questioning to have a different emphasis. He answered believing that the question carried the imputation of interference and undue influence. If one looks at the explanation that flowed from the record post the answer, it demonstrates that point. We know for a

fact that the phone call Mr Ingerson and Mr Hodge had on the subject of Mr Hill, outlining the complaints and concerns brought to his attention, had no bearing on Mr Hill's future. In fact, in his statutory declaration on 24 June 1998, Mr Hodge confirms this fact. The decision on Mr Hill was taken at a later date, months later in fact, by Mr Birchall as Chairman of the SAJC, not by Mr Hodge. Mr Birchall has signed an affidavit saying that he made this decision totally independent of Minister Ingerson. In fact, he states that at no time did he ever discuss the termination of Mr Hill's contract with the Racing Minister. In other words, the phone call to Mr Hodge did only what it was supposed to do, that is, advise that a Minister was concerned about the level of complaint on an issue he was receiving. There was no more or no less than that.

In summing up, what do we have before us? We have a Minister who made a mistake and misled the Parliament but has now apologised to this House for his mistake. We have a Minister who has already been punished substantially for his actions. He is a Minister considered proficient and effective by the racing industry, which is now complaining, both privately to the Government and publicly in the media, because he has been lost to it. No-one benefited or suffered from the Minister's phone call. The Minister has denied his answer in the Estimates Committee was meant to deliberately mislead. Therefore, as Premier I ask members to consider the report in that context and, as the member for Gordon has clearly indicated to the House, it is time to move on: it is time to put the interests of South Australia first.

**Mr HANNA (Mitchell):** I will make a few brief observations about the contributions in relation to this motion today. I have a lot of sympathy for the remarks of the member for Gordon when he talks about the culture in this place whereby a considerable laxity is allowed in terms of the answers that are given. It is not unusual, it is common in fact, for Ministers during Question Time and in answers to committees such as the Estimates Committee to duck and weave, to give ambiguous answers, to give non-answers and, in exceptional cases, to deliberately mislead with the answers that are given. Sometimes we catch them out. I am not saying that it is even confined to this particular Minister and this particular Government at this particular time. It has always happened in politics and it probably always will. That is not to say, though, that at every opportunity we should not seek to reverse that trend and to counter it. Today we have the opportunity and, in terms of the short-term future of Mr Ingerson, to take some steps to improve the culture of the place.

The broader picture is that we have a Constitution which would shock the public in terms of its lack of detail about how we should behave in this place. The Constitution is just a bare skeleton and the flesh that makes this a workable democracy is layers upon layers of trust and commitment to propriety. If we do not have that, the system can fall away very quickly. That is why it is important for this Parliament not only to take steps to adopt this motion but then to consider the future of Minister Ingerson. One aspect of what we do here is counting the numbers, and I am afraid that very often the numbers get in the way of integrity and truth. In this case, we have a finely balanced Parliament and the numbers may be on the side of integrity and truth.

I also make an observation about members of the racing industry who have not only written to the Premier but apparently spoken to the *Advertiser* and had their support

publicly expressed. I refer to Mr Michael Birchall and others. Unfortunately—and I apologise for the pun—they have backed the wrong horse and, if they say that because the Minister has taken an appropriate interest in his portfolio they would prefer him to stay on because he suits them in some way no matter that he deliberately misled this Parliament, then, unfortunately, they are tarred with the same brush as the Minister as a result of this episode. Their public support for this Minister who has deliberately misled the Parliament reflects very poorly on them.

Finally, I note that even today the Minister—although he acknowledges now that there was an error of fact in what he reported to the Estimates Committee—has still not accepted the decision of the Privileges Committee. He keeps going on about the fact that he has no statutory role in choosing executives and that he is meant to have no influence in choosing executives in the agencies within his portfolio, but that is not the point, because we all agree that he should not have that influence or role. The point is that he made a phone call, which could be construed as an attempt to influence Mr Hodge, and he then disguised that phone call—he covered it up. That is what this Privileges Committee result is about. It is a matter for the integrity of Mr Ingerson—and also the Premier who has stuck his flag to the same mast—to accept the findings of the Privileges Committee and to act on them, and the only appropriate action at the very least is the removal of this Minister from the front bench.

**Ms WHITE (Taylor):** The Premier talked about ministerial responsibility. What the Premier did not talk about was the truth. The Premier said that we should determine where ministerial responsibility starts and ends. Every school child in this State can tell the Premier that that responsibility should never fall short of the truth. Now in his defence the former Deputy Premier keeps harking back to the fact that it is not his role to get involved in the statutory authorities that he administers. That is a fact: he should not, but he does. However, the point that we are debating is not whether or not he gets involved but the fact that he comes into this House and lies about it. Every member of this House knows, as does every political commentator and probably most South Australians, that the Minister misled the House and that he deliberately misled the House.

Our Westminster system says that a deliberate misleading of the House is a grave contempt of our Parliament. There is only one action that can be taken—a resignation or, if not a resignation, a forced resignation, a sacking by the Premier—and that is what must happen. The real significance about this matter today is that it is not the first time. This has happened previously with this Minister in exactly the same way. Members of the previous Parliament will remember, at the end of 1996, the no-confidence motion brought against the then Deputy Premier in the Anne Ruston case—the same script, the same behaviour by the Minister. First, there was the lie, then the denials, the uncovering by the Opposition, the embarrassment by the Government, the late night coming into Parliament and the admission—

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I ask you to rule on relevance.

**The SPEAKER:** I was listening carefully to the honourable member. I do not believe that the honourable member strayed too far, but I caution her to keep the text of the motion before her.

**Ms WHITE:** What the Deputy Premier probably did not want me to talk about is the late night admission to the

House—that we have seen before, in exactly the same way—that the truth was not told but saying, ‘I did not understand the question.’ Exactly the same thing happened. Familiar it sounds indeed, because two years ago it happened in almost exactly the same way. The question is not that difficult: ‘Did you have discussions?’ It is either ‘Yes’ or ‘No’. From the former Deputy Premier, it was a deliberate, even smug, ‘No’, as it was previously in the Anne Ruston case and as we have heard before on a number of occasions from this Minister.

A Liberal member might be willing to get an incompetent Minister out of a self-inflicted jam once, and every Liberal member in the former Parliament has done exactly that. Will they do it again, even though they know that, under our Westminster system, this Minister should have been sacked 18 months ago? The Minister has bumbled his way from crisis to crisis and misled Parliament when there was no reason to do so—not even a political reason. Will these Liberal members vote against the findings of this report when they all know them to be justified and correct? After all the havoc this Minister has wreaked, will members opposite say, ‘We value you so much, Graham, that we will ignore the fact that you have repeated the very behaviour that brought against you the first no confidence motion for misleading the House; instead, we will protect and sanction that behaviour by pretending it’s all okay, that you did not mislead Parliament again?’ Misleading Parliament is so serious that, under our Westminster system, there are no second chances. However, this Minister has had more than a second chance. This Minister has had several second chances. All I have to say to those opposite who will vote against this report is, ‘You deserve to be stuck with him.’

**Mr CLARKE (Ross Smith):** I want to start where the member for Taylor started in her contribution. The Premier, in his statement today, asked the rhetorical question, ‘Where does ministerial responsibility begin and end?’ It is quite simple, Mr Premier, and it is in your handbook: a Minister, when asked a straight question, should give an unqualified, categorical answer to the Parliament. The Parliament and the public are entitled to expect that that answer is truthful in all respects and that it was not, as the Premier would try to have us believe, an inadvertent misleading of the House or that it was a technical question and some of the facts were a little wrong, for which an apology could subsequently be made. It was a categorical answer to a straight question—no ifs, buts or maybes. Under the Premier’s own code of conduct, the Minister cannot survive. Indeed, he should have done the right thing by himself and by his Party by simply resigning.

I also want to draw attention to the member for Gordon’s contribution this afternoon, because this really boils down to the fact that the Minister, the member for Bragg, has decided to tough it out and see what happens. It is quite clear also that the Premier, even if unenthusiastically, in his speech today has decided to support his Minister for a variety of reasons, not the least of all being self-preservation. It also boils down to the finely balanced Parliament and to the attitude of the National Party and the two Independents in terms of what they will do about adopting this report. Further, it depends on what the House will do, if the Premier and the Minister do not act, with respect to any subsequent vote of no confidence in the Minister. The member for Gordon worried me a bit, because he started to wring his hands and suggest that the Minister should be judged by the standards of this Parliament today, yet he wails and moans about the standards that this

Parliament has concerning ministerial propriety and behaviour.

I simply say to the member for Gordon that he should accept the same advice he gave the Premier in rather colourful language last week when he said that the Premier should show some balls in handling the member for Bragg. I say to the member for Gordon: accept your own advice with respect to this matter. It is not good enough for him to come into this House and say, ‘We have appallingly low standards and, as a member of this House, I will join in that ruck: I will not draw the line in the sand; I will not insist on proper standards of behaviour for all Ministers of the Crown.’ The member for Gordon cannot escape his responsibility with respect to that matter by simply saying, ‘This is how the Minister for Health, Mr Cornwall, under a former Government, was treated. This is how Ministers Kotz and Buckby let down the side, and Minister Armitage was a bit sloppy’—but we know that anyway—in terms of some of the answers Ministers opposite have given. The honourable member cannot escape his responsibility. At least the Liberal members opposite have some responsibility—

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. I ask that you rule on the matter of relevance.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order at this stage. Although I will listen to the member for Ross Smith more closely, I believe that he is within Standing Orders at present.

**Mr CLARKE:** The fact that the member for Mawson has not risen in this place to date to defend the Minister speaks volumes, for he is the most toady of all Liberal members of Parliament. If the member for Bragg cannot get the member for Mawson to his feet in his defence, he would know that he is in real strife. I simply conclude by appealing to the member for Gordon as follows: do not try to wash your hands by saying, ‘I will judge the member for Bragg by the sub-standards that I believe operate in this House, and I do not like it.’ Draw the line in the sand and actually take the advice that you gave the Premier.

**Mr LEWIS (Hammond):** At the end of the day is the beginning of the night; that is about where we stand now. Either this Parliament—regardless of who the 47 of us are—takes us down the road to darkness and contempt in the wider community or we decide that standards mean something and that the people who have elected us here can rely on that point. The House must be able to trust and rely on the information which Ministers provide to it, and I have held that view since long before I became a member of this place. Somehow or other this was inculcated by an address given by Sir Thomas Playford to Arbor Day at the Paracombe Primary School in 1954. He made those points for good reasons, that one being the most important amongst them. I share the concerns that were expressed by the member for Bragg about the committee’s composition, although perhaps for different reasons: not so much about the committee members but, rather, about the fact that there was within the structure of that committee the capacity for any member of the general public to see undue influence implied if not obtained. I will leave everyone, whether in this place or outside it, to contemplate the meaning of that.

It was an unfortunate mistake that the member for Bragg made, as the Deputy Premier, when he gave the answer to the relevant question that was put to him, and then repeated it. Notwithstanding the fact that John Profumo, after discovering or being discovered—either way, I am not sure—that he had

misled the House of Commons, resigned. Notwithstanding the fact that he had already resigned—the House still dealt with the matter. It was not possible, as speakers opposite have said, for this House with any integrity and self-respect to have ignored the matter if the Deputy Premier had decided to resign from the ministry at that time. I have always held the view that the House had a responsibility to decide whether or not, regardless, there was a misleading—and a deliberate misleading at that—and I have said so.

The Minister said it is an unfortunate mistake. The circumstances, as they have been portrayed today, especially in the course of the debate (and I do not enjoy having to refer to anyone's contribution, although I refer to the Premier's), invite me and all 47 of us as members of this place to consider whether or not we would put our personal inclinations and feelings about one other member ahead of the respect which the public have, could have or should have for this institution, and whether or not we would put that ahead of our belief, in this case in the tribal context, in what I considered to be, when I first joined the Liberal Party, the high tenets which Liberal Party members expect of those they endorse and elect to Parliament, especially those who become Ministers in Liberal Governments, as distinct from some of the things I have seen come from Ministers of Labor Governments during the time I have been here.

Also, in the third instance, I wonder whether or not we have to decide between our support for somebody we know closely and personally or our support for the trust that the public must be able to have in the Parliament. Personally I cannot respond to that question, if indeed it is a question, other than by saying that the institution of Parliament and the good government of the people through the processes of democracy must be paramount.

I disagree with the view that it is the Opposition's job to catch them out. It is the Opposition's job, I believe, as other writers over the last century have clearly spelt out many times, to put alternative policies about the way in which they believe public policy ought to be undertaken as opposed to the way in which it is being undertaken by Her Majesty's Government. Members opposite are Her Majesty's loyal Opposition; they are loyal to the Head of State; and there is a separation between the Head of State and the Government.

The Opposition, however, these days is written up by journalists to be something more tribal, in behaviour, engaging in a blood sport, and the Government on the other side of the Chamber is expected to reciprocate in kind or the journalists do not like it because it is not entertaining enough—they do not have sufficient controversy to report. That is sad, because it demeans the Parliament and makes it seem more like a football game or some other more violent kind of sport. In fact, it is demeaned by implication in the subconscious of the majority of the people as being even worse than sport, because in sport at least you have an independent umpire and you know the rules. It seems that, too often, the Parliament either does not have or is unwilling to accept the view of an independent umpire, nor does it have written rules by which it will conduct itself.

We have written rules on this side of the Chamber in Government. The Liberal Party went to the last election with a clear-cut statement of what those rules were. I do not need to quote them again—they have been quoted in the context of this debate already. It pains me that it is now seen as desirable to use sophistry to get around it. There was a consequence, as another point in the remarks I make in relation to my belief that this motion deserves the support of

all 47 of us, for someone as a result of that telephone call. Because Rob Hodge did not comply, he paid the price, and so did other people who supported him. Whether that was necessary in the context of what was desirable for racing is beside the point. The end result is that Rob Hodge is no longer Chairman of the SAJC. A point was made earlier in the course of the debate that the telephone call to Rob Hodge from the Minister, the then Deputy Premier, had no consequences. Well, it did. Whether or not we could have achieved the same result without the same changes in the personalities controlling racing, I do not know. If the changes that have been rolled in are indeed the direction in which racing wants to go, then I guess we could have achieved that same result.

Equally, if that is true, then it does not really matter which person it is who is Minister for Racing, so long as that person demonstrates a measure of competence in the portfolio area, a measure of capacity and integrity as a Minister and, of course, then has the trust of this House. In consequence of the findings of the Privileges Committee, it simply is not possible, no matter how much some people in the racing industry may think it is, no matter how much they wish it to be so, for this House to have confidence in the Minister's ability to give it reliable information, to give it information in which it can place its trust.

So, it saddens me that we find ourselves having to debate the proposition, because it was never necessary. If the first act of misleading the House had not occurred, we would not be taking the time today to reflect upon what is meant by being elected to public office in this place and given the responsibility of directing the way in which the State develops itself, the way in which society governs itself, and the way in which we make the laws and the process by which information upon which we base those laws is obtained. If we cannot rely on Ministers, upon whom can we rely? What kind of a Parliament will it be? I ask all 46 other members, including you, Mr Speaker: how long we expect the public to trust us if we do not act on such information, regardless of what appears to be the consequences for us each personally? It is not about personal ambition and desire; it is not about making friends or enemies but about making improvements.

**Ms BREUER (Giles):** I have heard lots of terms here this afternoon like '*prima facie* case', 'breach of privilege', 'misleading Parliament', 'grave contempt' and 'process of democracy', but I wonder whether South Australians out there really understand what is happening today. I see this quite simply. We are supposed to be grown-ups. When I was a child I was not to tell fibs and, if I did, I got soap in my mouth, and I remember a number of occasions when I had soap in my mouth.

Most of us here today are parents, and we try to instil a sense of moral values in our children. One of the things that we do is teach them not to tell fibs and, if they do and they do it repeatedly, we punish them for it. We do not give them just a slap on the wrist and we do not use soap in the mouth as they did previously, but we give them a substantial punishment if it is repeated. We withdraw their privileges; we take away their rights. I believe, and I believe that the great majority of South Australians feel like I do, that if the Premier says today, 'You are a naughty boy, so you cannot be Deputy any longer,' but does nothing else, that is just a slap on the wrist. What sort of example is that for our children in this State or for parents in the community who are trying to give their children a sense of moral values? Are we

just saying to them, 'Don't tell fibs in case you get caught, but don't worry too much if you do, just get a way with it.'?

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL (Minister for Local Government):** Being Chairman of the Privileges Committee, indeed being a member of the Privileges Committee, was not an enviable task. We considered this matter and considered it as a matter of some weight. Therefore the level of contributions of some members of this House greatly disappoints me. The use of the judicial power has never been exercised by this Parliament in its history. On motion of the member for Ramsay, we were asked to convene a Privileges Committee: we did so. The whole Parliament knew that the committee was to report today, and it is incumbent on every member of this Parliament to understand what the report is about and what this committee is considering, not to sit in the Parliament and take pot luck. If this Parliament is diminished today as a result of these proceedings, as the member for Hammond pointed out, it is the 47 members in here who diminish the Parliament, not just the Privileges Committee.

The member for Gordon and the Premier made most significant contributions today, and I urge everybody after this debate has concluded to read what they said, because the member for Gordon in particular struck some very vital chords. The member for Hammond spoke about the integrity of Ministers. I put to members that the integrity of this Government—the integrity of any Government—rests not primarily on the integrity of the Ministers but on the integrity of every single member of the House. If this or any Parliament is in disrepute, it is because of the collective disrepute of every politician, not just the Ministers.

Much was made of a document which had nothing to do with the Privileges Committee—the Premier's Handbook—which states that wilfully misleading the Parliament in respect of ministerial responsibilities is a grave offence. The Crown Solicitor has advised:

...one of the other significant differences between the controlling authorities and RIDA is a lack of ministerial control in relation to the controlling authorities... Consequently, I conclude that these controlling authorities are not emanations of the Crown. Their lack of ministerial control means that their actions, if criticised, are more likely to reflect that on the individual bodies or members than upon Government as a whole.

That is the professional advice provided by the Crown Solicitor.

**Ms White:** When are you going to start talking the truth?

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** I heard the member for Taylor in silence; perhaps she would be a bit more courteous and a bit less waspish—I have had enough of wasps at present. That matter is pertinent because I draw—

*Mr Conlon interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** I caution the member for Elder.

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** I draw the member's attention to the fact that the Privileges Committee must consider three elements: was the statement of itself misleading; whether the member in making the statement did so deliberately, and that was not the unanimous verdict of the committee; and whether the misleading of the House was of little or no consequence. As the Premier pointed out, if this matter did not fall within the ministerial responsibility of the Minister, it was of little matter.

The Leader of the Opposition mentioned the Profumo case, and that highlights the problems for the Opposition. The Profumo case was about a Minister of the Crown who was having an affair with somebody who in turn was linked to a

national security problem. It was a matter of a Minister of the Crown compromising his responsibilities and, therefore, it was a matter before the House. I also point out to the House that the Profumo affair was in 1963 and the report quotes that in 1978, some 15 years afterwards, the House of Commons resolved to exercise its penal jurisdiction as sparingly as possible and only when satisfied that it was essential to do so.

The House heard the member for Gordon talk about Klunder over scrimber and Bannon over the State Bank. None of us are perfect and, lest we think that we are, I refer to a person who stated in this House on 11 February 1986 that the then Premier, Premier Bannon:

... was a Premier who put substance ahead of image, policy before gimmicks, and planning and management before rhetoric. In an era where media and interest groups demand instant solutions to long-term problems, the Premier has the courage to take the longer view.

That was the Leader of the Opposition on 11 February 1986. Just to complete that point, what about this statement? The Leader of the Opposition said:

No-one of significance in the Australian financial community would not acknowledge that the success of the new bank is in large part due to the brilliance of its Managing Director Tim Marcus Clark.

That is recorded in *Hansard* of 13 February 1989.

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

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There are a couple of points that I would like to make to the Leader. The first is that the use of the word 'lie' across the Chamber is totally unparliamentary, and it will cease. The second thing that I would like to mention is that the Leader has interjected 11 times. He has been warned and, as a general warning to other members, I advise that, if they do not want to be here for the vote, they will continue interjecting.

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** They were statements made to this House. The House may consider that they were made in total ignorance and that the Leader of the Opposition was not making a deliberate statement at that time, but they were statements which nevertheless could in hindsight have been calculated to mislead the House. This can be a process properly indulged in by the Parliament of South Australia exercising its judicial power, or it can prove once again that the Opposition has as its political hero the Queen of Hearts from Alice in Wonderland, because she only ever had one line, which was: 'Off with its head, off with its head, off with its head.'

As the Premier has said, this is not a black and white issue. It is a complex issue in which natural justice demands that the member for Bragg be heard fairly in this Chamber and not hung, drawn and quartered. A member opposite said that when we were kids we had our mouth washed out with soap and water for telling lies. That may have been so, but we were not necessarily hung, drawn and quartered for it. As the Premier said, let the punishment fit the crime.

Motion carried.

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** I bring up the minutes of proceedings of the Privileges Committee and move:

That they be received.

Motion carried.

#### AUSTRALIAN DANCE THEATRE

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services):** On behalf of the Minister for the Arts in another place, I table a ministerial statement made in another place this afternoon concerning the Australian Dance Theatre.

## INTOXICATION AND THE CRIMINAL LAW

**The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE (Minister for Government Enterprises):** On behalf of the Attorney-General in another place, I table a ministerial statement and a discussion paper tabled earlier today in another place.

## PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE

**The SPEAKER:** Are there any further motions that any member wishes to move in relation to the Privilege matter? There being no further motions, I call on Question Time.

## QUESTION TIME

### INDUSTRY, TRADE AND TOURISM MINISTER

**The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition):** Does the Premier stand by his own ministerial code of conduct in relation to Ministers who wilfully mislead the Parliament and, if so, given the findings of the Privileges Committee today and the unanimous vote of this House, will he enforce his own code of conduct by dismissing the Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism, or will the Premier re-write his code of conduct so that Ministers no longer must tell the truth to this Parliament?

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** Once again the Leader of the Opposition is seeking to re-write some of the findings of the Privileges Committee in the preface to his question. I simply reiterate to the House that the Minister (Hon. Graham Ingerson) has paid a price, and he has apologised to this House for the mistake that he made. The penalty has been applied and an apology has been tendered. The Minister has admitted making a mistake and, as I say, he has paid a penalty for that mistake and given due apology to this House. It would seem to me that the Opposition has some memory lapse. We well remember the Hon. Barbara Wiese who had not one, not two, but three conflicts of interest as identified by Mr Worthington QC, and what action was taken in relation to that? Absolutely none.

I see the depths of hypocrisy being put on the table in this place today. We well remember the Hon. Dr John Cornwall in the Upper House against whom a vote of no confidence was passed—not lost. Was any action at all taken in relation to Dr Cornwall? No, there was not—no action yet again. So, the Labor Party can come into this Chamber today and present a case—

*Mr Atkinson interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** We are talking about ministerial responsibility. The Labor Party can—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** Would members opposite give me the courtesy of allowing me to answer the Leader's question? I have put forward examples of non-action of the Labor Administration. In those two instances no action at all was taken compared with this instance where an apology was made and action was taken in that the portfolio was relinquished by the Minister and he resigned as Deputy Premier. Action has been taken and an apology has been tendered. The Government has not, as per the Labor Party's record, ignored the situation.

## ELECTRICITY, PRIVATISATION

**Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders):** Is the Premier aware of the Victorian Regulator General's report on the comparative performance of power distribution companies in Victoria in 1997 and, if so, does he believe that the content of that report justifies the comments made by the Deputy Leader of the Australian Democrats last Sunday?

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** I thank the honourable member for her question on what has been described as one of the most important policy issues confronting this House for some time. We have seen on a number of occasions the tendency of the Deputy Leader of the Democrats to exaggerate and misrepresent reports. It is about time that we put on the public record the accuracy or, rather, the lack of it, of those statements made by the Deputy Leader. We well recall the Hon. Sandra Kanck's statement that she spent 1 000 hours of study which resulted in a 15-page document and which bore an uncanny resemblance to articles by Mr John Spehr, which was full of inconsistencies and flawed logic.

We also remember the Hon. Sandra Kanck's use of what she claimed was a 'World Bank report' criticising privatisation in the United Kingdom. Apparently during the 1 000 hours of study the honourable member did not have time to read that it was not a World Bank study: it was an article by two academics in a magazine published by the World Bank, which contains the following very clear and explicit disclaimer:

Viewpoint is an open forum intended to encourage dissemination of and debate on ideas, innovations and best practices for expanding the private sector. The views published are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the World Bank or any of its affiliated organisations. Nor do any of the conclusions represent official policy of the World Bank or of its executive directors or the countries they represent.

The honourable member also did not have time, during the 1 000 hours, to read the whole article and apparently missed the following comments:

The overall net benefit of privatisation is substantially positive. . . The restructuring and privatisation deliver unambiguous benefits in lower operating costs. . . privatisation yields substantial environmental benefits.

The honourable member also missed the authors' conclusion to the question they posed: was it worth it? The response was an unequivocal 'Yes.' The Hon. Sandra Kanck is at it again with her treatment of the report of the Victorian Regulator General. I want to deal with the facts as they have been issued by the Hon. Ms Kanck in her press release. She has conveniently ignored the fact that the report provides information that was not even collected, let alone published, under the SECV, but this does not stop the honourable member's making comparisons between privatisation and public ownership.

The fact is that there was a small increase in the frequency of interruptions to supply but an improvement in the time taken to remedy them. Of course, the honourable member did not quote the Regulator's conclusion that there was an overall improvement in supply reliability from 1996 to 1997. The honourable member also totally avoided the very good news in that report concerning affordability and availability of supply. The report states:

Dr Tamblyn said that he was particularly pleased at the initiatives taken by the distribution businesses to improve the affordability of their services to customers. In 1997, there was a 55 per cent reduction in residential disconnections for non-payment of bills and an 11 per cent increase in the use of residential budget plans.

Of course, the honourable member did not bother to refer to the comments on improved affordability. However, so that they are on the record, I will read them: in 1997 affordability of supply was enhanced by a further real fall in process of 1 per cent for residential customers and 5 per cent for non-contestable business customers; and there has been a 5.3 per cent real fall in prices for residential customers since the SEC was disaggregated in October 1994. Further, there has been an increased use of instalment plans (11 per cent for residential budget plans), a 15 per cent increase in energy relief grant approvals, and a large fall in disconnections for non-payment (55 per cent for residential customers and 29 per cent for business customers). So, there was a significant reduction in disconnections for non-payment. That is the track record.

It is time we put the true facts on the record. It is important that the misinformation and selective quoting, without proper authorisation from the World Bank, was put in context. Clearly, the World Bank endorses the thrust of privatisation of our power utilities, and clearly the track record and the statistics show that customers have been the beneficiary in Victoria.

#### INDUSTRY, TRADE AND TOURISM MINISTER

**The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is directed to the Premier. In the past three weeks, what meetings and discussions, either formal or informal, has the Premier, or people acting on the Premier's behalf, had with the Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism in which the Minister's future outside the Parliament, in either a State or a Federal Government position, either here or overseas, was discussed?

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** This is obviously a fishing exercise. I have had no discussions with the Minister in relation to such a posting interstate or overseas and, to my knowledge, no-one would have any authority to raise such a question. It just has not been discussed. If the Leader has some information, I would be delighted to hear about it. I would like to know where these positions are that are available overseas.

#### NEW SOUTH WALES ELECTRICITY PRIVATISATION

**Mr SCALZI (Hartley):** Has the Premier any further indication that the New South Wales Labor Government is pressing ahead with its plans to privatise its electricity assets?

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** It seems that all of us except the Leader (who has now left the Chamber) are well aware that, once the Federal election is out of the way, the New South Wales Labor Government will move quickly to sell off its electricity assets—and it has made that quite clear. All of us are equally aware—except, it seems, the Leader—that this would result in a loss of value for our own power assets—the window of opportunity to maximise our return to retire debt. If we can retire debt, we can then spend the social dividend in education, health services and other infrastructure services that South Australians are calling out for. Yesterday's *Financial Review* reported that New South Wales is gearing up to apply its TAB template to the electricity sector. The *Financial Review* reported that the man who headed the Government's TAB task force, Joe Collins, is due to be appointed as joint head of the State's Electricity Reform Task Force. The report went on to state:

It seems certain that Collins' appointment as project manager is designed to smooth the Government's painful path to electricity privatisation, which it has never officially abandoned, despite a rebuff by unions at last October's State ALP conference.

It appears from the report in today's *Advertiser* that Mr Collins has indeed been appointed. Interestingly, Mr Collins is described as a deal maker appointed to crack union opposition within the ALP. Perhaps the Leader, and even the Deputy Leader, should contact their Labor colleague in New South Wales, Bob Carr, and ask whether Mr Collins could visit Adelaide and help the Labor Opposition come to some sense on this issue. I am sure that the member for Hart—who has been rather quiet of late on this issue, but it is common knowledge that he supports the sale of ETSA and privatisation—would welcome that.

It is clear that Governments of all political persuasions around this country are facing the inevitable in relation to electricity—removal of risk and not exposing taxpayers. We have Queensland with no debt, Victoria getting down the track to almost no debt and New South Wales having no debt once it privatises its utilities, but South Australia is still lumbering along with Labor's debt—the bank. Unless we get rid of that, we will not deliver the social dividend to South Australians. We will not be in a position, with the QEH, the Royal Adelaide Hospital or the Flinders Medical Centre, to provide the facilities that are required. We have been constantly hamstrung in the past 4½ years through a lack of finances to invest in infrastructure to deliver essential services to people.

If one were to ask any member of the Government whether we want to give our children better education services and facilities, to deliver better environmental outcomes in the long term for South Australians and to put more resources into our health system in South Australia, the answer would be 'Yes.' Let us get rid of the impediment to delivering those social dividends in education, health, the environment and other essential services, which is to free up from the debt. And instead of that \$2 million a day being poured down the drain in debt interest, let us save by reduction of debt interest which can be reinvested in the social infrastructure that so many South Australians deserve and want.

#### INDUSTRY, TRADE AND TOURISM MINISTER

**Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Is the Premier aware of or was he involved in any discussions being held with the Chairman of the Environment, Resources and Development Committee about the Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism taking that position in the near future, and does he believe that that would be a sensible compromise?

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** This just demonstrates the dearth of talent, policy options and seriousness with which this Opposition takes this Parliament. The answer to the Deputy Leader's question whether I had a discussion with the honourable member is 'No.'

The member for Gordon raised the issue of the standard, the conduct, the proceedings and the processes of this Parliament. What is important to South Australians is moving on with what is in the interests of South Australians and debating real policy options to take us into the next century. This Opposition (mostly vacant from Question Time today, because it has generated its news grabs for tonight) has no policy plans or policy options for South Australians. Members opposite sit there, having created the bank debt and

labelling us with the debt that we have to manage, with no alternative plans, not accepting any responsibility for actions in the past and not taking any initiative but to block, to block and to say 'No' to any option that will free up for our kids a bright and prosperous future.

Why do they not accept some fundamental basic responsibility to look at the future for South Australians? Why do they not be accountable in some form or some shape to the broader South Australian community for putting forward proposals for the future? It is because there is a void; there is a vacuum; there are no plans; and there are no options. All they are interested in, as was the case prior to Christmas at their Party Caucus meeting—their objective—is maximum mayhem, not in the interests of South Australians, not wanting to break through, not wanting to move forward, not wanting to create opportunity for our kids, but to drag this State back, to drag this State down for political opportunism at its base and its worst. That is what this Opposition is about.

And well would the Deputy Leader sit there feeling somewhat embarrassed about this set of circumstances. And well would some of the Opposition backbenchers look forward to a Party that ought to have been, and had been in the 1970s and 1980s, a Party of ideas. The Labor Party in the 1970s and 1980s did have some plans, did have some ideas, did take Australia and South Australia seriously. But have a look at them—not an idea, not a plan, not an argument, not a debate in the public arena about the future of South Australia. They should take a cold, hard look at themselves, because the electorate sees them for what they are—knockers and blockers.

#### BAROSSA VALLEY TOURISM

**Mr VENNING (Schubert):** Will the Deputy Premier, as the Minister for Regional Development, outline to the House the regional benefits that the Barossa Valley's first four star tourism resort will provide? My constituents have been making representations to me on this issue for more than six years, but the previous Labor Government did not deliver. They are extremely pleased with yesterday's announcement—at last.

**An honourable member:** A Liberal Government delivered: a Labor Government talked about it.

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** True. The news yesterday was terrific and really highlights a major development in that area. It was a pity there was not a bit more news space given to it. Regional development obviously is a high priority of the Government. Tourism is one of those opportunities in the region and, as the honourable member knows, the Barossa is certainly one of our major regional opportunities. The major earthworks for the Barossa Valley's first four star tourism resort began yesterday. The \$28 million Barossa All Seasons Premier Resort is being developed by private sector company Kinsmen Pty Ltd and will be one of South Australia's key tourism destinations. The project is expected to be completed by July 1999 and includes, amongst other things, restaurants, convention facilities and a mix of 140 one and two bedroom strata title apartments, a health club, a swimming pool and tennis courts, and it is integrated with the 18 hole Tanunda golf course, which will be upgraded to championship standard as part of the development.

The premium quality accommodation will complement the existing range of bed and breakfast facilities that are very popular in that area and will certainly add value to the wine industry and encourage further investment and development

in the region. The conference market has already indicated enormous interest and, given the good facilities, must surely have a terrific potential to bring more people into that area. The developers estimate that more than 100 permanent jobs will be created by the project. The Government's contribution to this major tourism project will be through infrastructure support in the final stages of construction.

The 140 rooms and units in the first stage of the resort development have already been sold. We certainly look forward to this development creating jobs and economic development in the important Barossa region and building on the excellent reputation that that region holds.

#### TORRENS VALLEY PRIVATE HOSPITAL

**Ms BEDFORD (Florey):** My question is directed to the Minister for Human Services. What is the total floor space in square metres to be leased to Healthscope for the Torrens Valley Private Hospital and, of the total floor space in that building, what percentage does that represent?

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** I will have to obtain an answer to that question. Obviously, I do not know the number of square metres of floor space, either being privately leased out or for the entire building, but I will obtain that information and bring it back to the Parliament as soon as possible. From memory, I think I am right in saying it is two floors of the total building, but let me check that figure and bring back a reply.

#### HOUSING TRUST PROPERTIES

**Mr BROKENSHIRE (Mawson):** Will the Minister for Human Services assure the House that Housing Trust tenants in rural and regional areas will benefit from the Housing Trust programs to install smoke alarms in Housing Trust properties and safety doors to trust cottage flats, and to increase its program of upgrading Housing Trust homes in rural and regional areas?

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** The Government is taking a number of initiatives to ensure that we provide effective public housing for those with the need in rural and regional parts of South Australia. First, let me deal with the renovation program, because there are a lot of Housing Trust homes in places such as Whyalla, Port Augusta and Port Pirie which were put there in the early development days of those regional cities and which are now very tired. I am delighted to say that this year, 1998-99, 150 of those Housing Trust homes will be renovated. There are major programs under way at Port Pirie, Port Lincoln, Port Augusta and Whyalla. Some of those programs have already had several stages opened.

Let me give the details of what is occurring in each major town around South Australia. In Port Augusta, 20 houses are being renovated this year; in Whyalla, 48; in the South-East, 21; in Port Pirie, 21; in Port Lincoln, 19; and in the Murray region, 24. The total cost of those renovations to Housing Trust homes is about \$3.8 million.

One week ago I announced that we would be putting safety doors on all cottage homes or cottage flats. This is being done in response to the approaches to me as Minister from a number of older people who are concerned about their security. These cottage flats are used largely by older women who are living alone and who are therefore very concerned about their security. I have discussed the matter with the board of the Housing Trust and I am delighted to say that, as



a result, security doors will be fitted to 6 716 cottage flats throughout the State, 1 379 of those being in rural parts of South Australia. Therefore, approximately 6 700 people will go to bed each night feeling that little bit more secure because they will have a very good safety door on their home with an effective locking mechanism. If need be, on a hot summer's evening, they will be able to open their main door, let the breeze through but still have a safety door to protect them.

The third issue being taken up by the Housing Trust in relation to trust homes in rural parts of South Australia is the installation of smoke detectors. This is being done in the city as well as in the country. Let me give the figures. Smoke alarms are being installed in Housing Trust properties, with 2 200 in the South-East at a cost of \$76 000; 1 070 in the Port Pirie region at a cost of \$32 000; 950 in Port Lincoln at a cost of \$28 500; 2 900 in the Murray region, including the hills area, at a cost of \$87 000; 1 400 in Port Augusta at a cost of \$42 000; and 3 500 in the Whyalla region at a cost of \$105 000.

Most of that work will be carried out by local contractors. Some of it will be carried out by service clubs such as Rotary. I also stress that the installation of the safety doors, which is a significant contract in terms of labour, will be done by local contractors. The Housing Trust is certainly playing its part in making sure that people in Housing Trust homes in the country have effective public housing to meet the needs of those regions.

#### INDUSTRY, TRADE AND TOURISM MINISTER

**Mr CONLON (Elder):** Has the Premier discussed or is he aware of discussions with the Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism about the Minister's potentially accepting a junior ministry? Is the Minister passing away in instalments?

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** In just taking the answers to the previous questions asked by members opposite in relation to this issue, what we have seen from the Opposition is a total inability and incapacity to engage the Government on any significant major policy issue at all but to engage in the trivia, the sideshows, the circuses and the ten second grabs. That is not in the interests of South Australians. Any Opposition worth half its salt would be engaging us in debate on major policy issues that we have before this Parliament.

The Opposition is abdicating its responsibility in this House by not even attempting to debate key policy issues. It is not as if in the last six months we have not made some policy decisions of note. We have made a range of policy decisions in the course of the last six months, since the last State election, that are of quite outstanding significance in terms of impact, direction and the future of South Australia. But where has the Opposition been on those issues? Absolutely silent. What are the alternative policy options from the Opposition? There are none. None have been put forward. But rather, they keep on the side issues, the circuses and the ten second grabs instead of engaging in debate on real policy substance.

As to some members of the Opposition—and I will not name who they are—that must really gall them, because I know that some members of the Opposition in this Chamber really do have a genuine concern about South Australia and its future, but it is not being demonstrated by the way in which this Opposition approaches those policy debates or Question Time in this Parliament. It is an opportunity on behalf of South Australians to take up policy debates with the Government of the day. It is an abdication of responsibility

on behalf of this Opposition that some eight or nine months after the last State election it still has not attempted to grasp the real issues for South Australia.

There are many issues that this State, this Government and this Parliament will have to confront in the course of the next year to protect the economic base and try to expand and grow that economic base, to take into account the Asian economic crisis, and to take into account other issues that will impact on investment in this State in the future. Those challenges are the ones on which we ought to be concentrating. It is important that we get those challenges right for this State's future.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT RATES

**Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders):** Will the Minister for Local Government inform the House on the impact rate capping exemptions will have on employment in regional South Australia? I understand that all but two of the 10 councils recently granted exemptions for employment and economic development reasons are located in regional areas.

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** I am most grateful that all members of the Opposition are not as fearless in pursuing the needs of their electorate as are most members on this side but in particular the member for Flinders. I believe that, if we were all kept up to the mark with the tenacity of the member for Flinders, we would be overworked indeed. Recently, pursuant to section 174(A) of the Local Government Act 1934, the Governor proclaimed to exempt the following councils from operations of that section: the District Council of Elliston, the Corporation of the Town of Gawler, the District Council of Kimba, the District Council of Loxton-Waikerie, the District Council of Mallala, the Mid Murray Council, the District Council of Streaky Bay and the Corporation of the City of Whyalla. In addition, there were two city councils—so the honourable member is correct—the City of Playford and the Corporation of the City of Campbelltown. In that second round eight out of 10 councils were rural councils.

The councils made applications for rate cap exemption based on specific proposed projects and have indicated the level of rate increase they would pursue if the exemption is approved. I emphasise to the House that the level of rate increase is a matter between the council and their ratepayers. The Government has granted an exemption. It is for the councils concerned, in concert with their ratepayers, to determine the level of the exemption. However, the probable level of rate increases in the 10 councils in question can be expected to range from 3 to 8 per cent at the extremes, with the majority in the middle range. Of the 10 councils, three have indicated a possible rate increase of more than 5 per cent and they are: the District Council of Kimba at 5 to 7 per cent—and I know that is in the honourable member's electorate—the Town of Gawler with 5 to 8 per cent; and the District Council of Mallala with 4 to 8 per cent.

The question related to additional economic activity and that has been calculated—and it is very difficult to put a final figure on these things—to be in the order of an additional \$3.9 million, and that is on top of the \$10 million worth of economic activity we believe that the first round of rate cap exemptions would generate. Much of this additional expenditure will be in laying down infrastructures to support future large scale economic development, especially in the rural areas of South Australia, with major investments supporting horticulture, aquaculture and tourism—three industries about

which I know the member for Flinders is passionate and a fearless advocate. In addition, many of the capital works projects submitted by the councils are labour intensive and will meet the Government's objectives of more jobs and working on projects that will have long-term benefits for the community. I am tempted to give this answer in full, but I am more than happy to brief members—

*Mr Atkinson interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** If the member for Spence wants me to go through it for the next 25 minutes I will have much pleasure in doing so. I point out that the River Port Interpretive and Visitor Centre is a total project of \$620 000 for which the council is contributing \$170 000 and rates limitation will provide \$100 000. So, there we have \$270 000 driving a \$.62 million project. Whyalla, in particular, has a number of projects, and the eco-city core site project will involve \$1 million over five years and the creation of up to 300 new jobs. I am quite sure that, if no other members opposite are interested, the member representing Whyalla will certainly be interested in 300 more jobs in that important regional economy. But it is not limited just to job creation. Projects for Loxton-Waikerie, such as the River Environs Rehabilitation Program, will provide youth employment programs to continue rehabilitation and revegetation of the Thiele Flats area adjacent to Loxton, additional to upgrades of roads and other major industries.

The decision to exempt councils from the rate cap was not taken lightly, and it was taken very carefully on the Premier's commitment that local government, State Government and Federal Government should work together to create a seamless interface that will drive this country, and this State in particular, into the next millennium. If we—

*Mr Atkinson interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL:** I am sure the member for Spence will tell me what is wrong with the words 'seamless interface'. The important factor is that this Government has demonstrated repeatedly a commitment to work with local government and through local government—not to dominate them, not to behave like big brother, but to work in cooperation—and in no other place in South Australia is that more important than in our regional economy. We have demonstrated and we will continue to demonstrate that by working with members such as the member for Flinders and other country members in this Chamber and by working with country councils we will revitalise the regional economy and do something for those people of South Australia who for decades were totally neglected and totally scorned by the Labor Governments of this State.

## RAIL REFORM

**Mr ATKINSON (Spence):** My question is directed to the Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism. Was the Minister involved in decisions or in making recommendations regarding the awarding of grants under the Commonwealth's rail reform program following the sale of Australian National?

**The Hon. G.A. INGERSON:** I am Chairman of the committee that, in essence, is looking after the distribution of the funds. We recommend that distribution of funds to the Federal Government, and the Federal Government finally makes the decision in terms of where those funds go. I took over the chairmanship of that committee, I think about four or five months ago, when the Minister for Transport stood

down from that position. If the inference from the question was whether I chair the committee, then the answer to that is 'Yes.'

## LOXTON IRRIGATION REHABILITATION SCHEME

**Mrs MAYWALD (Chaffey):** Will the Deputy Premier explain what involvement the State Government will have in the rehabilitation of the Loxton irrigation scheme? I understand that the South Australian Government has agreed jointly to fund a program with the Commonwealth Government and the community. Will the Deputy Premier explain to the House the details of that program?

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN:** I thank the member for Chaffey for this question, involving an issue on which the honourable member has kept right on everyone's metal. It has been a long time coming. We understand that the Commonwealth Government has approved initial funding commitment for the rehabilitation of the Loxton irrigation scheme, although we are still awaiting written confirmation. Certainly, the local member was given the okay to make an announcement last week, so we believe that the scheme is under way. It is the first win in a very concerted effort of lobbying the Federal Government in which we and the member for Chaffey have been involved. Certainly, the Federal member for Wakefield has done a lot of work to try to get this priority up.

The Loxton irrigation scheme is owned and maintained by the Commonwealth, and that is different from the other irrigation schemes along the Murray. In recognising the desperate need for the area to be rehabilitated, the State Government is entering into an agreement to cost share with the Commonwealth and the community in what will be a 40:40:20 split on the overall rehabilitation. The approval for stage 1 will allow massive new development by Century Almonds to become part of the Loxton scheme. Century Almonds is a 670 hectare horticultural development which will provide many new jobs for the Riverland and increase our export potential. Stage 1, which is estimated to cost \$2.5 million, would be for the main pipeline and pumping station to be built to allow the Century Almonds project to go ahead. The State and the Commonwealth would each put in \$800 000, and Century Almonds has said that it is willing to commit \$800 000 for this stage of the project.

It is absolutely vital that the rehabilitation of the 3 200 hectares in the Loxton area should happen. As I said, it is owned by the Commonwealth, but the State Government is willing to jointly fund the rehabilitation. This will bring Loxton in line with other Riverland areas where the rehabilitation program is now nearly complete. In that program, the Commonwealth has assisted with the State owned assets. The State Government has committed all along and has budgeted for the full rehabilitation over a six year period, and this is certainly an absolutely major \$16.5 million commitment to what is an important project not just for the Loxton area but, indeed, for all South Australia. The health of the Murray-Darling Basin system is absolutely vital for this project, other projects and also the health of the river on which South Australia so greatly depends, not just for industry development but also for domestic purposes.

We understand that the commitment at present will be only for stage 1 of the program: so far there is no indication that the budget for future years has been allocated. We will continue to pressure the Federal Government to match our commitment so that the necessary work can get under way.

This will pave the way for other new developments and improve the service to existing irrigators. I look forward to working with the members for Chaffey as well as the local community to keep pressure on until this scheme is fully funded.

#### INDUSTRY, TRADE AND TOURISM MINISTER

**Mr ATKINSON (Spence):** Can the Premier advise the House of the cost of Government legal advice to the Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism in connection with the Privileges Committee, and will these costs now be reimbursed to the Crown by the Minister now that he has been found guilty by the Privileges Committee? On 9 July, the Deputy Premier told the House that he would obtain for us the detail of the wording regarding the Cabinet decision to give the Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism governmental legal advice in connection with the Privileges Committee. Neither the Deputy Premier nor any other Minister has yet provided that information.

**The Hon. J.W. OLSEN:** I do not have the figure available to me. My understanding is that no account has been rendered in relation to the matter. However, I will undertake to have the matter followed through and make that information available to the honourable member.

#### AQUACULTURE

**Mr MEIER (Goyder):** My question is directed to the Minister for Environment and Heritage. What is the Government doing to ensure the future of an environmentally sustainable aquaculture industry for South Australia? I am very heartened that, in the electorate of Goyder, aquaculture has continued to play an increasingly important role in such areas as oyster farming, abalone farming, the production of nori seaweed, crab farming and even ornamental fish farming.

**The Hon. D.C. KOTZ:** I thank the honourable member for his question, which covers a broad range of aquaculture. The actions taken by this Government will certainly ensure the long-term future for the aquaculture industry in South Australia. I am sure that members would be aware of the industry's growing importance to the economy of our State, particularly within regional areas. Aquaculture has certainly grown very rapidly over the past decade, with the 1997 value of the industry to South Australia reaching some \$93 million. Of course, this could increase to nearly \$175 million by the year 2000. With careful planning and sustainable use of our natural resources, we can confidently predict that this industry will be one that will continue to grow and flourish, and will provide jobs in South Australia.

The House would be aware that one of the keys to the success of the South Australian aquaculture industry has been the availability and the international recognition of an unpolluted marine environment. In a marketing sense, our primary producers have been able to capitalise on our clean and green image, and their advantage will continue because of the Government's action to protect and maintain our coastal and marine environments. Further, the industries will certainly benefit from our marine environment which recognises that they have a vested interest in managing that resource extremely well.

It was only yesterday that I launched another measure relating to our water care program in this State with the introduction of an innovative form of technology involving the Water Watch web site. The Water Watch web site will

also provide easily understood information about our water resource, including our linkages to areas on Water Watch sites, both nationally and internationally. Importantly, we are looking at providing education and information for the people of South Australia, including a facility for young people to post public messages to each other on their findings. This is obviously a great way to include young people in regional areas, enabling them to exchange views and understand the promotions and the importance of aquaculture to South Australia.

Members would also be interested to know that Adelaide is at present hosting a national Water Watch conference. That conference, which started yesterday and will proceed today, will focus on a whole range of issues, involving discussion on some of the important aspects that affect our water such as algal blooms, pollutants and their effects on our rivers. This conference will contribute to the rising level of commitment and community awareness and will explain how we can all play a part in ensuring cleaner waterways in South Australia, through this Government's interest in promoting a clean and green environment and in making sure that information is available across this State, starting with our youth and building with our industries across the board. I would also suggest that the Water Watch web site is an initiative that is an example of the community and the South Australian Government working together to explore creatively environmental issues that impact on our precious water resources.

#### POLICE VEHICLES

**Ms RANKINE (Wright):** Can the Minister for Police advise how many police patrol cars, CIB cars and other vehicles used by the South Australian Police Department are being withdrawn in order to meet the Government's \$4 million cut to the police budget? How much does the Minister estimate this will save and, more importantly, how will this impact on the department's ability to fulfil its responsibilities and the Government's pledge to have more police on the beat? It has been brought to my attention that a process of removing cars from suburban patrol bases, CIB units, country regions and other specialist areas has begun and that the implementation of this policy is already having a significant impact. I have been advised by a delegate of the Police Association that only last week officers involved in a special operation targeting nuisance offenders were forced to catch a bus to the shopping centre involved because no car was available.

*Members interjecting:*

**Ms RANKINE:** Councils have to pay for those. Ironically, a similar scenario was raised in today's *Advertiser* in the *Politician* comic strip, from where it seems this Government is getting its policies. It was put to the Minister that Treasury supported putting more police on the streets, the reason given being that running police cars is too expensive.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** The honourable member has raised some specific incidents. If she is happy to give me the details of those incidents, I will follow them through. As regards the number of cars, that is ultimately a management issue for the Commissioner, and I will seek the details from the Commissioner and bring back an answer for the honourable member. However, she has made claims that she has been given details, so I am interested in her providing them to me so that I can follow them through.

## EDUCATION, VOCATIONAL

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen):** Will the Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training inform the House of some of the actions the school and TAFE sectors have taken in recent times to link in with regional enterprises?

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY:** The very nature of country schooling is changing in front of our eyes because a very enterprising group of both principals and school councils is working closely with country industries and linking that to employment opportunities for the youth of our high schools and schools in the country. It is happening at a pace that has not occurred at any other time in our schooling history. As I move around our schools, I am consistently informed of programs that school councils and principals are undertaking with local industry in terms of vocational education training to ensure that their students have the maximum potential for obtaining a job when they leave school. There are some good examples around the place, such as Nuriootpa High School and other places which are gaining employment outcomes for their students in excess of 80 per cent when they leave school.

**Mr HILL:** On a point of order, Sir, I bring up the question of relevance. The member who asked the question is no longer in the Chamber.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. I caution members against raising trivial points of order.

**Mr Clarke:** Who are you talking to?

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY:** You, for one—you might learn something. I am speaking to only half the members on your side, obviously. I have spoken before in this Chamber about Naracoorte High School, which is working with BRL Hardy in developing vocational education training for the viticulture industry. I note the success of that program in the skills centre opened down there a few months ago and its success in obtaining Australian National training authority funding for that particular project.

I know that the member for Heysen is particularly interested in this question, and I am pleased to see that he is on the edge of his seat listening to my answer. There are other areas where the Naracoorte experience is being replicated. Schools in the Riverland are working in partnership with local industries such as the dried fruit industry, viticulture, agriculture and State ITABS in cold storage and transport, food and beverage and the Agricultural and Horticultural Council in ensuring that there are maximum opportunities for the students coming out of those schools in the Riverland.

In the Lower Murray cluster of schools, a partnership with seven employers has been created to develop a national pilot project for irrigation and engineering services. You can tell by the flavour of these sorts of projects that schools are aligning to industry within their region and ensuring that country industries and country businesses are given the best possible option to have young people skilled to enter the work force within the country and maximise the potential for them.

Another example is Millicent High School, which has a metal and engineering area of school-based apprenticeship where students have been contracted by Group Training Employment at Mount Gambier and hosted by local employers in the Millicent and Mount Gambier area.

I mentioned previously Nuriootpa High School. For some time it has run a viticulture project in association with local wineries to ensure that vocational education training undertaken at Nuriootpa High School is of the highest degree and prepares young people in the valley for jobs in the viticulture industry and within wineries in the Barossa Valley. Nuriootpa

High School has gone one step further in that it has produced a wine which it makes on site.

*The Hon. Dean Brown interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY:** The member for Finnis says that Willunga High School has done the same thing. It is producing a marketable wine of high quality. The wine from Nuriootpa High School recently won medals in national wine competitions, and it is extremely pleasing to see that not only is the program delivering in terms of skills for later employment but also the quality of the wines and the quality of the projects is extremely high. It is not only limited to the schools, because our TAFE institutes are also performing extremely well. To give some examples—

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** I did ask about TAFE institutes.

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY:** The member for Heysen reminds me that he asked about TAFE institutes. I am pleased to get around to the substance of his question. The Murray Institute of TAFE is working with companies such as BP Fruits and Almandco, and up to 36 traineeships initially are likely to be followed by many others. Onkaparinga Institute has consultancy and training agreements with over 30 different enterprises, some major ones being BRL Hardy Wines, George Chapman Pty Ltd, Hendersons Automobile, Lear Corporation and Southcorp Wines. We can see from that spread the range of different industries now being invited to become involved with TAFE institutes.

It is extremely pleasing to see, under the new Department of Education, Training and Employment, the goodwill between TAFE institutes and schools in developing those sort of projects. The Directors of our TAFE institutes are working hand in hand with our school councils and principals to ensure again that the facilities we have in TAFE institutes are able to be employed to their maximum use.

**Mr CLARKE:** On a point of order, Sir, I refer to Standing Order 98. In particular this Minister again is a time waster in his answers, consuming Question Time. He is worse than the member for Heysen when he was a Minister.

**The SPEAKER:** The honourable member took nearly half a minute for the point of order. There is no point of order in that I cannot bring the Minister to a conclusion unless he starts debating the response. He is still providing facts. I invite the Minister to continue.

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY:** They are very important facts. The South-East Institute of TAFE has long-term enterprises leased by arrangements with many major enterprises such as Kimberley Clarke Australia, CSR Softwoods, Tatiara Meats, Mount Gambier Meats and Kentish Potatoes—again showing that the working relationship between industry and our TAFE institutes is exceptional in South Australia. Not only the schools but also our TAFE institutes are doing exceptional work in this area of vocational education training.

**The SPEAKER:** I remind Ministers that there is an opportunity for ministerial statements and they should consider it.

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## GRIEVANCE DEBATE

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

**Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** I wish to address once again a proposal by the Northern Area Waste Management Authority, which is known as NAWMA, to establish a landfill facility at Medlow Road at Smithfield, which is in my electorate. This proposal has caused quite a degree of unease amongst my constituents, particularly those who live nearby. For instance, several properties are within 500 metres of the proposed landfill area. These are small farms or small properties, and the people who live there are trenchantly opposed to the proposal to have the landfill facility sited near them in the hills face zone.

There is similar opposition from residents in local suburban areas such as Blakeview, Smithfield and Munno Para. Market gardeners at Virginia and other local farmers are also concerned about the implication for contamination of ground water. I have been informed that a report from the Department of Primary Industries and Resources, which raises concerns about ground water, has been sent to the Environment Protection Authority. Its concern is that the underground water in the area is tapped by bores and that such bore water is used for drinking by residents who live within 500 metres of the proposed landfill.

One resident told me that regularly in the summer period he tops up his rainwater tanks with bore water. In contrast to a lot of bore water in the area, this bore water is quite drinkable on its own. This resident mixes it with rainwater, but it is quite possible to drink it on its own because the salt content is not such as to prohibit human use of the bore water. Concerns have also been raised about the standard of monitoring of the bore water surrounding the landfill.

Apparently the report expresses concern about the use of that underground water by the proposed landfill operators and the subsequent effect on the amount of water that will be available for use by the other users of that underground water. The landfill operators will use the water primarily to water the landfill site to reduce the amount of dust, so it will be used every day over the dirt covering the site. That use will have a substantial impact on the underground water.

Very little is known about the nature of the underground water in the One Tree Hill area, but what we do know is that there is a great deal of pressure on that water. Many residents in the One Tree Hill area experience a shortage of water, and we know that the bores drop considerably during periods of drought and that people find difficulty drawing water during such periods. There is quite a lot of concern about what will happen when this other operator in the area begins using a considerable amount of water.

I stress once again that this proposed landfill is in the hills face zone, a zone which does not have approval for this sort of use. It has approval for use by small farmers and hobby farmers, and there is a great deal of concern about the use of water by the increasing number of vigneron in the area. A great deal of the area around One Tree Hill is being planted with grapes, and there is a great deal of concern already about the amount of water being used for farming.

The third concern is about the complexity of the aquifer and the lack of knowledge about it. The report, apparently by Primary Industries, states that it is difficult to estimate the effect of any leakage from the landfill because of the complexity of the aquifer. This is what local residents and market gardeners have been saying long and loud for many years. I hope that the Minister who is responsible for ultimate approval will take notice now.

**Mr CLARKE:** I draw your attention to the state of the House, Sir.

*A quorum having been formed:*

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen):** I should like to comment on a number of organisations which are to be commended for the work that they carry out. Last week I had the opportunity to attend the annual general meeting of the Friends of Parks Incorporated, which is the umbrella organisation for a number of Friends of Parks organisations throughout South Australia. I commend the people who are part of these organisations for the commitment and dedication that they continue to show in supporting our parks, reserves, national parks and conservation parks throughout South Australia.

As a patron of this organisation, I was delighted to be able to attend the annual general meeting and to learn of some of the activities, not only the activities in which the umbrella organisation is involved but also to learn something of the tasks and responsibilities that have been taken on board by so many of the Friends of Parks groups around South Australia. I am sure that many members in this place are aware of some of those achievements. I always enjoy the opportunity whenever possible to visit with the Friends groups in my electorate, and I know that other members do the same thing in their own electorate.

We are also very lucky in this State to have a series of consultative committees, which were established to bring about a closer working relationship between those who have responsibility within the National Parks and Wildlife Service for managing our parks and reserves and to establish a better relationship with other people who have an involvement, for example, the landowners who surround the parks, local government, the CFS and other organisations that have an important part to play in the overall management of parks and reserves.

All these people carry out their responsibilities in a voluntary capacity and, when I look back at the changes that have occurred over the past decade or so in park management and when I consider the support that is now provided so widely by organisations, individuals and community groups within various parts of the State for our parks, I recognise just what a superb job those consultative committees are doing.

The other group that needs special recognition is the National Parks Foundation. That group of people work in a voluntary capacity to raise funds for the purchase of land and for the purchase of other necessary things that are evident in the work that park managers carry out. The National Parks Foundation shows a tremendous amount of commitment in a voluntary way. It has gained the support of many people in South Australia and, because of the splendid work that it is able to do, its activities are now watched very closely by similar groups in other States.

The final group I mention is the Bookmark Biosphere Reserve and the trust that is involved in helping with the management of that reserve. That group has achieved a considerable amount, including investment from Government and private sources of over \$12 million. There are approximately 38 current and soon to be approved land partners in Bookmark, including Federal and State Government, local government and lands, corporate holdings and properties of individuals or families. I emphasise that this Government's support is needed to enable the environment centre to be built at Renmark. It is essential that that development proceed as a matter of the highest priority and I hope that all members support that project.

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

**Mr CLARKE (Ross Smith):** A recommendation will be presented to a meeting of the Prospect City Council tonight with respect to the unfortunate demolition of a BMX bike track at the Irish Harp Reserve on Regency Road in my electorate. Whilst I can appreciate why the council is making such a recommendation, I would like to commend some of the young school children who were involved in building that BMX bike track. In my electorate, regrettably, there are few organised places for young people, particularly young boys, in which to skateboard, rollerblade or, indeed, involve themselves in a BMX bike track.

The nearest facility is The Pines, which is some considerable distance from where these particular lads live. As the average age of these young lads is approximately 10 years, it is far too dangerous for them to travel up Grand Junction Road and across Bridge Road to The Pines to involve themselves in BMX bike work. In the April school holidays, a group of about six lads went about building their own bike track on this reserve. I also liked the fact that they took into account the younger members of their group by ensuring that some humps were a bit smaller and they built larger humps for themselves. They were very entrepreneurial: a house was being built around the corner and they knocked off a few of the building supplies to ensure that the humps could be built properly, with a bit of structure, so that they were stable and solid.

The council, naturally, is concerned about its legal liability. The track built by these young lads is located in an area surrounded by trees and, of course, the council is concerned that if any of the lads injure themselves or hit their head on a tree without proper supervision it could be liable for considerable sums of money. I approached the council with a view to its constructing a BMX bike track at that location in consultation with those young lads so that they have some sense of ownership of it. Regrettably it would appear that it is just not possible.

The recommendation that goes before the council tonight is that the BMX bike track be removed and that a new track be built at the Broadview Oval. I support the council and I hope that, at its meeting tonight, approval is given to build a BMX bike track at the Broadview Oval. That will cause some consternation to some of the more elderly residents in that area who, at times, show themselves to have less patience than I think they ought to have for young people getting out and enjoying themselves. The trouble with many inner suburban areas, as you would appreciate, Mr Speaker, is that not enough urban open space is provided for youngsters to enjoy themselves and participate in the sorts of sports they enjoy.

When I was a young person, 20-odd years ago—it seems only 20-odd years ago, but perhaps I am stretching credibility a bit, but not that much; at least I do not dye my hair, mainly because there is no hair to dye—I was able to enjoy myself in various parklands, to get involved and show a bit of imagination as a young boy making and doing things with other young boys. The fact is that we did not think about going out and suing councils if we fell over and hurt ourselves, but society has changed and I can appreciate why councils are a bit more nervous. The fact is that, in inner suburban areas, we are showing ourselves incapable of providing enough open space areas for young people to

rollerblade, to enjoy a BMX bike track, to skateboard, and the like.

We complain about their being on the footpaths and the roads, and we complain about the noise, but let us remember that we were young once and that these young people have got to be able to get out and expend their energies in a constructive and enjoyable fashion. We ought to be using our councils and our Government to facilitate those sorts of recreations that they enjoy, allowing them to participate in the design of bike tracks or skateboarding areas so that they have a greater sense of identity and ownership.

**Mr MEIER (Goyder):** I was pleased that last week was a non-sitting week, because it gave me the opportunity to present cheques to the various groups in my electorate that were successful in obtaining grants under the Grants for Seniors Program. Nineteen groups in the electorate of Goyder were successful this year and I offer my personal congratulations to them for not only being successful but also having applied for grants for the specific items for which they saw a need in their club or organisation. I also thank the Minister for the Ageing, the Hon. Robert Lawson, for making these grants available in his budget.

The grants ranged from as little as \$120 to \$2 000. The types of items, therefore, ranged significantly from material suitable to make curtains to an audio tape dubbing system. It is very heartening that we have so many volunteers in our community who are members of these various organisations and who give of their time freely and willingly, doing so much for their community. I acknowledge that the Government can do only so much and these grants for seniors is one way in which the Government can at least acknowledge some of the work that is being done by the organisations.

I know that some groups were a little disappointed with the amount of money they received because they had applied for more than was given to them. I have said to those groups and I say here in the Parliament that, in these times of restricted availability of money due to the enormous State debt, I always like to see the money spread as widely as possible, particularly in an electorate such as Goyder, which includes the whole of Yorke Peninsula and extends across to Port Wakefield, Balaklava and Hamley Bridge. Requests for specific items included, as I said, an audio tape dubbing system for the Rotary Club of Maitland, which has a fantastic system of reading books and newspapers onto tapes so that visually impaired people are able to listen to them.

I was pleased to hear that the *Stock Journal* is also being dubbed onto the system by the Yorke Peninsula group and that is available to other people throughout the State. I was a little worried when I made the presentation to the Port Broughton Day Centre because it had requested an electronic bingo machine. I must admit that I thought that that may be an electronic gaming machine of some sort. I was assured that it was simply an electronic machine that makes the spinning up of bingo numbers that much easier, particularly for the senior citizens. It will help them to enjoy some of their afternoons in the future.

Other organisations that attracted my attention were the Hamley Bridge Hospital Auxiliary, which received \$500 towards a keyboard organ; the Kadina Senior Citizens Club, which received \$650 towards a microwave and an expanded first aid kit; and the Blue Bush Club at Port Vincent, which received \$300 for a folding bed. The Blue Bush Club seeks to ensure that the senior members of the community get out and enjoy themselves, particularly in the way of physical

activity, and that organisation caters for many people in that area. The Wallaroo and Districts Garden Club received \$400 towards an overhead projector. Again, the amount of work that that club does is great, particularly amongst the senior members of the community, and members of the club have won many awards for prize gardens in their area.

I offer my congratulations to the many clubs in my electorate that were successful. I believe it is the largest number of recipients in Goyder for quite some time, and I was pleased to be able personally to present the cheques to all 19 organisations during the past week.

**Mr HILL (Kaurna):** I speak today about my colleague Kaye Sutherland, the Secretary of the Labor Party, who passed away on 12 July at the age of 43 years. As members would know from reading the press and from the media generally, Kaye was the first woman to become the Secretary of the Labor Party, something of which she was very proud and something which really created a new culture in the Labor Party.

In talking about Kaye and her life, I would like to start talking about her death and the illness that caused her death because, in many ways, that illness defined Kaye's life—not in the sense that it narrowed or restricted her life, but in that it helped to create the person that she was. Kaye was found to have kidney disease at the age of two or three, I believe. At the funeral the other day, poignant pictures were placed against the coffin of Kaye as a young girl in the Children's Hospital suffering from this disease. So, it really did help to define her life. Over the years she was on dialysis on a regular basis, which obviously placed huge restrictions on the way in which her family was able to live. Then, some 10 or 11 years ago, she had a kidney transplant, which liberated her from her machine, but she was still dependent on medication and treatment. Therefore, she was very much involved with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, where the kidney unit is situated.

All through that period of time, when there was an enormous amount of suffering, pain and anguish for the family at the various times when they thought they had lost her as a child, Kaye's personality struggled through and, in fact, dominated the disease. It in no sense restricted her in her ambitions, in her life or in her attitudes to people. She worked her way through it. It was a platform upon which she could demonstrate her courage and her great tenacity, and she certainly did that in all aspects of her life.

I believe that 500 or so people attended her funeral the other day. It is true that, if one dies young, one is more likely to have a big funeral than if one dies old, but in her case it was a large funeral because of the large number of people who wanted to pay their respects to her because of their love for and friendship with Kaye. She was a widely loved person in the Labor Party because she treated people decently and honestly. She always gave them a fair go, and she was very generous in spirit in the way in which she treated people. She was a very fine human being and, as someone who worked with her for nine or so years, I know those qualities were very much to the fore. She was a very loyal person. As the Secretary before her—and, therefore, her boss in that sense—I was always given great loyalty, and at no stage at all did I feel as though I had to look behind my back for anything that she was doing: she was very open and honest with me.

In addition to her services to the Labor Party, for many years Kaye did some proud work for the Shop Assistants' Union. She gave strong service and was very loyal to the shop

assistants right through to the end of her life. She was also a South Australian cricketer. When she was on dialysis, as I understand it, she played as a wicket keeper for the South Australian team—no mean accomplishment at all. In addition, she was an active member of the Australian Kidney Foundation and was very prominent within the Labor Party in advocating the organ donation program, so that people would automatically donate their organs (this would be her argument) if they suffered an accident and their organs could be used to help save someone else's life. She was a very strong advocate of that cause and also a very strong advocate for the Kidney Foundation in relation to its money raising activities, because she knew that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, no matter how fine the unit there, was desperately in need of money.

Kaye will be very much missed by her friends in the Labor Party and by her friends in politics and in the medical services, but I believe that she will be missed especially by her family. I would like to say to them—to her mum Rhonda (known as Rocket), her brothers Alan, Don and Rod, her husband Karl, her stepchildren and her nieces and nephews—that we very much feel for them at this time. However, they do know that she is honoured in the Labor Party and in the movements in which she was involved, and very highly regarded by all of us.

**Mr LEWIS (Hammond):** There are three matters that I want to touch on today. The first of them I have mentioned before in these debates in this House, and that is that WorkCover currently requires an employer who is employing someone—that is, another person—who is over 65 years of age, to pay the WorkCover levy on their salary or wages. However, if that person working for salary and wages, even though they are over the age of 65, injures themselves, they cannot obtain benefits from WorkCover: yet they must pay that levy.

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**Mr LEWIS:** They will not get paid.

**Mr Clarke:** Between 65 and 70 years of age.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr LEWIS:** They cannot claim wages lost through incapacity to work during the time that they are healing and rehabilitating their injury unless, as the member for Ross Smith points out across the Chamber, they are between the ages of 65 and 70 years. Yet the employer, in law, remains responsible to meet that obligation. The employer must pay the person over 65, on whose wages the employer has paid the WorkCover levy but, nonetheless, cannot obtain from WorkCover recompense for those wages.

It is equally ridiculous that a person over 65 seeks personal accident insurance if their employer seeks to insure them against accident at work separately and independently of WorkCover of any personal accident insurance they may have. If either the employer or the employee seeks personal accident insurance, insurance companies will take the premium but, if they injure themselves, when the time comes to make payments, the small print will mean that they get nothing. I believe that is a rip-off. It is otherwise called, in any other place, a rort. But they have to be injured elsewhere to receive anything from personal accident insurance. As it turns out, if they injure themselves while they are not at work—that is, while they are on recreational activity or while they are at home doing something—they can obtain their wages from the personal accident insurance. But if they injure themselves at work, they cannot. How ridiculous!

So, the elderly in our community who are still very able-bodied and sound of mind and limb and who are capable of working and able to work to the satisfaction of employers find themselves in the position where, if they are injured at work, they cannot obtain any benefit but if they are injured elsewhere they can receive those wages that are forgone during the course of their recovery. To my mind, that is encouraging people to be dishonest, even at that age.

If there is one thing that needs to be rectified, it is this discrimination against older people who are able bodied and sound of mind, capable of doing the job and who wish to continue to do so, and who wish to insure themselves against the risk of costs incurred when they become incapacitated either temporarily or permanently through some misadventure at work.

The other matter to which I wish to draw attention I have also mentioned in this House before, and that is the necessity for this State, if it now wishes to get its small and medium size businesses to grow rapidly again so that it is a place which has a good future for them in the Australian economy, to get back market share by investing in firms overseas in the countries to our near north, by arranging to take over those firms or to take up some of the equity and go into a joint venture with them. Not only will they get the skills and technologies that those firms have—and the firms are going cheaply in the currency crises and other financial difficulties being experienced in those countries—but also they will get the market share which those companies have and the benefit of the existing brand names in that marketplace.

As those economies experiencing a financial crisis at present come out of crisis and become strong again, the South Australian firms that take up the opportunity that is there now will have a massive market already established into which they can export partially manufactured goods from South Australia on a cost-sharing basis in competition with their interstate compatriots and overseas counterparts as well. It is the thing they need to do to secure a future.

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

#### JOINT COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT SAFETY

The Legislative Council transmitted the following resolution in which it requested the concurrence of the House of Assembly:

I. That in the opinion of this Council, a joint committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon all matters relating to transport safety in the State; and

II. That in the event of the joint committee being appointed, the Legislative Council be represented thereon by three members, of whom two shall form a quorum of Council members necessary to be present at all sittings of the committee.

#### STAMP DUTIES (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

#### BARLEY MARKETING (DEREGULATION OF STOCKFEED BARLEY) AMENDMENT BILL

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

**Ms HURLEY:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

*A quorum having been formed:*

#### NON-METROPOLITAN RAILWAYS (TRANSFER)(BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT WORK) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 9 July. Page 1440.)

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Minister for Human Services):** I was in the process of closing the second reading debate and I now wish to proceed with doing that. I adjourned the debate previously so that I could get detailed answers to a number of questions raised on this Bill, and I promised to come back with those answers. I now have that information, and I would like to go through the issues raised by various members in the House and give the answers. First, the member for Spence asked:

We know that the track is owned by the Commonwealth-owned Rail Track Corporation—

*Members interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Will members take their seat or leave the Chamber.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:**

—but what about the permanent way in which it rests? Who owns that? Is it the Rail Track Corporation, or will the permanent way revert to the State?

The interstate main lines in South Australia are owned by the Australian Rail Track Corporation. These are the lines linking Adelaide with other State capital cities, plus the lines from Port Augusta to Whyalla and from Tarcoola to Alice Springs. The Commonwealth excluded the interstate lines when it sold Australian National and the ARTC now owns these corridors. Land currently contained within the corridors that is identified as surplus to the requirements of the interstate main lines is expected to transfer to the State under the 1997 Railways Agreement. However, the Commonwealth will retain the actual corridors. Other ex-Commonwealth railway land in South Australia has already been transferred to the State, for example, land comprising the branch lines. The second question asked by the member for Spence was:

How will this legislation operate in the future?

The amendment is expressed to relate to buildings and development work carried out on the relevant land before the commencement of the Act. It would validate that work as complying with statutory and regulatory requirements at the time it was carried out. Accordingly, it would operate only in respect of past events. Any development undertaken after the commencement of the Act will have to comply with the Development Act.

The member for Schubert raised two matters, the first referring to the Broken Hill to Parkes line and the GSR access to this for the Indian Pacific. This line is in New South Wales and is currently controlled by the New South Wales Rail Access Corporation. Access to this line, as to all interstate main lines, will be managed by the ARTC when arrangements have been reached with the various State Governments.



GSR currently has an access agreement to this line and similar access agreements to all other lines, for example, the Adelaide to Melbourne line and the Adelaide to Perth line. These access agreements have varying terms and it is normal practice to have to renegotiate them from time to time. This is the same situation as that applying to freight operators on these lines.

The second issue raised by the member for Schubert related to the buildings being restored at Nuriootpa or any other location. This Bill will make no difference to the restoration of buildings. Any new works will still have to comply with the Development Act as they do now.

The member for Gordon raised a question with respect to local government powers to take action if buildings have deteriorated. The approach in this Bill is entirely consistent with the scheme that applies under the Development Act. There is no suggestion of any exemption from the Development Act in the sense raised by the honourable member. The amendment would only operate to ensure that the pre-existing works are taken to comply with the relevant standards at the time they were undertaken, so that any other issue, including deterioration, would be dealt with in the same manner as that applying to any other building.

Section 53 of the Development Act provides that any application for development approval is determined in accordance with the law in force at that particular time. If you satisfy the law at that time, the development is then complying and cannot be subsequently challenged as not complying with future changes in the law. It is on this basis that the buildings do not need to be constantly modified as standards change. If a building begins to deteriorate, other provisions of the Development Act may apply, for example, in respect of safety. This amendment does not limit or affect these other powers.

The fourth and final member to ask questions on this Bill was the member for Stuart, who raised the issue concerning the future of Railways Institute properties. The answer to that question is that the Commonwealth excluded Railways Institute properties from the sale of AN and from the transfer of land to the State. The excluded properties were identified at the time by the Commonwealth and the Railways Institute. However, it is understood that the Railways Institute has subsequently indicated that it wishes to own some additional properties that were not excluded and so were transferred to the State. Negotiations are under way between Transport SA (representing the State as the current owner of these properties) and the Railways Institute to reach agreement on the future of these properties.

I think that gives a very full answer to the various questions raised during the second reading debate and I now urge all members to support this important piece of legislation.

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

#### EMERGENCY SERVICES FUNDING BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.  
(Continued from 4 June. Page 1139.)

**Mr CONLON (Elder):** Apparently this Bill comes before the House based on the Government's view that the current system of funding for emergency services is inequitable. The Opposition agrees with the Government on that matter but it is possibly one of the few areas of agreement we have with

the Government on this Bill. One of the other things the Government has claimed is that this Bill will make the funding of emergency services more equitable and fairer on people. The Government is being less than frank in making that comment. The simple truth is that this Bill represents a major redistribution of the responsibility for emergency services funding away from the Government and towards the tax paying public of South Australia. In light of the dreadful mugging this Government has given the people of South Australia in its recent budget, we have some very serious concerns about that.

Let me explain what I mean by working through the Bill. First, let me explain the system of emergency services funding at present. There is no doubt that it is not entirely the fairest way to fund the emergency services. The bulk of the budget is for the Metropolitan Fire Service and the Country Fire Service. The bulk of expenditure on emergency services in this State is for those services and for the associated emergency services those two dedicated services provide. Some members would be aware that outstanding fire services emerged around the turn of the century in this country, as they did in many other countries, largely through the motivation of the insurance industry. What happened is that the insurance industry insured people's property, and about a century ago, some bright fellow noticed that, if they stopped the houses burning down, their insurance liabilities were not as great as if they had left them to their own devices. So, the insurance industry established some fire brigades in most capital cities of Australia, including South Australia.

The system has grown and evolved since then. Those services have changed dramatically over the ensuing century. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the CFS and the MFS. The CFS is still almost exclusively staffed, at their great expense, by the volunteers who perform the services. It is only appropriate in dealing with any legislation or any Bill in this House to recognise the enormous contribution made by the many volunteers who, with very little thanks on most occasions, operate the Country Fire Service for the safety of our community. The Metropolitan Fire Service was largely a volunteer organisation in its nascent stages. It went through a period of development in growth, particularly in South Australia. The old Fire Brigade Board was done away with by a Liberal Minister, a former Chief Secretary in the Tonkin Government—and I have forgotten his name—

**Mr Clarke:** Allan Rodda.

**Mr CONLON:** Allan Rodda, and I pay tribute to him. He was a very nice fellow. He introduced a far more professional structure to the Metropolitan Fire Service with the abolition of the old Fire Brigade Board (which was made up of representatives of the insurance industry and businessmen about town) and implemented a very professional service with a chief officer drawn from the ranks, the first one being a New Zealander but a very highly regarded man. I pay tribute to the people who have worked in the Metropolitan Fire Service and who have professionalised that fire service over the years.

Having had some connection with the Metropolitan Fire Service through its employees, I believe that we have the most professional and the best trained fire service in Australia. Its duties now extend way beyond the mere putting out of fires and include the terrible task of attending motor vehicle accidents and removing victims from their cars, as well as chemical spills and incidents which are now among the most dangerous incidents that one can face. Certainly it was true a few years ago that—and I assume it is still true—

every person who worked for the Metropolitan Fire Service and who made a career of it could be expected to be injured at some stage during their career. It is a dangerous occupation and we should pay credit to those men and few women who undertake it.

*Mrs Geraghty interjecting:*

**Mr CONLON:** There are only two, unfortunately, but we will get more. We would concede that the funding has not kept pace with the changes in the fire service over the years, in particular with regard to the Metropolitan Fire Service. Currently some 75 per cent of the funding still comes from a levy imposed on insurers of property, which they top up premiums to recover; 12.5 per cent, as I understand it, comes from local government; and the other 12.5 per cent is a contribution from consolidated revenue. With regard to the Country Fire Service, about 50 per cent of the annual budget is contributed out of consolidated revenue and the other 50 per cent comes out of the insurance premium contributions. In terms of the State Emergency Services funding, which currently is the third major area of emergency services funded by the State, about 100 per cent of that budget comes from contributions from consolidated revenue and—the Minister may correct me—some small component from the Commonwealth but there is no funding from insurance premiums.

The reason I raised that matter is that I want to come to one of the problems I have with the Bill as it stands—and we will deal with this matter later in Committee. The current form of the Bill provides for a major redistribution of the responsibility for funding Emergency Services away from the State Government and away from its contribution from consolidated revenue. I say that because, if you do the present sums—and these are rough figures—you see that the annual expenditure of the three services I named for 1997-98 was about \$74 million, and the contribution of the State Government to the services by appropriation was about \$15 million, or 21 per cent.

Further, as I understand the operation of this Bill, it will also make a contribution to those services provided by the police, which are of an emergency services nature and which are funded out of consolidated revenue. The discreet component of that in the 1997-98 budget was about \$9.7 million in the emergency response area. In future, that will be funded from the Emergency Services Fund. If you add that component, you see that about 35 per cent of funding for Emergency Services comes out of consolidated revenue.

The new Bill will provide for a levy on real property, which will constitute 90 per cent of the funds raised—and the Minister will have an opportunity to explain that in Committee—and the remainder will be raised through a levy on cars, boats and trailers. The difficulty we have with that is that, of the component raised from real property, the Government will either pay its contribution to Emergency Services on the basis of a levy on the capital value of the real property it holds or, according to clause 10 of this Bill, it may make a contribution of 10 per cent of the money to be raised through the real property levy, and it will thereafter be exempt from any payments for any real property of the Government.

This is the first major redistribution within this Bill. It means that the Government, which formerly paid about 35 per cent of Emergency Services funding in this State out of consolidated revenue, will now pay only 10 per cent, if it elects to pay the 10 per cent. That is not something the Government has been quick to point out to the people of South Australia. It cannot give good reason for that, as it has

not really told people about it. However, if you do your sums, you see that the Government is shifting a major portion of its responsibility for Emergency Services funding onto the already suffering people of South Australia.

We do not believe that that is good enough, and we will be moving amendments to deal with that. We will still give the Government a premium and, if it accepts our amendments, it will get out of it better than it would have. However, it will not get away with it to the extent that it would like. I congratulate the Minister for having a fly at it. It was a pretty fly act, but we will not let him get away with it if we can possibly help it.

We have a number of other concerns with the Bill—and I foreshadow some amendments in relation to these—but that is the primary one. Basically, one of our concerns—and again I foreshadow that we will seek to amend this—is that the amount to be spent each year is at the determination of the Minister, who will advise the Governor, then that amount will simply appear in the gazette. Given the open ended nature of the ability to raise money under this legislation, the Opposition is concerned that there should be some scrutiny about the amount to be raised by the Minister. As the Bill would broaden the areas that are funded in terms of Emergency Services, in particular—and I flag this now; I raised it with the Minister in Estimates—we are concerned about the use of this legislation to fund bad decisions on capital expenditure of the Government.

We know that the Treasurer has talked about a \$150 million to \$200 million Star Link program. We would not like to see the Government getting out of the troubles it has created for itself with Motorola by running off to the long suffering people of South Australia again and clubbing them for a huge amount of money to pay for this radio network. Therefore, we believe it is necessary to have scrutiny of the amounts that are to be raised each year by the Government at the discretion of the Minister. This is an enormous, open ended power to give to the Minister to allow him to decide how much tax he will raise out of a group of property owners every year.

*Mrs Geraghty interjecting:*

**Mr CONLON:** As the member for Torrens points out, you would have to have an awful lot of trust in the Minister.

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**Mr CONLON:** No, I certainly wouldn't want that power; although, it would be safe in my hands, Ralph. Be that as it may, I would not want it, because it would certainly set a bad precedent—safe as it would be in my hands. We will suggest ways of introducing some scrutiny of the Parliament over that. We do not want to place impossible or difficult impediments in the way of the Minister operating it. We want to make sure that the Parliament has some ability to see how much is being raised, whether it is being raised for the right purposes and whether it is being spent properly. That is very reasonable, and we will move a number of reasonable amendments to achieve that end.

I have a number of other difficulties with the Bill. I flag that we will address some of them by amendment in this House, and possibly some of them by amendment in the Legislative Council, when it reaches there, in whatever form it does. I flag some of our other concerns, in particular the impost of these levies on motor vehicles. I say that because, if there is a class of people who have been mugged again and again by this Government in this recent budget, it is the long suffering drivers of this State. I am particularly concerned for those young families who require the use of two motor

vehicles, who are paying off a mortgage on their house, who have very little disposable income and who have lost some of that disposable income because of the increases in charges, and I consider that going to those people again may result in going to the well once too often.

It may well be that either in this place or the other place we will look at removing Division 2 of the Bill and concentrating the effect of this on real property. I foreshadow that we would seek to amend the real property levy by removing the ability for a fixed charge and basing the levy solely on the capital value of real property, on the basis that we believe that, for whatever failings there, that is a more progressive method. I foreshadow that in Committee we will need to be satisfied by the Government that concessions will be available for pensioners and those on fixed incomes in regard to this levy. I do not know whether the Minister has addressed his mind to that but, as we are not likely to get to Committee in the next five minutes, the Minister may want to think about it during the dinner break.

I have described some of the Opposition's concerns in respect of this Bill. During the Committee stage I will be asking questions, so we will deal with the Bill bit by bit. I have foreshadowed the Opposition's difficulties with the Bill because I am a very open and honest fellow and I want the Minister to have the best possible opportunity to answer my concerns. The Minister would be keen to do the right thing by the suffering public of South Australia.

**Mr Venning:** He is on the rise.

**Mr CONLON:** The member for Schubert points out that the Minister is quite possibly on the rise. It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good. The other concerns I have relate to the levy on motor vehicles. The levy is based on the premium class. I understand the premium class on motor vehicles is based not on the value of the motor vehicle but on the engine size. In the past as a student I drove a vehicle with a lot of cylinders but not much gumption because it was 30 years old. I am concerned about those aspects of the Bill.

In summary, the concerns we have are, first, that any levy raised is of a progressive nature that addresses a person's capacity to pay as well as the service they provide. The Government may support it, but we are not a Party that believes that the only notion is user pays; the more important notion in the community is one's ability to pay. Our second concern to be addressed relates to the shift in responsibility for funding emergency services away from consolidated revenue and towards the long suffering and still suffering people of South Australia. I look forward to addressing some questions and amendments to the Minister in due course.

**Mr VENNING (Schubert):** I support the Bill. I note the comments of the member who just sat down in relation to the capacity to pay. I do not agree with that. We have to be fair across the board because many people are asset rich but income poor. I note his comments about shifting away from consolidated revenue to the long suffering people of South Australia. I believe they are one and the same because people are asking for open Government today. They are asking that we reveal where Government raises and spends its money. In this instance it is clear what the levy is for and how the money is raised. I support the Bill currently before us.

I understand that five reports over the past 20 years have recommended major reforms of the funding arrangements for emergency services. The present arrangements are inequitable, inefficient, difficult to understand and basically unfair.

I think of that every time I pay my insurance. I see this little levy there and I pay it happily—

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr VENNING:** It is an amount of money, but I am prepared to pay it. However, it irks me when I realise that a third of the people are not paying at all. I happily pay the money because we have had to call out the CFS on more than one occasion, and some cases involved accidents. One wet night a bird fell off a powerline onto the ground and it caught fire. A fire was burning in green peas at two o'clock in the morning and no-one could work out how it happened. It was a fluke accident. The CFS came out and put out the fire. I could not believe there could be a fire. It burnt about three acres before the CFS arrived. It provides a magnificent service. I thoroughly support any change that makes for a more equitable process in this matter. It is hard enough for country volunteers to man emergency services.

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr VENNING:** I apologise for using the word 'man'. 'Staff' is not quite the right word. I could not think of another word than to 'man' emergency services. They are called out at all hours of the day and night, and they undertake other duties as well as putting out fires. The State Emergency Services (SES) also attends the scene of accidents. I would not go too close on one occasion because of the terrible scene. Not only do these people see it but they have to clean it up. My heart goes out to them. It affected me and I was a distant bystander. Our country people—my constituents who live in country towns—do this without any grizzles at all hours of the day.

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Ross Smith is out of his seat.

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

**Mr VENNING:** Before the break I said that I thoroughly support any changes that make for a more equitable process. It is hard enough for our country volunteers to staff or man our emergency services and be called out at all hours of the day.

*Mr Hill interjecting:*

**Mr VENNING:** I used the word 'man' because I could not think of a more suitable word. The word 'person' does not fit the bill either. I do not think that it is fair to expect these people to raise money for the upkeep and ongoing maintenance of their equipment. That is not on. Most CFS brigades have very good, active auxiliaries, usually comprising the women, wives or partners of brigade members, which raise money to keep the facilities up to standard. I do not think that is on. In many small country communities, much of the social life is generated by the CFS auxiliary, because the members cater at various functions such as wedding receptions and they are quite the life of the town. The CFS is pivotal in a country community.

The Government accepts that everyone has a right to some sort of emergency services for the protection of their life and property, so everyone should make a fair contribution to the cost of those services. As I said before, my insurance, particularly my crop insurance, involves an amount of money, but it has always annoyed me to know that one-third of people do not pay anything at all. I believe that, under these new arrangements, the services delivered will be specifically funded on a genuine needs basis and on a risk strategy.

I took up this issue with the Minister, and he assured me that the accounting under the new system will be more accountable than under the old system. The previous speaker said that we just cannot make available a large amount of money for all the emergency services to draw on. We have to make them accountable, and I believe that with correct management and proper governance we will have better control of accounting than previously.

I understand that a relatively non-complex formula or equation is to be used to calculate the levy. It will be based on the value of the property in question, adjusted by an area factor and a land use factor. That is, a property owner will pay an equitable amount for emergency services. I pay tribute to the Minister, because he has given us individual briefings, one-to-one, and these things have been spelt out quite clearly. Most responsible land-holders will be better off under this levy because they are currently paying a larger amount than they will pay under the new system. However, I give the Minister warning that I will be watching to make sure that that is so. I will be one of the first to know because I pay a rather large levy at present.

I understand that, if people live in areas that are subject to a potentially high usage of emergency services, they might have to pay a little more. The Adelaide Hills is one such example because of the higher risk of fires in the summer months. However, I do not think that property owners in this area should be taxed to the hilt, to a point where they cannot afford to pay their rates and levies. It must be an equitable levy.

I also raised with the Minister the fact that the sea does not form part of my constituency and therefore my constituents should not be paying for the services of lifesavers, another very valuable emergency service. The Minister was the first to tell me that most of the people who have difficulties at the seaside can be constituents such as mine who, when they go to the beach on holiday, are inexperienced swimmers and can get into difficulty.

*Mr Conlon interjecting:*

**Mr VENNING:** That is what the Minister put to me, so I will certainly watch that. We must contribute to all the emergency services, whether it be life saving, the SES or the CFS. There is a great list. We just cannot create a continual pool of money which these services can drain.

*Mr Conlon interjecting:*

**Mr VENNING:** I correct the honourable member: I live at the beach when I am in Adelaide. The beach is right outside my bedroom.

**Mr Conlon:** We should charge you two levies.

**Mr VENNING:** I will be paying two levies because, when I am in Adelaide, I live in a house that I share with my city based children. I will be there tonight. We can all sit here and create bureaucracies—we can all be accused of that—and then come up with hundreds of ideas for spending the money. I am assured by the Minister that it cannot happen and that, under this new system, we will all be very accountable, probably more so than is currently the case.

I believe that individual areas and regions should be given flexibility and a say in the management of their specific needs. I do not know whether the new vehicles are necessary. Certainly, we are well stocked with those, as well as state-of-the-art equipment. Nowadays we see many captains of our brigades driving around in very flash Harry four wheel drive Land Cruisers. These are either control vehicles or the captain's vehicle and I do question whether, in some cases, they are necessary. Certainly in some cases they are but I do

not know whether they are necessary in all cases, but that is an area of priority for the local brigade to assess. I believe that individual areas and regions should be given flexibility in these matters and as to what they do with that money.

They do not need plush clubrooms and the like, but they do require good working facilities to allow them to get on with their job well, particularly in today's environment when there is a strong emphasis on training. They must have reasonable training facilities and areas. Local people who have lived in an area and faced emergency situations should be consulted in respect of issues affecting their districts and not be dictated to by remote bureaucrats, which is often the case. I would like to pay tribute to the people who staff the emergency services, particularly the CFS, formerly known as the EFS, and other speakers have paid tribute to that service.

I pay tribute to the volunteers who give countless hours of their time, as well as to the salaried staff. They all do a tremendous job. I also pay tribute to employers who allow their employees time off with full pay to attend emergencies. These are the forgotten people. They are the people who are expected to pay the wage bill and allow their employees to go off when the siren sounds. Over the years I have experienced several fires on my property, one very serious fire. I shall never forget that in 1950, when I was a five year old, we were totally burnt out. We lost everything except our house. To see four tractors, 6 000 tonnes of hay and a brand new motor car go up in a matter of minutes was very traumatic.

I will always remember the volunteers working for 24 hours to save our home. As a five year old, I will never forget it. In 1950 we had a chaff factory, which caught fire and we lost everything except the house. I have experienced some pretty horrific pasture fires. The camaraderie amongst members of the CFS and the land owners is terrific. We would be totally lost without them.

It has always annoyed me when I have paid the insurance on my grain crop that there has been a fire levy on the bottom of the bill. If I was mean enough, I could have telephoned my insurance company, which has head offices in all States, and placed my insurance with it but through an interstate office. That fire levy then would not have appeared on the bill because I would be insuring in another State. However, I never did so, and I never will because I believe that responsible people should pay their bit. But, only a telephone call would save an insurer like me a lot of money. As I have said, I never did that, but it is an example of how unfair and inequitable the present arrangements are and, indeed, can be. I believe most South Australians are sufficiently responsible and honest to pay their fair share, but that does not apply to everyone, particularly those who underinsure, who insure interstate or, worst of all, who do not insure at all.

In closing, I believe that local government should collect this levy. I have raised this issue with the Minister. It appears that it will be calculated in a similar manner as are rates, that is, on capital values, and will be billed on the rate notice along with normal council rates. Realistically, local government provides significant resources both in administration of the services and in financial support to the services. It encourages them and, in many cases, it oversees them. I believe it puts in approximately \$11 million towards the operation of emergency services in South Australia. I firmly believe that property owners would be more receptive to the idea of paying this levy to local government than they would be to paying this State Government or even the Federal Government. It would be viewed as a just and equitable

emergency services levy and not a wealth tax—as some would say it was.

The collection of the levy can be decided after the passage of this Bill, because the Minister has provided flexibility in this legislation. After the Bill is passed, it can be decided how the levy will be collected, whether a straight-out levy by the State Government or, indeed, whether it be placed with local government. So, I would have no hassle, when picking up my local government rate notice, to see the emergency services levy on the bottom of the notice. It will be exactly proportional to the rate which appears above it. I think it is common-sense and politically smart for the Government to do that. I notice members opposite raise an eyebrow. I would be interested to hear what they have to say about that because local government is already paying a large amount of money. I am sure the Government could come to an arrangement with local government to collect the levy at a fee, of course, which would be politically palatable to everyone.

I am very pleased that this Bill will solve a problem that has existed for 20 years. I understand from listening to previous members that they are supporting the legislation with amendments, and I will be interested to see what those amendments are. I think, for a change, members might see some constructive work in this House tonight to address a problem which has existed for over 20 years. This Bill will make it equal for all and I certainly support it.

**Ms WHITE (Taylor):** I rise to speak briefly on this Bill, aspects of which I am pleased to see. However, there are other aspects of the Bill that concern me. My colleague, the shadow Minister, touched very briefly on some of those points of concern, and in the Committee stage of this Bill I intend to delve into those issues further.

At the outset, I want to alert members to some of my concerns about the impact of this levy on my own constituents and constituents such as those whom I represent. They are predominantly low income earners who cannot very easily absorb extra costs, and this legislation will impose yet another tax on the people of South Australia.

I said that I was pleased to see some aspects of the Bill, including the broadening of direct funding to certain agencies. The moneys raised by this fund will, as outlined in clause 26, be paid to the Country Fire Service, the Metropolitan Fire Service, the State Emergency Service and the Surf Life Saving Association—and I believe that that is a positive; it is overdue that that organisation be funded (and I hope adequately) for the enormously good work that its predominantly volunteer members donate to this State. If the State Government had to pick up the functions that the Surf Life Saving Association provides by way of its volunteers, it would cost us a pretty penny indeed. Also included is the Volunteer Marine Rescue, and there is provision for 'any other person or organisation'. I would like the Minister to outline which organisation that might entail.

I said that I was pleased to see the inclusion of the Surf Life Saving Association, but I want to ask the Minister specifically about another organisation that performs a very similar role to the Surf Life Saving Association, and that is the Royal Life Saving Society, which provides services on inland rivers, creeks and waterways. I do not know whether it is encapsulated in that 'any other organisation' provision, but I believe that the Government should put its mind to funding not only the Surf Life Saving Association but also the Royal Life Saving Society in the work that it does in—

*Mr Venning interjecting:*

**Ms WHITE:** Are you indeed? I am surprised that the Minister did not include your association more directly. So, perhaps the Minister will—

*The Hon. I.F. Evans interjecting:*

**Ms WHITE:** Indeed! Perhaps he could have lobbied a little harder and had a direct inclusion in the legislation. However, it is not too late. Perhaps the Minister would like to address that issue when he responds to my second reading speech.

I note that there is within this fund a cap that the State Government puts on itself of a 10 per cent contribution towards the real property moneys collected through this levy. My colleague the shadow Minister has already raised that issue, and I am sure that will be explored in more depth in Committee.

One of the arguments advanced by the Government in putting forward this legislation is that, currently, the funding comes via a contribution when people pay their insurance premiums—as it well does. One would expect, now that that funding mechanism is changing, that our insurance premiums will go down—or rather, that is what should happen once an alternative method of fund collection is implemented. I wonder how the Government will enforce what really should occur, that is, the lowering of insurance premiums. I wonder also what mechanisms the Government will put in place to monitor the effect on our insurance premiums as a result of the current 8 per cent (or thereabouts) that people pay on their insurance premium disappearing and being funded in this alternative way. Perhaps the Minister will address the matter of what happens to our insurance premiums once this Emergency Services Bill comes into force.

One issue that concerns me is that the method of collecting this levy is not determined in the Bill: it is very vague. The Bill provides that the levy may be collected in three ways: first, by way of a fixed charge; secondly, a charge depending on capital value; or, thirdly, a combination of those two modes. In other words, the method of collection is totally open. How will this levy be collected? Tonight, we are being asked to vote on this Bill without knowing, first, what this new tax will cost constituents such as mine, or, secondly, how it will be collected: whether the rate will be fixed or progressive or a combination of both.

I would also appreciate some answers on the issue of concessions. Will concessions be made available to the many constituents whom I represent such as pensioners, low income earners and others who currently receive concessions on other types of utilities and rates? What is the Government's intention in this respect?

Clause 15 refers to the way in which these moneys will be collected. It appears to suggest that the method of collection is also open, that it might be through a State Government collection or a council collection via rate notices. Many aspects of this Bill have been left open and not determined. Councils are unhappy—

*The Hon. I.F. Evans interjecting:*

**Ms WHITE:** —yes—with the way in which they have been forced to collect the water tax, a State tax, on behalf of the Government. Has the Minister consulted with local councils about this emergency services levy, and what is the view of local government?

**The Hon. I.F. Evans:** Positive.

**Ms WHITE:** The Minister suggests that it is positive. I suggest that that is not quite true, and that if I asked a few councils the response would be other than positive. Regarding

the collection of this new tax, what does the Government foresee to be the situation in terms of rental accommodation: whether it be public—Housing Trust—or private? Will there be any guidelines for landlords (Housing Trust or private) to pass on this new tax to people in rented accommodation?

My final point relates to clause 19, which provides for the sale of land for non-payment of a levy. It is a lengthy clause which details methods of auctioning, etc., if people default on paying the levy on their land. How does what is proposed in this Bill compare with what happens in the case of non-payment of other taxes, charges or levies? For example, if a water user does not pay the new water tax, does the Government come along and sell their property? That is what is proposed in this Bill. If you do not pay your tax, the Government will sell your property. Are there any other Government taxes and charges, the recourse for which, if unpaid, is to sell your land? I would like to ask the Minister further about that.

I have a number of questions to put to the Minister in the Committee stage. I want to signal right from the outset that I feel extremely uncomfortable with a piece of legislation that is open, not only in terms of the amount of tax this will mean, the mechanisms for how the tax is levied, and whether it is a progressive or non-progressive tax, but also (as the bottom line) in terms of how much my constituents will have to pay. I ask the Minister to consider those questions, which I will further address in Committee.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen):** First, I commend the Minister for at last attempting to do something about the funding of emergency services in this State. For far too long the system that we have had has been far from equitable. I hesitate to say how long it is that we have been talking about various methods that could be adopted to make that system more equitable. Numerous reports have been prepared and attempts to deal with this issue have been put aside, gathering dust somewhere, but at last action is to be taken. Therefore, I commend the Minister and those working with him for attempting to do something about it.

I support the legislation, although I have some concern, and the Minister is aware of the concern I have expressed on behalf of some of my constituents regarding this legislation. Really, it is more a matter of those people gaining a better understanding of what the Government is attempting to achieve through this legislation, rather than just being opposed to what the legislation is about. I have received a considerable amount of correspondence on this issue. I guess it is unfortunate that this particular levy has come about at a time when concern has been expressed particularly in regard to the Onkaparinga catchment levy within my own electorate, and the way that that levy has been set.

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** I hope the member for Ross Smith is not going to start this foolish debate again about levies versus taxes, etc., because I am sure that the honourable member knows my attitude to this issue. Can I also say to the member for Ross Smith and other members in the House that, having had a fair bit to do with the establishment of the catchment boards and the associated levies, I am delighted overall with the results we are seeing in the cleaning up of our catchments. At last the community, along with Government—and I include local government in that—have accepted responsibility for the cleaning up of our catchments. I have no difficulty whatsoever with the catchment levies. I am delighted with the responsibility that the board—

*Members interjecting:*

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

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** Thank you for your protection, Mr Speaker. Whilst there is that concern about the levy that has been set, particularly in the Onkaparinga catchment area, that program is working very well over all. I intend taking up the matter of the Onkaparinga catchment levy with the Minister in the next day or so. It is a pity that both levies have arrived at the same time through parts of the hills, because there is confusion. We have headlines such as 'Double slug for hills householders' etc. in the local media. Regrettably, that has come about because of a misunderstanding on the part of the media, which has sent the wrong message through to many of my constituents and constituents of other hills electorates.

At the start I take this opportunity to commend the CFS. I do not want say a lot tonight about the other emergency services in the State, although I think we can be very thankful for the quality of service that is provided by the MFS, the SES and other emergency service providers in the State. Tonight I want to concentrate particularly on the Country Fire Service, because that is the service that is of most significance as far as my electorate is concerned.

All of us, particularly those who live in the hills, can be eternally grateful for the support and services that are provided by the CFS under very difficult circumstances. I never cease to be amazed at the dedication and commitment that is shown by these officers and those who serve in the CFS on a voluntary basis, and I hope that that will always be the case. I want to have that very clearly on the record, because I would hate to think what would happen if the CFS ceased to function. I do not believe that will ever be the case, because of the dedication and commitment that is shown by those officers, those men and women, who serve, and particularly with the interest that is being shown by the younger cadets who are coming on. I might say, however, that that is becoming a more significant issue now that some of the brigades are finding it difficult to find people who are able to serve during working hours. That is because in some of the areas of the hills more and more people are going into Adelaide and the suburbs to work and are not in the area during the day. But that issue can be dealt with. The Minister is aware of the number of concerns that have surfaced through my electorate. I need to say that there is a—

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** There were a lot of Democrats at the last election, but I believe that that is the last we have seen of them.

**Mr Clarke:** Like the European wasp.

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** Well, I will not go into that. One of the issues that have become very clear is that there are those who believe that this levy may be heading towards a *de facto* land tax or wealth tax. I am very much of the opinion that that is not the case and obviously would always be concerned if that eventuated. I know that that will not occur as far as this Government is concerned and, once the legislation is in place, whatever the circumstances I will be keeping a very close watch on it to ensure that a future Government, particularly a Labor Government, does not turn this levy around to make it a *de facto* land tax or wealth tax.

Some concern has been raised about the opportunities that might be there for a significant increase in the size of the levy, how that levy will be used and how that levy is fixed. As I say, most of that concern comes about because of a lack

of understanding regarding the legislation. As I said earlier, there certainly is a concern about the possibility of it becoming a *de facto* land tax. It is important that we recognise that the levy is a dedicated fund and it is spelt out very clearly in the legislation what that fund can be used for. As the Minister has indicated on a number of occasions, the Auditor-General will be the one who will bring about disciplinary procedures if the Government of the day goes outside those actual responsibilities. Also, people need to recognise that the budget can only be approved by the Governor. That means that it has to go through the process of Cabinet. As I understand it, it is a similar process to that which is used in the Water Resources Act and I believe that that has worked relatively well.

I am also pleased that the Minister has indicated that some amendments will be moved. I understand that the Opposition is putting forward a couple of amendments. I am not privy to those amendments and will consider those at the appropriate time. The Minister has indicated that amendments will be introduced to ensure that there is a notice of expenditure provided to the Parliament as to how the funds are spent; that there will be an exemption for some vehicles through the provisions of the legislation; and that there will be a provision making it quite clear that vacant blocks of land, regardless of where they are in the State, will be treated as rural land. I believe that that is important as well, and I will say a little more about that at the appropriate time.

The Adelaide Hills Council has brought to my attention some concerns and I have forwarded those concerns to the Minister. I only received them very late last night and I have made those available to the Minister so that he might be able to provide some answers to some of the questions that have been put by the Adelaide Hills Council. It is complimentary of the legislation, to a large extent. It agrees with the premise that everyone in the community has a right to expect access to affordable service for the protection of life, property and the environment and that everyone has a responsibility to make a reasonable contribution towards the cost of doing so. I am sure that the vast majority of people believe that that should be the case. The whole system has been far from equitable in the past. In the past there have been those who have done the right thing as far as their insurance is concerned and paid appropriately and there have been others who have not.

The council has indicated that it believes the risk based systems for allocating resources to manage hazards to be fair. A question that it has is: how will the strategic risk based system be set up? For example, will the Adelaide Hills risk be monitored and reassessed if action is taken that decreases the risk in the area? That is another matter that has been brought to my attention by a number of constituents. Fortunately, more people are now doing the right thing and are making sure that they clean up their properties, that they have appropriate standby equipment in case of fire, and so on. I commend the Adelaide Hills council for the work it is doing in respect of that responsibility.

The council also asked about the process for planning and strategy and how it would feed into it. It wanted to know whether grants would be available outside regular funding, for example, for special projects. The transfer of ownership of assets needs to be addressed. Councils have a high degree of investment, and that is pointed out very clearly by the Adelaide Hills council. Negotiation on collection management needs to take place prior to agreement, and it has suggested that that could be a potential source of conflict.

The council is seeking clarification of local government's role in supporting volunteers. It wants to know what will occur when councils have incurred debts to fund CFS services and whether the standard of fire cover is a reasonable approach, particularly in the Adelaide Hills, with its unique environment in determining the level of protection; for example, it does not cater for any level of coverage beyond the standards of fire cover where local brigades and communities have identified the need. The council has put forward many other questions, as I said, at very late notice. I have forwarded those onto the Minister, and I hope that he will be able to provide answers to a number of those questions.

I could spend some time working through some of the correspondence that I have received on this emergency services levy, but I will refer to only a couple. One constituent makes this point:

The residents in the Hills are to be levied at a higher rate because of the assumed higher wildfire risk despite the fact that we have unpaid volunteers in the CFS. Hills residents do not enjoy the same guaranteed service in an emergency which the salaried MFS can supply to people on the plains, and we have always been indoctrinated by the Government into believing that we have to be self-reliant as it is not possible for the CFS to help everybody.

**Mr Clarke:** Do you believe that?

**The Hon. D.C. WOTTON:** As a matter of fact I do believe that it is important for people to be self-reliant, particularly in high fire risk areas. I have already made that point, and the member for Ross Smith would have heard it, had he been listening instead of being so concerned about his water levies. The constituent goes on to say:

Therefore, we could be made to pay very high rates for a service which may not be available when we need it most.

That is understood, and fortunately not many members in this House have been through an Ash Wednesday. I certainly have been through two. The first Ash Wednesday affected us quite significantly in that we retained our house but lost everything else. It is under those conditions that you realise that the CFS is just not strong enough and that it is not broad enough to be able to provide services for everybody. Under those circumstances, it comes back to people having to be self-reliant and helping themselves. Further, the constituent states:

Also in the light of the regular arson (on a daily basis not merely in the bushfire season) of MFS suburban business premises, schools etc., is a higher rate for the Hills justifiable? Has the known cost of funding 24 hour fully paid MFS firemen and all their associated workplace costs been accurately compared with the CFS costs?

The constituent has worked out their calculations on what the new levy is likely to cost, and they make the point that, based on the proposed rates and levies, it can be seen that these people will be required to pay approximately three times more than they do at present, even though they are well insured. That is not right, and hopefully the Minister will be able to indicate that that is not the case. The constituent goes on to say:

We strongly object to land tax being brought into the equation because the valuation of one's land does not reflect one's income or one's ability to pay more. Furthermore, the Government spokesperson stated that it will be up to the individual councils to either rebate the ratepayers or provide additional services, thus creating the potential for more inequity.

Again, that is a common concern. They go on to say that these people are self-funded tax paying retirees who forgo the age pension, council rate concessions, etc. but who are not wealthy. Their home and their outbuildings occupy about 2.5 acres of their land, so they ask whether it is fair that they should be levied on the remaining 15 acres of gum tree forest

which is in the hills face zone and which they cannot utilise or subdivide. They are already paying higher rates, etc. on this land because of the Hills face zone. The Minister has indicated that he will move an amendment which I hope will address that issue.

They make the point that they do not mind paying a fair levy but feel that they will be required to pay more because the land use is very restricted by Government legislation. As I said, I am pretty sure that the amendment to be moved by the Minister will deal with that. I have quoted from this letter, but there are many other pieces of correspondence which I have received and which are very similar; but, generally, I support the legislation.

**Ms HURLEY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** It was interesting that the member for Heysen said that this piece of legislation is not properly understood. Again, that is due to the Government not consulting the community about the legislation. This is such a continuing refrain that not only do those of us on this side almost get sick of saying it but so do the people in the South Australian community, namely, that there is very little consultation by the Government on a lot of the legislation—

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**Ms HURLEY:** Yes, it is an indication of the arrogance of Liberal Governments generally and of the unwillingness to talk to people who really understand what the issue is about.

*Members interjecting:*

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

**Mr Clarke:** Go back to your wasps.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Ross Smith that he has now interjected nine times, and I think that is enough.

**Ms HURLEY:** Having said that, I, like most members who have spoken thus far, have heavily qualified support for the legislation in that, as other members have said, we all recognise that more needs to be done to assist emergency services in this State. I agree with the member for Heysen that it is very unfortunate that this legislation will take effect at the same time as the water catchment levy. I am afraid that I also fail to understand the distinction between a levy and a tax. I am sure that most of my constituents will when they get their bill for the water catchment levy as well, because at the same time they will also get the increases in stamp duty and motor vehicle registrations together with the increases indicated in this Bill. What will hit the people in my electorate particularly hard is an emergency services levy on motor vehicle registration. My electorate is about 30 to 35 kilometres from the city. There are long commuting distances for many people in my electorate, and people need their vehicles often, particularly—

*Mr Meier interjecting:*

**Ms HURLEY:** This is a levy on motor vehicles and on mobile property as well. There may not be a good understanding within the honourable member's own Party of what this Bill is about. This will particularly affect those people in One Tree Hill and the country of parts of my electorate who do not have public transport and who rely on their motor vehicles. For various reasons, many young families in my electorate need two motor vehicles. The Government's taxation measures and this measure, on top of the water catchment levy, will hit people in my electorate particularly hard. They are all taxes and they all mean that people in my electorate will pay a great deal more money to the Govern-

ment than they previously paid—and that is the only distinction that they understand.

Certainly many people in my area are on lower incomes or on fixed benefits such as pensions and simply do not have the flexibility to afford even small amounts of money, much less the relatively high imposts that will affect them as a result of this Government's budget and this Bill. I will deal with some correspondence I have received regarding insurance in particular from a constituent who lives in Smithfield. These constituents have just received their new household insurance policy. The premium this year is \$482.42 as opposed to last year's premium of \$305.88. There is also an instalment loading. The fire service levy this year is \$82.90, compared with last year's fire service levy of only \$23.48. Their stamp duty this year is \$49.08 and stamp duty last year was \$28.80. They are faced with a total bill this year of \$862.85, compared with \$388.75. Their insurance has doubled this year.

When my constituents rang their insurer, SGIC, and asked why their insurance policy had doubled and asked for the answer in writing they got the following response:

As your request, I am sending you this in writing to advise you that your premium has increased due to the boundaries of the metropolitan area have been reclassified as from country premiums to metropolitan areas, which therefore the premium is increased.

Even once you sought out the tortured grammar of that very brief response to my constituents it still says very little. Basically it says that SGIC has reclassified my constituents from the country to the metropolitan area and their postcode, which is 5114, has meant a huge increase in the premium. However, although my constituents are classified as metropolitan now by SGIC, with no real explanation at all, they still pay the increased fire service levy because they contribute to the CFS levy, which this Government has bumped up considerably.

This is an example of individual people being badly affected by Government policy and, admittedly, by an insurance company. These sorts of charges illustrate what people have to cope with. Charges are being increased by both the Government and private companies all the time and people simply will not be able to afford these increases in charges. This is the reality of ordinary life, which the Government refuses to recognise in its inane distinction between levies and taxes.

Next year and indeed in the forthcoming month these very same constituents will be hit by further increases in charges from the Government and will find it increasingly difficult to pay their insurance. They will find it increasingly difficult to pay their motor vehicle registration and be caught in all sorts of difficult decisions about what to do with their limited budgets. This is what the Government consistently refuses to recognise, despite initial promises in its last term to have family impact statements for every policy it introduces—these family impact policies we have never seen or heard of again.

Finally, I emphasise something about which people from the emergency services in my area have expressed disquiet in this Bill, namely, the fact that the Minister has direct oversight of how this fund is used and has great control over the way it operates. People in emergency services are concerned about this, not necessarily about the way the current Minister may direct the funds but certainly there is concern about the action of Ministers in the future. They would prefer some security and certainty of equity in the way funds are distributed.



The shadow Minister, the member for Elder, has indicated that there will be amendments from the Opposition which will address this, and I certainly urge the Government to accept them because that is certainly consistent with its policy to be open and accountable in government. Again, we have not heard a great deal about this from the Government but this is an important issue and it is important that the decision making processes be very transparent to the public, particularly to the different branches of the emergency services that may or may not benefit from this fund. They would like to be sure that the decision on which fund gets what amount of money is based on true and correct premises so that they can understand why they did not get a certain amount as compared to other funds.

It is particularly important that this is a public process that is well understood by all the people involved given, as members have said, that these emergency services are run by volunteers who give their time very freely. Certainly, in my area that is very much the case. Many people give almost full-time service to some of the emergency services and they operate very efficiently in my area. It is important that they get due recognition and respect for their commitment and that volunteers are properly consulted and notified of decisions affecting their service. Otherwise, we will see that these services will not get volunteers or commitment from volunteers and the services will deteriorate. I do not need to belabour what other members have said about the importance of these services in making sure that we operate effectively in emergencies.

In closing, I reiterate that my support for the Bill is qualified, as is the Opposition's support, and I expect that the Government, through pressure from its own members as well as Opposition pressure, will have a rethink about some of the more arbitrary measures contained in the Bill and that the Minister, as he has done with the Police Bill, will go back and consult with some of the people involved and with the Opposition and come out of this with a more respectable Bill that enshrines openness and accountability and has a better form and more equity than the Bill before us.

**Mr CONDOUS (Colton):** On many occasions I have raised my concerns about this Bill, which implements the emergency services levy, because I treat with great suspicion any government or Party—be it mine or across the benches—that introduces any form of revenue raising which in future could be used for devious reasons. For example, with land tax, I remember for many years going down to Old Parliament House to pay land tax which in the days under Premier Tom Playford was £1 per property. We paid it year after year. However, a bloke called Dunstan decided that it should become a wealth tax on property and all of a sudden—

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr CONDOUS:** That is right. You obviously have a problem handling successful people who work hard and make money.

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr CONDOUS:** That is right. The Labor Government turned land tax into a great revenue-raising scheme and continued to use it as a levy. What worries me is not only what my Party will do with this but what Labor members will do with it when they get into government. They are the greatest lot of rogues and money-grubbers that I have ever seen in Parliament in my life. They will turn the emergency services levy into another rope around the neck of people in this State. They will create a land tax on the principal—

**Mr Foley:** It is your tax.

**Mr CONDOUS:** Yes, but I know what we are going to do with it: I am worried about what you are going to do with it. That is what worries me. It will become a de facto land tax on the principal home. Labor members will also decide that anybody who owns a house worth more than \$185 000 must be pretty well off, so they will be slugged and lifted properly and completely.

**Mr Clarke:** Tusmore and Burnside.

**Mr CONDOUS:** That's right; hit them up there. I could easily oppose the Bill tonight, but that would mean that existing policyholders—

**Mr Clarke:** That is what you said you were going to do.

**Mr CONDOUS:** Just listen to me. Existing policyholders would be asked to contribute more money while those people who do not insure or who underinsure would continue to avoid contributions towards emergency services, which is so important to the ongoing provision of safety in times of crisis, be it fire, storm, earthquake, lost children or any other things—

*Ms White interjecting:*

**Mr CONDOUS:** That is right; emergency services perform that duty. After a murder they are also called to try to find evidence. Only a couple of weeks ago a freak storm hit Torrensville, and the emergency services moved in very quickly to do something about the damage. Under the present legislation, any Government can ratchet up the existing levy if it wants to.

**Mr Hill:** Yours is a ratchet Government.

**Mr CONDOUS:** They have done that, have they? A Government can ratchet up the existing levy to cover higher emergency services costs, but that would mean that responsible members of the community who already insure their properties would be asked to pay more because of the irresponsibility of those who choose not to insure. Ash Wednesday was a prime example, where people in the Greenhill area who had not insured their homes, even though they were in a high risk area, put their hands out to get full cover on their property when they should have been responsible enough to insure their property.

The people of South Australia, through sympathy and rightly so, decided to make a contribution. However, I believe that a lot of the people who lived up there were not in the bottom echelon of the income earning bracket: they were people who had homes worth in excess of \$300 000 and chose not to insure their properties. If members refused this Bill, it would be a social injustice for an aged pensioner who is fully insured to subsidise those irresponsible people in the community, and that is a fact that must be considered.

I am also very angry that it is an injustice that large, multinational companies, which have their head companies in the UK, the United States, Europe or any other part of the world, can use complex company structures to avoid contributions to insurance in this country and thereby avoid the fire services levy. However, in times of emergency—fire or storm—their expectation is that the State Government will provide them with a service to which they do not contribute one cent. This means that the average householder in South Australia, the ordinary working-class person and others in the State, is paying to support emergency services to which multinational companies do not make a contribution at all.

The Bill will also minimise under-insurance—and we have all been through this experience. The most common loophole for insurance companies is to say, 'I am sorry. You had your home insured for only half its value and, even

though it is now totally destroyed, we can pay you only half the replacement value of the house.'

That is a great injustice, because insurance companies should ensure that people understand—perhaps by signing a form—that, if their property is worth \$150 000 but is insured for only \$75 000, in the case of a fire, that is the amount for which they will be covered. Too many times these low-life insurance companies—and that is what they are; they are in the gutter types, in my opinion—look for every loophole to get out of paying insurance. They do not mind collecting the premium time and again, but when it comes to paying out it is a different story altogether. And those companies are making multi-millions of dollars every year. I have never seen a decent insurance company go broke yet.

The Bill also establishes a community emergency service fund as a special deposit account under the Public Finance and Audit Act. This account requires an annual audit by the Auditor-General, and the Minister is accountable for the proper maintenance and distribution of these funds. The Minister needs to make it very clear tonight that all the moneys collected by the State for emergency services must be placed in a separate account that is accountable to this Parliament and audited by the Auditor-General so that we know that it is being used for the right purposes.

Under the proposed levy, the amount to be collected must be scrutinised in the budget process and then agreed to by Cabinet and presented to this Parliament. The amounts will then be examined as part of the Estimates Committees process. The accounts of the fund and the agencies will be audited by the Auditor-General. The new scheme provides for various notices to be printed in the *Gazette* and the new Bill will restrict expenditure from the levy to emergency services costs only. The legislation prevents any Government from using the levy to fund welfare, housing or other non-emergency service costs. Further to these accountability provisions, I commend to the House the amendments standing in my name for consideration.

I will not support the Bill unless these amendments to safeguard the public are carried. I will not be a party to creating another level of tax collection by this Government. It is important that, if we are to provide services, we provide the very best and, when we come to clause 9 this evening, I will move these amendments to the Bill. If they are not adopted, I will cross the floor and vote against the provision.

**Mr CLARKE (Ross Smith):** I will be comparatively brief, I think. I hesitate to say that in light of past performance. With respect to this legislation, I remember last year when I was the shadow Minister for Emergency Services that I asked in the Estimates Committee the then Minister for Emergency Services, the now Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism, whether or not the Government had given any consideration to introducing the sort of levy that we are now contemplating. I asked that question because the Insurance Council of Australia and others had been regularly pointing out that, because of under-insurance or no insurance at all, and based on estimates as a result of the New South Wales bushfires that occurred a couple of years ago, approximately 40 per cent of those affected by the bushfires were either not insured or under-insured and, therefore, not paying towards the costs of the emergency services.

At the time, the Minister for Emergency Services said that there was no consideration whatsoever with respect to changing the method of funding. Of course, we now see—a bit like the ETSA deal—that what you say before an election

is entirely different from what a Government does after the election has been won. Of course, it is cloaked up by there having been a review and the Government's being able to say, at least publicly, that it has taken the advice of that committee of review and determined upon this course of action.

Be that as it may, the fact is that there are significant numbers of people who are underinsured or not insured at all. I have some sympathy for those people because recently I inquired about taking out household contents insurance for my place. The total value of the contents of my unit is about \$3 500. I went to two brokers with large domestic portfolios, and I found to my horror that the minimum value for which I could take out an insurance policy for contents was \$15 000 or \$20 000. Essentially, I was being asked to pay about \$200 to \$250 a year for contents insurance when the contents I owned were valued at only about \$3 500.

Housing Trust tenants and those who rent private property would be lucky to have \$4 000 or \$5 000 worth of contents which they own and which would be at risk. But, they are being asked to pay minimum premiums of between \$200 and \$250 a year by private insurance companies. In effect, those with the least in terms of assets in household contents insurance, that is, those of us who rent, are being asked to subsidise the premiums of those fortunate enough to have contents valued at \$20 000 or more. That is the effect of these minimum premium rates. It is a massive disincentive for people who rent a property, particularly those on welfare benefits or low incomes who have little in the way of assets, as far as contents are concerned, to take out fire insurance and, therefore, pay something towards the contribution of the emergency fire services.

The other point which I will be raising with the Minister during the Committee debate—and he might like to give the matter some thought—is why the insurance companies are not being asked to put their hand in the pocket towards the cost of emergency fire services? As has been pointed out by earlier speakers on this Bill, the fire brigade originally started, for example, in London because insurance companies decided that it would be a good way of minimising their risk by having an organisation put out fires. In those days, one had a plaque to attach to a wall if one had household insurance. If there was a fire, the fire truck would roll up and, if the plaque was not on the wall, they let the place burn down. If the plaque was on the wall, they fought the fire.

**The Hon. D.C. Wotton:** Is this one of your forward thinking policies for the future?

**Mr CLARKE:** The former Minister, the member for Heysen, interjects. I think he should concentrate more on the Democrats in his electorate who are close to knocking him off in the seat of Heysen, particularly after his support for the Government's Bill, despite the fact that the honourable member read out a number of letters from his constituents who oppose this legislation.

Be that as it may, returning to the insurance companies, for a number of years those who take out their policies pay a percentage of the premium towards the upkeep of the fire service. All the fire insurance companies do is actually collect the money and pay it on to the Government. Here we are, as a community, through our taxes paying to minimise the risk for insurance companies, yet they do not contribute a brass farthing towards the cost of emergency services, whether it be the police force by way of prevention of burglaries and crime generally, on which they have to pay out, or be it through fire insurance on buildings and contents. Indeed, I

would not be at all surprised, given that insurance companies are in the main multinationals, if they took out their own insurance, effected it overseas and did not pay any premium whatsoever to this State's emergency fire services.

So, the Minister ought to give serious consideration, in addition to the levy that he is proposing that the average punter in the street pay towards the emergency services, to insurance companies which underwrite in this State also contributing, as we are helping their shareholders to make a profit and a return on their business by keeping in operation an emergency services unit which helps to minimise the risk exposure to those private insurance companies. At the moment, they are not being asked for any contribution on their part.

In addition, I would also like to see a guarantee—not just one given by the Minister, but put into this legislation—in relation to the levy that is currently paid by policyholders when they pay their premiums that insurance companies will, in fact, reduce their overall premiums to reflect the fact that that fire services levy is no longer payable because everyone will be contributing towards it. I fear that the insurance companies will get a windfall profit because they will not adjust their overall premiums, when they send their premium notices out, by reducing the net premium by the amount of fire services levy which they no longer need to collect to pass onto the Government because of the introduction of this legislation. They might say that they will do it, but there is no legal obligation on them to do so. They might simply remove the heading on their premium notice as being a fire services levy and just roll it into one overall premium that they are charging, and there will be a windfall profit for those insurance companies.

I also raise the issue of clause 23 of the Bill, which has already been alluded to by our shadow Minister and which provides:

The Governor may, by notice published in the *Gazette* on the recommendation of the Minister, declare the amount of the levy.

If I read the Bill correctly, I do not believe it is to be laid before both Houses of Parliament: it just sets out what the premium is. So, in effect, the Government of the day can set the levy, whether it be for residential or commercial premises, or one of these mobiles, such as motor vehicles, caravans, or whatever, and, without any parliamentary scrutiny whatsoever, simply jack up the rate. I say to the Minister that it ought to be in the form of an amount specified in the legislation and, every time the Minister believes there should be an increase, he puts it to this Parliament. If the Minister believes that an increase in the levy is justifiable, he should not hide: he should be proud of the points that he is trying to make and win the Parliament and the public over by the justification he puts forward.

I know that recommendations are being put forward with respect to the Economic and Finance Committee, and we will see how that goes in terms of winning Government acceptance. I do not support its being put in by regulation because, quite frankly, the regulations in this Parliament are treated with contempt. Even though they can be disallowed by a motion in either House of Parliament, as we witnessed during the last Parliament in particular, all the Government of the day has to do is simply regazette the regulation at the moment the former regulation has been disallowed, and it stays in force until such time as the regulation is disallowed.

We saw on a number of occasions during the last Parliament the Upper House disallow Government regulations, only

to see the Government reintroduce that same regulation that very night, in effect, therefore defeating the intention of the Parliament, which was to allow either House of Parliament to scrutinise the legislation. If we want to do it by regulation, the principal Act should be amended so that any changes by regulation do not come into effect until such time as the notice period for disallowance of motions has expired, the same as operates in the Senate with respect to the Federal Parliament. Subordinate legislation in this State is an absolute joke. It is honoured many times more in the breach than in its observance in terms of the principles that govern it.

The member for Colton regularly makes public pronouncements about crossing the floor on pieces of Government legislation. Whether it be jumping in front of a tractor or a bulldozer with respect to the open channel at West Beach, the issue of shopping hours or whatever, the member for Colton is only too quick to jump to his feet and beat his breast like a modern day Tarzan.

In fact, the honourable member is more of a Mickey Mouse when it comes to this type of legislation because, every time he is brought to the barrier, at the moment of truth when he is about to cross the floor on a piece of legislation he fails the test. He comes up with an amendment, which has probably been worked out with the Minister, who says, 'Don't worry about it, Steve; put up this amendment and I'll cop it sweet so that you can continue to beat your chest.' He goes on morning radio, probably 5AN, which, unfortunately, these days is so appalling that only politicians bother to listen to it, not that I would commend commercial radio, particularly 5AA. It certainly does reach a broader audience, but I think that is a reflection of the ABC's appalling management in terms of those it has appointed to different radio spots and which commentators it has sacked in the past. If I have to hear Philip Satchell speak once more on prostate cancer, I will die.

The member for Colton is very good at beating his chest pretending that he is leading the charge. One thing that I will give the member for Colton is that he has seen this emergency services levy as a possible Trojan horse for future Governments, particularly Labor Governments which could use the legislation in a progressive manner. I must say to the member for Colton that, if bringing in this legislation will result in stinging the residents of Tusmore, Burnside, Netherby, Springfield and the like for more money to put more teachers into schools in my electorate of Ross Smith or to build or update Housing Trust homes and improve public hospitals for the community of South Australia, I think this Government is doing us a favour.

As the member for Colton rightly points out, in the hands of a more progressive Party and Government, this legislation could be used to raise money for social good. In that respect, the member for Colton is quite right. I commend this Government for bringing in this legislation which a future Labor Government could put to good effect. The member for Colton is absolutely spot on with respect to this matter. Therefore, rather than putting forward amendments, I say to the member for Colton, 'If you and your Tory mates are worried about a future Labor Government with respect to this legislation, you should not be a little bit pregnant: you should go the full Monty and oppose the Bill outright', because when we get into Government we will use it in a progressive manner and to the best effect by taking from those with the greatest means for the benefit of those in the greatest need.

**The SPEAKER:** I call on the member for Mawson. The member for Kaurana.

**Mr HILL (Kaurna):** I am really sorry that the member for Mawson is not here, as I always like following him. I was hoping he would follow the member for Heysen, who was telling us about how much arson there was in the hills. I know that the member for Mawson would tell us about the amount of arson there is in his electorate as well.

I would like to talk about this levy and follow up the points made by other speakers, that in fact this is not a levy but a tax. We should not be afraid of saying that. This is a taxation measure that this Government is bringing in. It is a tax on property and it has a specific purpose, but it is still a tax. We should not beat around the bush. The Government is very fond of beating around the bush when it comes to such measures. It has done the same thing in relation to water catchment taxes and it is now doing it in this area as well. It is a tax.

There is no doubt that more money is needed in the area of emergency services. Any members who travel around their electorate would know that the CFS, surf lifesaving clubs and so on are desperately short of funds to do the jobs that they try to do. They do have volunteers who raise funds under difficult circumstances. It is very difficult raising funds for any good community cause at the moment. There is no doubt that there is a need for extra money for those areas. If the Government is introducing a tax to do that, it should say that it is a good purpose, it is a tax, and that this is what we will be doing.

A number of questions need to be asked about the tax, and in particular in relation to how it will be applied. As I understand it, the tax will replace an insurance levy which is not paid by everyone, and there is an element of unfairness in that. The tax will be applied to every piece of property and will raise money. Presumably it will raise a lot more money, but we do not know this yet, because the levy or tax has not been set, but presumably it will raise a lot more money than the insurance levy currently raises.

The question that has to be asked is whether this will be additional money that will go into emergency services or whether it will replace money already going from Government coffers into emergency services. If this is a substitution generally of Government effort, then really it is not making the huge improvement that the Government is arguing for in this measure. That is something I would certainly be wanting to examine and something I will be asking about if I get the opportunity during the Committee stage.

I was very pleased to see that the definition of 'emergency services' does include surf lifesaving clubs. I have written to the Minister about this on a number of occasions and in a number of ways and, as a member in this place who has five surf lifesaving clubs in his electorate, I am very pleased to see that the surf lifesaving clubs are getting a piece of the action. Just for the record, they include Christies Beach, Southport, Port Noarlunga, Moana and Aldinga surf lifesaving clubs, and there have been plans afoot to have a surf lifesaving club at Maslins as well.

Those clubs do a tremendous job in my electorate, with its large number of beautiful beaches and the many visitors to the area who go surfing and swimming, including citizens perhaps from the member for Schubert's electorate who come on their holidays, some of whom have holiday properties in my area and use the beaches, so it is only appropriate that they should be contributing to the work done by those clubs.

I would also refer briefly to the State Emergency Service and record my particular thanks to them for the excellent job they do in our community. A couple of years ago, during a

big storm, accompanied by a large wind, my wife was looking out the window at the double carport in front of our house, and she saw the wind lift it a couple of inches off the ground before it settled down again. Then she saw it lift up six inches off the ground and settle down again, and for a third time she saw it lift up and just keep going. The double carport, legs and all, landed on our roof, severing the telephone system and putting pressure on the electricity wires connected to the house.

She was in fear of what damage might have been caused if the wires were cut. She got onto emergency services and the volunteers were there with their sandbags within half an hour repairing the damage. It was an absolutely first rate effort for volunteers to do that work in difficult circumstances, because it was raining and very windy and they had lots of jobs to do around the community. So, I personally pay tribute to the volunteer workers who contribute to the emergency services in all their different guises, including the surf life saving club volunteers and the Country Fire Service volunteers as well.

A number of measures in this Bill cause concern. One of the matters I wish to talk about is the notion of separate levy areas and how that might work. I note that under Schedule 1 of the Bill a variety of council areas are described as belonging to the greater metropolitan area—'greater Adelaide area' it is called. Included in that list in Schedule 1 is the City of Onkaparinga, which covers the electorate of Kaurna and some of the other electorates in the southern suburbs. Currently the southern part of my electorate—including part of Aldinga, Port Willunga and Sellicks Beach—are for most purposes considered to be part of the country. I will ask questions about this in Committee. I would like to know what impact that will have on the provision of—

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr HILL:** For the Minister's benefit I will say it again. The listing in Schedule 1 of an area such as the City of Onkaparinga as being part of the greater metropolitan area will mean that certain parts of my electorate which once were considered to be country will now be considered metropolitan. I would like to know what the impact of that will be. Will it mean they will have to pay higher levies as a result of that change or, indeed, will they pay a lower rate than they would have paid if they had been considered part of the country?

What does it mean to the emergency service providers in that area? Will pressure then be placed on the CFS, for example, to be swallowed up by the MFS in those areas? Will the MFS have the total provision of services in the metropolitan area, or will that be divided between the CFS and MFS? Currently, the southern parts of my electorate—certainly from the Onkaparinga River down—are generally covered by the CFS. There is some joint coverage in certain parts, but the most southern part is covered by the CFS. I am sure it will cause concern to the many volunteers involved in the CFS if they find that the duties they have hitherto performed have been removed from them. That is something I would like to see explored further in Committee.

The other issue on which I wish to make comment is the basis of the levy. The Act provides that a levy can be formed in three separate ways: first, by making an amount payable with respect to the value of the land; secondly, as a fixed charge; or, thirdly, as a combination of those first two methods. In Committee I will ask the Minister whether one system will be applied across all of South Australia or whether different areas of the State will be treated in different ways. So, for example, will the metropolitan area have a fixed

charge of a certain proportion (maybe \$100) and have a land value or amount payable in respect to each dollar value on top of that? So, will the metropolitan area be covered by (c) and others areas be covered by only (a) or only (b)? If that is the case, that would create some inequalities. I would like the Minister to expand on that issue when he gets the opportunity during Committee, because it would be unfair if certain people in the State were paying levies on different bases.

In addition, there will be concerns about the issue of its being a property tax, and the member for Colton raised some of those concerns when he addressed the House. There are people who have property which is worth a great deal of money but who have very low income and who will have less capacity to pay a high levy. If that tends to force them out of their home that is something that we as a society should consider very carefully. There are people who purely through circumstances now live in a property which is very valuable but which when they purchased was low in value. We know how the property market works, where values in different areas accelerate at different rates.

So, it would be unfair if a pensioner or someone on a low income who happened to live in a high value property had to pay a very high rate for their land. There must be some way of balancing out those concerns. Equally, the reverse is also true. It may be high income earners who live on property which is valued at a lower rate but they may have a greater capacity to pay. They are some of the social justice issues that the Minister needs to address when he gets to the Committee stage.

I meant to mention this item when I was talking about the change to the metropolitan boundary, but through different measures the Government has already changed the country-city division. Hitherto, for the purposes of the Motor Vehicle Act, charges were applied to people living in the country which were lower than charges applied to people living in the city. As I understand it, the country boundary was determined at 40 kilometres from the GPO. Now ratepayers in my electorate who are south of that 40 kilometre mark are being charged the city rate, on the basis that the Government has determined that the total of any postcode area which falls within the 40 kilometre boundary and is also outside the 40 kilometre boundary will now be included. Constituents in a variety of electorates on the edge of the metropolitan area who previously paid the country rate for third party compulsory insurance are now paying the city rate.

In my electorate a number of people are paying about \$52 extra a year to insure their car, which I understand is the additional cost for an average car. In the case of many of them they have two or three cars because public transport is poor in those areas and that may well mean that they are paying \$100 or \$150 more. I raise this point because, if the boundaries are changed in the way that the schedules indicate, it means that people in what were hitherto country areas are now paying a greater rate for their third party compulsory insurance and, if they are expected to pay a greater levy to look after the emergency services as well, then the questions they will be asking me and the Government are: will the Government give them the other services that go with being in the city? Will they get public transport equivalent to the public transport enjoyed by people who live within the 40 kilometre zone? Will they get police services equivalent to the services provided to people who live in the metropolitan area? Will they have sewerage connected as people in the metropolitan area? There are certainly parts of my electorate that are not seweraged—and the member for Mawson smiles

because certain parts of his electorate within that 40 kilometre zone are not seweraged.

Any decent Government ought to be addressing those needs. To change the boundary for the purposes of taxation without providing all those other services seems to me very unfair and an injustice to those people. That is certainly something about which I will be asking the Minister when I get the opportunity.

**Mr BROKENSHERE (Mawson):** I will be brief with my remarks tonight. However, there are a few things that I will put on the public record with respect to the Emergency Services Funding Bill. Following on from my colleague the member for Kaurna, I also have some concerns about the new postcode proposal with respect to registration fees and so on. I have spoken to the lead Minister on this matter. I believe that it is time we reviewed the boundaries between rural and metropolitan areas right around the perimeter of Adelaide. I have also recently written to the Premier highlighting my concerns about this matter. It could also affect a number of constituents in quite a large part of my electorate. I would like to see it become a win rather than a loss for the community of Mawson, and we will continue to try to argue some sense on the matter.

I am pleased that the principle of more equity for emergency services funding has been included in this Bill. As a longstanding member of the CFS, I am aware that CFS members have had major concerns for well over 10 years in respect of what has been an inequity whereby we had to fight many fires—often only on grasslands and so on—on the properties of people from Adelaide who bought property in rural areas. They may have had only a shed on it, and they may have decided that they would run the risk when it came to the protection of that property and effectively self-insure. However, the CFS still had to look after that property as we would look after the property of those who were insured. Approximately 70 per cent of the community were insured, and about 30 per cent were either under insured or not insured. Obviously, that was not equitable, and I congratulate the Minister for showing this initiative so early in his career by tackling a problem that has been longstanding for a couple of decades. The Minister has an electorate similar to mine, so he knows exactly what those inequities are and the hardship they create for communities.

One of the things I have spoken to the Minister about is my hope that, when things settle down and we know exactly what is happening with respect to the net cost to each landowner and the owner of any property, real or otherwise, there will not be a major net increase. I have been assured that that will not be the case. I would assume that it would not be the case given that 30 per cent more people will be brought into the net to spread the risk and the costings. We all know that insurance is all about numbers—the more people who are insured, the cheaper it becomes per head. By taking away the current insurance levy and invoking an Emergency Service Funding Bill that is absolutely dedicated to emergency services funding, we will also give surety to the funding of those emergency services.

I have been disappointed for some time in the amount of effort that volunteer fire fighters in particular have had to put into fund raising in order to get adequate clothing, boots, and so on, because there simply has not been enough money in the past. I would hope—and I know that these matters have not been resolved—that in time, because of this initiative,

some of these volunteers will receive even more equipment, and I know that that is the hope of many members.

In his second reading explanation the Minister outlined the fact that we have a radio communications system that is getting towards its use by date. Irrespective of whether a Labor or Liberal Government was in power, this is something we should have addressed a few years ago. Perhaps the Labor Party should have addressed it even earlier when it was in office. The fact remains that we cannot go into a new millennium and run the risk of having a communications system that is not up to scratch.

I know from Ash Wednesday that, in the end, we had to turn off our radios when we were fighting the fires, because the whole thing was an absolute mess. The only way we could determine the location of other units from Mount Compass was to use CB radios. That is not the sort of thing I want to experience again. It was bad enough being there with old trucks that were vaporising and did not have adequate fire protection equipment, and so on, let alone being in the middle of a hot spot and not being able to call out for back up. It is time that we all got on with addressing this issue. Let us look not to the past but to the future and ensure that these things are remedied.

For the past three years the Group Captain in McLaren Vale has asked me to push the Government to introduce emergency services funding legislation so that we can pick up the inequities I have highlighted tonight. At the end of the day, I know a few things still have to be answered, and I put that on the public record, because I say to my constituents that I will be keeping an eye on what happens in the wash up. However, the principles of this Bill are sound and right and, as a result this Bill, we will see South Australia lead the way when it comes to the protection and safety of all South Australians and their property. I commend the Minister for this initiative.

**Mr LEWIS (Hammond):** I support the proposition. As other members have effectively said, it is pretty clear that this measure is essential at this time, and that is because there are so many free loaders on the system, free loaders in the form of people who say they are self insuring—like hell they are. If there is a fire on their place or if something else goes wrong for them and they or their vehicles are involved in a prang out on the highway somewhere or other, they call on the CFS or expect the SES to be there to clean it up. If it is a risk to their property in any way and the emergency services can help them, they will make the call. So much for self insurers.

It is equally important that those people who have been free loading on the system as self insurers are joined in being compelled to make their fair share contribution by those who say they are insuring, in the trade's terms, 'offshore'. They are the people who use that word euphemistically to mean that they are insuring interstate or overseas for more favourable rates. Large corporations fit into that category, because they are able to cover what they see as their risks at a lower premium. There is no law against doing that: it is just that they make no contribution whatever to the emergency services that protect their property. The rest of us who take out our insurance premiums with underwriting offices here in South Australia are the people who carry all the burden, and there is a cost overhang.

It is not as though the money we get from that quarter is adequate for the purpose—it is not. So, general revenue has to contribute. Equally important with that is the fact that, if

we impose a levy on the value of property, it almost goes all the way to providing an equitable base on which to determine who contributes what, because that cost annually is notionally included in the cost of owning property that is either leased to a commercial entity or rented to somebody who wishes to live in the home, and it has to be recovered. Either that, or it is part of the negative gearing process which then attracts tax credits in the taxation assessment system. Either way, either or both of those concepts contribute to an adequate supply of properly insured premises for people to live in.

Their property within the premises is their responsibility. No-one ought to be under any illusion that they can expect their landlord to look after the insurance on their personal and their household effects where those personal and household effects are the property of the tenant. If it has not already become obvious to members, I point out that it means that you meet the cost of doing that notionally in your rent. It also means that, whilst we are seeking to establish a levy proportional to the value of real property that can be identified, the one thing we are overlooking in that process is the current assets on that property. To that extent I am talking about, say, farm machinery or other machinery belonging to a firm that has to have a lot of machinery.

The tractors or the lathes are not included in the value of the premises on which the levy is struck. So, the people with a low cost home or just the shell of a building as a factory but who have substantial current assets in the form that I have just described in the case of manufacturing or other business enterprise contexts or in the form of art works or antiques in the case of household effects are getting off scot-free. They are having their real property in the form of current assets protected by the rest of us and themselves presumably paying a contribution only on the fixed assets—the land and what adheres to it that goes to make up the assessed market value.

*Mrs Geraghty interjecting:*

**Mr LEWIS:** Whilst interjections are out of order, I would happily, had I heard, respond to the member for Torrens.

**Mrs Geraghty:** What about contents insurance?

**Mr LEWIS:** Contents insurance does not attract a charge under these proposals and does not form part of the fixed assets. It is indeed part of the category of assets referred to as current assets, to which I was just addressing my remarks. So, we miss that. But this system is fairer than the one we have and the fact remains that, if we stick with the system we have, we have to be even more unfair on the people who are being honourable about the way in which they underwrite the risk by taking their insurance with a South Australian-based office instead of going interstate or overseas or taking out no insurance at all.

So, we are taking a considerable step in the right direction, however painful that may be. It is a step in the right direction only because the funds go into a dedicated account. Without a change to this legislation in the event that it becomes an Act, the funds cannot be purloined by the Treasurer into general revenue for any other purpose whatsoever: they are earmarked. I appreciate that and applaud it. It is the principle that I have advocated since before I came into Parliament. We ought not to be collecting revenue from people unless we identify the purpose for which that revenue is to be applied. It is the only way in which we will have government of any political persuasion at any time in the future accountable for the decisions it makes.

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr LEWIS:** It will mean—if I may go the next step in concert with the member for Spence—that everybody will

know why the revenue has been raised and where it is going. The public respect for the institution of Parliament and executive Government that derives its authority from it will be elevated. That is something to which we ought all pay more attention. Whenever we see the opportunity of getting a restoration of respect for what we do here in this place in the way of making laws and understanding what Government has been doing within the framework of those laws with the authority it has to execute its policies through them, the better off we will all be, and the greater will be the measure of the regard the public has for us. That in itself ought not be a goal but at least it is the measure by which our effectiveness ought to be judged.

Whilst you can measure productivity in the private sector by measuring the output of widgets on a day to day or year to year basis and the value of those things, and the margin between what it costs to produce them and what the market is prepared to pay for them, in this place that is no measure whatever. It was crazy of some members in years past to suggest that the measure of responsible productive output of this place ought to be the number of Bills we passed per hour we sat. However rational that may have appeared, it is totally inane. It is not logical at all. It is not simply about churning legislation through this place but about understanding the effect of that legislation on the lives of the people who vote.

So, altogether, in spite of the discomfort this will cause many of our constituents in thinking that they have another tax to pay, they ought to be reassured that everybody will be paying a much fairer share now. They ought to be reassured that it is not going anywhere else but into the emergency services. They can be reassured that in the process, so far as it is possible to do so efficiently, we are making it fair and equitable between everybody and that nobody is dodging.

We need the additional equipment that other members have spoken about and we need, in particular, better communications networks, though I am not sure what it is that the Minister has in mind or what it is that he has been advised to buy. I would say it would be a good idea for the Minister to get away from reliance on terrestrial line of sight communications and go for a near earth orbit satellite. On fire days, a hell of a lot of solids are suspended in the atmosphere that can cause static. The movement of carbon particles, the smoke and soot that come from fires generate charges which result in interference in radio communications that can cause them to break down. Where they would otherwise have a range of many kilometres, they can be reduced to less than a couple of hundred metres in consequence of the movement of smoke through the atmosphere on a wind. It will literally generate sufficient static electric charge to act as a condenser and static blanket and block out those communications.

That is dangerous, because you do not have command control of all the vehicles and the personnel within those vehicles that are being used to combat the fire. I say to the Minister, 'Keep checking until the day comes for you to sign the money cheque to make sure that the technology that is to be used is the most up to date and most likely to be efficient technology that we buy.' When we lock in on that we buy a whole network for the entire State and it is extremely difficult—

**Mr Conlon:** Don't ask the Minister, ask Motorola—

**Mr LEWIS:** I do not want to get involved in too many red herrings or wild cranes. I just want to make the point that we need to remember that it is difficult, once you have locked into particular frequencies and therefore types of communication equipment, to migrate from that to another type because

it generally entails the use of a complete new range of chips and harmonics to give the coverage required.

In all, we can be reassured that there are no clandestine motives behind this proposal, other than to fix up a problem that has been too hard to deal with for many years. I was appointed to the select committee of this House (and this matter was not in the actual terms of reference of that inquiry) in replacement of the Hon. Roger Goldsworthy, when he resigned from the Parliament in 1992, and I was the replacement along with the then member for Stuart, who took the place of the Hon. Ted Chapman when he resigned at the same time almost as the Hon. Roger Goldsworthy. We on that select committee came to the firm conclusion that there needed to be an improvement in a number of things, one of which was communications. Another and more important one overall was the means by which our emergency services, particularly the CFS, obtained finances to perform services.

We all expect volunteers to contribute their time in meeting threats as they arise, whether it be from a spill on the road (for which need the SES), or a fire (for which we need the CFS), or for fires in the metropolitan area (for which we need the MFS). We clearly need to make sure that we have a source of revenue dedicated for the purpose which everyone can easily recognise and relate to in order to make sure that is done sensibly, efficiently and accountably.

I sympathise with the remarks that have been made by other members—the member for Kaurana and the member for Mawson, for instance—about where the boundaries need to be drawn to determine the difference between the amounts that are collected on a pro rata basis. That is well and good and I have no difficulty with that. My purpose, however, was to draw attention to the basic fundamentals which have been left unaddressed for so long and which this Minister, to borrow a phrase from the member for Gordon, has had the balls to take on.

**Ms THOMPSON (Reynell):** I will be brief with my remarks, because the matters have been fairly well canvassed. I extend my thanks and congratulations to the many people in my electorate who participate in CFS activities. There is also an MFS depot in my electorate, but we have the need for a lot of volunteer work. I noticed over Easter that a number of members of the local CFS had their head shaved in order to raise funds to buy trucks to keep themselves safe, as well as to undertake their important activities within the community. I sincerely hope that the securing of a regular source of income will mean that these people do not have to forgo their beautiful locks again.

A number of issues in the Bill need further consideration. One that has already been raised is the issue of concessions. People on low incomes, whether supported incomes, or people whose earnings are such that they have to juggle their budgets from day-to-day are facing a number of significant changes as a result of the imposts of the State Government and the Commonwealth Government. I think particularly of those families who now have to support their young members until they are 25 years of age in many circumstances. The additional impost of an emergency services levy will have a major effect for them in just trying to balance everything.

One of the matters that arises is how the levy will be imposed and whether, as some have suggested, it will be imposed with council rates. This will create a difficulty for people if they have to pay such a large sum all at once. One of my questions to the Minister is: will there be any provision for payment in instalments? I note that people who incur

speeding fines often need recourse to the payment by instalment method. In my electorate the court has increased its business massively since that provision took effect. If a figure of \$82 a year, which the member for Napier mentioned as the fire levy for one of her constituents, comes with the council rates bill, that is not an insignificant amount.

One aspect of the Bill that has not been mentioned is the provision for education and research into the prevention of the use of emergency facilities. I note that this is covered in clause 26(4)(b), but I was not able to ascertain from the provisions in the Bill what sort of education it would be and what assistance might be envisaged to enable people to make their homes and their vehicles, if necessary, safer and less in need of emergency services facilities. Again, it is a difficult issue to address. When I have visited some constituents in my area, I have noticed that their electrical appliances have frayed cords. We all know that this is unsafe. When I have mentioned it, I have been told that they cannot afford repairs. This is always a difficult matter to administer, but I ask the Minister whether there is any possibility of assisting such people to develop homes that are more fireproof, as well as the education and research measures that are proposed.

I note also that the Minister is requiring that an assessment book be kept. In this day and age, I find that quite a quaint term. I notice that the Minister has the ability to keep it in any form that he or she may choose. I wonder whether the terminology 'an assessment register' might be more in corporation with the fact that, before long, we will probably be keeping such information on data transmission lines and in nothing that resembles a book whatsoever. That is not a major matter but one that the Minister might like to take into account all the same.

The more important matter in relation to the assessment book or register is the ability of the Minister to suppress names where publication could put people at risk. One such example is where a person's name or residential address is suppressed from the electoral roll. I wonder what other circumstances might be involved in a person's having their name and address suppressed and what process they will have to go through in order to seek and achieve that personal protection.

The only other matter about which I wish to comment is the provision relating to non-payment of the levy. The sale of land does seem to be an extremely drastic measure. There are many areas in which people default, including council and water rates and electricity bills, and some amounts of default are in excess of what seems likely to be the emergency services levy. As far as I can see, the only provision for taking action in the event of non-payment is the sale of a home, land or property, which does seem somewhat drastic. I ask the Minister to address that matter as we proceed through the Bill.

Generally, I am very pleased to see the introduction of something that resembles progressive taxation. I note that some people will have to pay some form of tax where they have been successfully avoiding all forms of tax, but I do ask that we take greater account of the difficulties faced by people at the lower end of the income scale in the way that we introduce this legislation.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services):** I will not delay the House for long. All members are in general agreement that the way in which emergency services are funded does need reform. This reform has been coming for 20 years. Five

or six reports over that time have all suggested that the existing method of funding emergency services is simply not fair. It is up to the Parliament to decide a fairer system, and that is what the Government has put before the Parliament for discussion.

I want to clarify some points raised by members during the debate tonight. Some members have made great play of the fact that this is somehow a different or a new tax. I make the point that there already exists a levy on insurance premiums in relation to household insurance, household contents insurance, business insurance, business contents insurance, car comprehensive insurance and crop insurance. Those levies on insurance will obviously be removed and this new or replacement levy will take their place. Ultimately, this is simply a different method of collecting the revenue that has been previously collected under the levy on insurance premiums. It is important to note that the existing charge on insurance premiums will be removed.

The member for Taylor asked whether the Royal Life Saving Society could be included. The reason that that organisation is not specifically included is that the Government already has an arrangement with Surf Life Saving South Australia to the tune of about \$145 000, or following Saturday night approximately \$152 000, for funding of its emergency services component. To my knowledge, the Royal Life Saving Society has not approached the Government to be treated as an emergency services agency.

*Ms White interjecting:*

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** To my knowledge it has not approached us. The Bill is open enough for those sorts of organisations to approach us or for the Government to approach them and say, 'If you are carrying out an emergency services functions, let us sit down and talk about exactly how that is costed and how you can justify it.' Those sorts of organisations can be accommodated. That is why members will find in the Bill some clauses that are generic in nature to allow for that process.

We have done that quite deliberately because we do not know, for instance, what new organisation may occur in five or 10 years. The State Emergency Service, the CFS and other organisations have essentially developed out of the community spirit to provide the community with a service. A generic clause has been inserted so that if a new emergency organisation starts in 10 or 20 years it can be considered under the funding arrangement. The Royal Life Saving Society would be one of those organisations to which the Government of the day would talk about its emergency services funding and how it goes about it.

The member for Heysen raised a number of good issues. The honourable member has raised with me a concern of one of his constituents in relation to the capital value nature of the levy and, in particular, whether it was based on notional value or capital value. Notional value takes into account heritage orders and native vegetation orders which have been placed on the property. The member for Heysen has been advised, and the House will be advised through this answer, that ultimately the levy is based on the notional value. So, those properties which have a heritage order or a native vegetation order, where the community has asked the owner to protect a certain asset for the community's benefit, the value is adjusted because of the benefit that they are providing the community. That is the normal process which the Valuer-General undertakes. So, I clarify that issue for the member for Heysen and other members who raised that point.



The Deputy Leader of the Opposition raised issues in relation to consultation and the lack thereof. I would dispute that. We have had ongoing discussions with the Local Government Association and with the Insurance Council of Australia, and all the emergency service agencies have had input. We had significant input from other organisations such as the RAA and the Motor Accident Commission. If members read the report, they will see that there has been extensive consultation on this principle. After six reports over 20 years, the Government thinks there has been adequate debate on this issue and that it is now time for the Parliament to decide some of the issues that need to be debated.

In relation to the examples that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition gave regarding the MFS and CFS and SGIC, from memory, increasing the premium, I suggest that the honourable member write to SGIC to clarify whether the property has transferred from a CFS area to an MFS area. Sometimes insurance companies get it wrong when they base it on postcode. My understanding is that they are meant to base it not on postcode but on the MFS and CFS proclaimed areas.

I had a case recently where a pensioner in my electorate discovered that she was being charged MFS rates instead of CFS rates and a refund of some \$280 came within seven days from the insurance company. So, I recommend that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition write to SGIC and ask it to check the address, not the postcode, and to check the CFS area to ensure that the person involved is being charged the appropriate levy.

I want to stress that this Bill sets up what is known as a hypothecated account or a dedicated fund which is, essentially, a special deposit account in Treasury to ensure that it cannot be used for purposes other than as outlined by the Bill, and the member for Colton is quite right in the way he has outlined it. This Bill brings more equity to the funding of emergency services. If the Opposition or other parties oppose this Bill, then ultimately they are endorsing the current system which is totally unfair.

We hope to resolve the current situation where insured pensioners are subsidising the emergency services cost of uninsured businesses; where farmers who take out crop insurance pay a levy which goes to the Metropolitan Fire Service; and where people in the country are paying car insurance which goes to the Metropolitan Fire Service. I appreciate that there are agreements, or mutual aid arrangements, between the two organisations, to fund the various services on the boundary issues, but there are some inequities there that we are trying to correct. With those few words, the Government looks forward to the Committee debate.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clause 1.

**Ms WHITE:** This clause is about the title of the Bill. I note in schedule 2 that this Bill amends the Valuation of Land Act 1971 by including the title of this Bill, Emergency Services Funding Act—

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I believe that the honourable member is talking about either the schedule or the long title.

**Ms WHITE:** No, I am talking about the short title.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The honourable member might need to clarify that point.

**Ms WHITE:** I am just about to do that. That schedule amends the Valuation of Land Act by including the short title of this Bill inserting under the definition of 'taxing Acts'. As there has been much debate, with members opposite saying that this so-called levy is not in fact a tax, does the Minister

now agree that this is a tax, given that his legislation determines that it is a taxing Act and, if so, should this not be called the Emergency Services Taxing Act 1998?

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** The way I read it, that schedule refers to 'the rating or taxing Acts'. So, one could run that argument both sides. My answer is that it is a levy.

Clause passed.

Clause 2 passed.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

### CITY OF ADELAIDE BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 1 July. Page 1230.)

**Mr ATKINSON (Spence):** The Opposition believes that the Council of the City of Adelaide is a special council, quite different from any of the other councils in South Australia whether they be metropolitan or country. We think that the special nature of the City of Adelaide requires special legislation that overrides the Local Government Act. So, we heartily support the idea of the City of Adelaide Bill. The City of Adelaide is a small council by population but very large in its revenue base. That revenue is largely generated by people who live outside the parklands, people who come to the city to work (as we do), to shop or to play.

**The Hon. M.K. Brindal:** Or to pray.

**Mr ATKINSON:** The Minister interjects that some come to pray. For a number of years, I came to the city to pray every Sunday morning at St Mary Magdalene's in Moore Street. If I am not mistaken, this is the week of the Feast of St Mary Magdalene.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member of the need for relevance.

**Mr ATKINSON:** The member for Unley interjected that people come to the city to pray, and I merely added that at one stage I also came to the city to pray. I would think that is relevant to the City of Adelaide Bill. The City of Adelaide is different from other councils in that there is a substantial commercial interest in the city that votes at council elections. At the moment, in the City of Adelaide elections 9 000 residents are eligible to vote, consisting of residents living in the central business district and North Adelaide, and 6 000 commercial voters are registered to vote on behalf of rate paying landlords or businesses.

I understand that under this Bill the number of commercial voters will increase to about 9 000, that is, equivalent with the residents. If the commercial proportion of the vote can be sustained, I think that is an important aspect of the Bill and a great improvement. I would not normally say of a local government Bill that it is a good thing to increase the commercial vote as against the residential vote, but in the City of Adelaide it is a good thing if it can be sustained because the only people in the City of Adelaide who are genuinely interested in having people from the suburbs and elsewhere in the State come to the City of Adelaide to work, to play, to do business or to shop are the commercial interests. If it was left to North Adelaide society to decide on access to the city, just about all access points would be closed.

*Mr Lewis interjecting:*

**Mr ATKINSON:** As the member for Hammond says, you could come in by chopper or flying fox. For the past few years, the battle between the commercial faction of the Adelaide City Council and the residential faction has been a

tawdry, ugly affair and to the discredit of the council. Nevertheless, those of us who live outside the parklands ought to be clear about for whom we should barrack. In that dispute, I must say that the people for whom we should barrack, no matter their mistakes or their vulgarities, is the commercial interest, because it is only the commercial interest in the City of Adelaide, once so ably represented by the now member for Colton, that is interested in bringing people from the suburbs and elsewhere into the capital city to do business.

I would have liked to see a City of Adelaide Bill which actually extended the franchise beyond the commercial interests in the city and the residents of the city to people who live elsewhere in South Australia—to people who perhaps could register to vote because they work in the city, or people who could register to vote because they are students at educational institutions in the city. If you follow the Minister's reasoning in this Bill, I cannot see any reason why the Minister would object to that idea. It was an idea promoted by the member for Kaurna when he was ALP State Secretary. I think it is a good idea.

In an article in the *Advertiser* on Saturday entitled 'Welcome to Easy Street', the Minister is quoted as making a pretty good case for Adelaide City Council's franchise being treated differently from that of other councils. He points out that the budget papers show that rates on property for the City of Adelaide make up \$36 million of their revenue, but other income sources are \$58 million, and they include user charges. So, rates make up only 38 per cent of Adelaide City Council's revenue whereas they make up 70 per cent of other councils' revenue.

No taxation without representation is a pretty good principle, and there are a lot of South Australians who do not live in the City of Adelaide or do not own a business in the City of Adelaide who are nevertheless paying fees to the Adelaide City Council, parking fines and the like, and who I think ought to have some say in how the Adelaide City Council is elected. Admittedly, it could be cumbersome for people outside the City of Adelaide voting in Adelaide City Council elections. Another way would have been for the State Parliament to appoint representatives to the City Council. I think that would be quite a good idea, although I realise at this stage that it does not have widespread support. What worries me is that if the North Adelaide society—

*Mr Lewis interjecting:*

**Mr ATKINSON:** The Parliament would vote to appoint people to the Adelaide City Council, because the City of Adelaide is special, and there must be some mechanism for representing the interests of people who live outside the parklands. At the moment the North Adelaide society and its faction on council, led by the Lord Mayor, Jane Lomax-Smith, is able to batten on the revenues generated by the central business district and indulge themselves in some of the best council services anywhere in the State. It is not the North Adelaide residents who are paying for that: it is we, who are paying parking fines, working in the city, spending money in the city and patronising the commercial institutions of the city, who pay the bulk of the rates.

*Mr Lewis interjecting:*

**Mr ATKINSON:** I will come to the rate rebate. I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

**The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL (Minister for Local Government):** I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

**Mr MEIER (Goyder):** Tonight I would like to compliment the Federal Government for having passed a Bill recently that will help farmers. In fact, a release on 25 June by the Minister for Social Security, Senator Jocelyn Newman, indicates that the Senate has now provided much needed help for farmers as a result of the passing of the Retirement Assistance for Farmers Bill. This scheme offers significant real benefits to needy Australian farmers, according to the Minister for Social Security. In the Minister's words:

Low income farmers of age pension age, who have been struggling to survive on a property (with a net worth of up to \$500 000) that can only support one family but is supporting two or more, will be able to give their property to their children and have immediate access to the age pension.

Those who were around during the early part of the 1990s would recall that many farmers suffered considerably because they were not able to will their farm to their children and be eligible to receive the pension. As a result, when the price of commodities crashed and when interest rates under the then Labor Government reached as much as 25 per cent and the price of grains and commodities generally were very weak, so many farmers were living on a very small income or, in some cases, a negative income. It was tragic at that time to have to speak to so many of those farmers who were in real poverty. At that time I was the shadow Minister for Agriculture in this House and I spent so much of my time simply going around and speaking with families throughout this State who were in very real hardship.

I am therefore very pleased that the Federal Government has now made a significant step in enabling people who are of retirement age and on farms to be able to pass their farm over to their children and to be able to qualify for the age pension without any time frame having to expire. This measure will remove a significant impediment to the inter-generational transfer of the family farm and, as a result, represents a considerable concession for farmers. As the Minister says in her press release:

I encourage farmers of age pension age to contact their Centrelink office to see if they qualify for this important initiative. This includes farmers who have gifted their properties since September 15, 1992 and are not receiving an age pension or are receiving a part pension as a result of gifting their farm.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**Mr MEIER:** I did not hear the interjection opposite, but there is certainly still further work to be done in this area because, as the honourable member opposite would probably fully acknowledge, many farmers' properties exceed \$500 000 net worth. Whilst they might be asset rich, they are poor in terms of economic output for any one particular year.

Another matter I came across recently was from the Australian Institute of Criminology in its trends and issues pamphlet entitled *Homicide Between Intimate Partners in Australia*. It was very worrying to read in that article:

Three times every fortnight a homicide occurs in Australia in which intimate partners are involved. In these incidents both victims and offenders are spouses, ex-spouses, those in current or former de facto relationships, boyfriends, girlfriends or partners of same sex relationships.

The National Homicide Monitoring Program database. . . reveals that, during the period 1 July 1989 to 30 June 1996, just over one

quarter of the 2024 homicide incidents where the offender was known involved intimate partners.

The article further states:

One-third of intimate partner homicides resulted from conflicts associated with jealousy or the termination of a relationship. The remaining incidents arose from domestic arguments.

Members will appreciate that 'intimate partner homicide' by its own definition raises serious policy issues. In other words, what can a Government do to decrease homicides between intimate partners? It is certainly a real worry.

**Ms Thompson:** Create jobs.

**Mr MEIER:** I do not know whether or not the member opposite is being facetious. When I think back to earlier years when perhaps it was traditional for only one person, particularly the male partner to have a job, and the female stayed in the home, I do not know whether the incidence of homicides was as great then.

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr MEIER:** Well, you bring up statistics to prove me wrong and I will be happy to listen to them, but I suspect that I would be right and that there would not be such statistics. The one interesting factor is that the annual number of intimate homicide incidents in Australia has not shown significant temporal variation over the period from 1989 to 1996. It has remained at a relatively constant level. It is even more interesting to me that over the past 20 years in the United States the number of intimate partner homicides has decreased by roughly one third. The declining trend in intimate homicides in the United States has been linked, *inter alia*, to factors such as shifts in pattern of family formation associated with declining domesticity, the improved economic status of women and increases in the availability of domestic violence services.

However, as that trend has occurred in the United States, that is, the decline in the number of homicides between intimate partners, there is no doubt that we in this country may be able to learn something from those figures because it is a worrying trend. I again note in this article that one of the key reasons for conflicts arising was because of jealousy or the termination of a relationship. I guess that brings out the emotion in a person and it is virtually impossible for any Government to lay down laws or rules for people to abide by when jealousy or other similar emotional factors come into it. However, there is no doubt that we as a Government should continue to ensure that our society is in a situation where, if relationships break up or if there is a high degree of jealousy associated with a relationship, at least there should be an outlook for a positive future by one or both of the persons involved in that relationship so that they do not think it is literally the end of the world.

Whilst the American statistics show a decrease, Australian data, on the other hand, suggests that intimate homicide has remained stable, at least in the seven year period under review. I also note that the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia record the largest percentages of intimate partner homicides during the seven years. I believe that we in South Australia need to take this on board. It is something that we should not dismiss and it is another issue that needs to be addressed by those persons who have some understanding and knowledge of the social factors causing this high degree of homicide between intimate partners in Australia.

**Mr HANNA (Mitchell):** It is coming to crunch time for the land known as Glenthorne Farm, which is situated in my

electorate, between Majors, Landers and South Roads. This issue has been live for some time. The history of the land goes back to earlier this century when it was used as a remount station for soldiers and their horses, and subsequently it was farmed through most of this century; in fact, it is still being used as a farm. Some seven or eight years ago, there was a proposal to sell off the land which is owned by the CSIRO, and massive public protest at that time under a Federal Labor Government caused a change of heart on the part of the CSIRO and the relevant Federal Minister, and the land continued as it was, used by the CSIRO and, in part, farmed.

The issue resurfaced about two years ago when the CSIRO again decided that the land was surplus and, of course, the attitude of the incoming Federal Liberal Government was quite different. It was looking to sell off assets to the greatest extent it possibly could, subject to public objection. I have no doubt that Glenthorne Farm is the target of that strategy among other assets such as Telstra, and so on. Relatively speaking, it is only a small asset as far as the Federal Government is concerned. It is not even a major asset in the context of the CSIRO's annual budget. However, it has the potential for raising quite a few million dollars for the CSIRO. Indeed, that is a worthy organisation which deserves ample support from the Federal Government.

However, the issue is acute now not only for local residents who would value the open space, the visual amenity of the land and the opportunity to have it developed for recreational use by the local community but also for everyone concerned with environmental issues, particularly in southern Adelaide. It is an acute issue now because of the impending Federal election and the need for a positive decision to be made on the land before the election comes and goes. If there is a Federal Labor Government, the local community has a great hope that the land will be saved for an appropriate use. When the last State election was coming up, the Federal Opposition Leader, the Hon. Kim Beazley, visited the Glenthorne Farm site and made a clear and definitive statement, as did Mike Rann, that the land would be preserved for open space and that the preferred option was a national park or nature reserve.

In contrast, when Prime Minister Howard recently visited Adelaide, no mention of that issue was made at all, despite the fact that the local Federal Liberal member, Susan Jeanes, has apparently been quite active on the issue. She has certainly been vocal on the issue, but her speeches on the issue will amount to nothing if she cannot persuade her Federal Minister and her Prime Minister to intervene to ensure an appropriate use that will benefit the local community, rather than just being a massive housing subdivision that we do not need.

I have referred to the Glenthorne issue in this place before, and I underline again the fact that a major subdivision is approved for Sheidow Park, with some 1 300 allotments planned, thereby obviating entirely the need for a housing development on the Glenthorne site. I am disappointed that there was a recent *Advertiser* report about some urban development association that considered the Glenthorne Farm site ideal for housing. Really the people behind that statement were speaking in ignorance. They obviously had not researched the local demographics and the local housing opportunities near the Glenthorne site.

There is a group known as the Friends of Glenthorne. A number of local people, a number of people from around Adelaide and, indeed, a number of local politicians have been

involved with that group. They have been promoting this concept of a use for the Glenthorne site which will benefit the local community, rather than just having another major housing subdivision.

There is an idea which at present is gaining favour, namely, a wine research centre or something along those lines; indeed, there is some merit in that idea. However, as a concept the proposal is at the early stages of development and in my opinion needs Federal, State and local government backing. Certainly, it would have community backing if the sums could be done to make sure that it is economically viable. I have said that the time for a decision is upon us, because if the Federal Liberal Government is re-elected after this imminent Federal election—and I am speaking as a member of the local community—we will lose bargaining power with the CSIRO and the Federal Liberal Government,

which apparently does not have any interest in retaining that land for community-oriented use.

I can only hope that a Federal Labor Government has the opportunity to revisit the situation. I have every confidence that a Federal Labor Government will pursue the option of a nature reserve, a park or something along the lines of a wine research centre. I put it to those in the local community that they must now increase the pressure on their local member of Parliament, and indeed on the Federal Minister and on the Prime Minister, to make sure that there is action and a promise of some sort before the Federal election, because I am afraid that if we leave it until after the Federal election it may be too late.

Motion carried.

At 10.17 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday 22 July at 2 p.m.