

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Tuesday, September 25, 1973

The PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir Lyell McEwin) took the Chair at 2.15 p.m. and read prayers.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT: ESCAPED PRISONERS

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE (Chief Secretary): I seek leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: Following the escape of three prisoners from custody at the Royal Adelaide Show, information was given to the Council on the circumstances surrounding the escapes. This information was based on reports and statements furnished to the Chief Secretary by the Comptroller of Prisons. It now appears that the police brief that was used in recent court proceedings in relation to the matter contained a statement purporting to be made by one of the prison officers in charge of the prisoners that is at variance in important respects with the information supplied to the Chief Secretary. In these circumstances, the Government considers that there should be an inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the escapes. The inquiry will be conducted by a senior law officer of the Crown, and his report will be tabled in the Council as soon as it is available.

QUESTIONS**PINE POSTS**

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I seek leave to make a statement prior to asking a question of the Minister of Forests.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: The Woods and Forests Department has recently announced considerable increases in the prices of pine posts. For example, 2in. (50mm) by 1½in. (38 mm) pine posts have risen from \$16 a hundred to \$25, an increase of over 50 per cent; and 2in. (50 mm) by 2in. (50 mm) have risen from \$21 to \$33, which represents a similar increase. Can the Minister say why such a massive price increase has been necessary?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I will obtain a report from the Woods and Forests Department and bring it down as soon as possible.

ROAD TRAFFIC MARKINGS

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: I seek leave to make a statement prior to asking a question of the Minister of Health, representing the Minister of Transport.

Leave granted.

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: In the modern concept of road building, increasing use is being made of median strips down the centre of roads, together with a low kerbing. In many intersections in the metropolitan area and in country areas, roundabouts are being used to direct traffic at intersections and to separate the different streams of traffic. It has been the policy of the Highways Department for some time to restrict to some extent the speed of traffic when entering a main highway. It is also obvious that some of these kerbings cannot readily be seen by approaching motorists at night, particularly where an intersection or median strip is not well illuminated by overhead lighting. I have noticed in some parts of the metropolitan area that these kerbings are painted with black and white strips to make them more conspicuous to approaching motorists, whereas most of them, I believe, are painted yellow, thus making them not readily visible at night.

Will the Minister of Health ask the Minister of Transport to examine this aspect of road safety, as it is obvious from the number of black rubber marks on these kerbs that many motorists are failing to sight them soon enough at night?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: I shall be pleased to refer the honourable member's question to my colleague and bring down a reply when it is available.

INTEREST RATES

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Has the Chief Secretary a reply to my recent question regarding the effects of the higher interest rate to be paid on State Bank and Savings Bank of South Australia housing loans?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: A similar question was asked in another place last week, and I repeat the reply then given. Of the sum of about \$17,000,000 which the State Bank will lend in 1973-74, in accordance with the new Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, out of the Home Builders Account to persons subject to means test at the concessional rate of 5½ per cent a year, there will be no increase in rates. Of the further \$12,000,000 or so the State Bank will lend in 1973-74 at a present rate of 6½ per cent to persons who do not satisfy the means test, the position is not so clear, for, though most of the moneys come from repayments of older Home Builders Account loans, they are supplemented from the bank's own resources. However, it is expected that any change would not be likely to be other than nominal (possibly to 6¾ per cent).

It is unlikely that the State Bank will have to revise rates on existing loans as a consequence of the new official interest policy of the Australian Government. Only about 3 per cent of current State Bank lending is for Housing Trust houses, the remainder being for houses privately constructed. The Savings Bank is presently lending at the rate of about \$32,000,000 a year and is charging 6¾ per cent per annum on loans up to \$12,500. At present, there is no information available either from the Reserve Bank or the Australian Government as to prospective changes in interest rates generally, so no accurate forecast is possible by the Savings Bank. However, I am assured by the trustees that any changes in interest rates on housing loans will be kept to a minimum, consistent with the costs of money to the bank itself. It is probable that any necessary changes in housing interest rates by the Savings Bank will affect both new loans and existing loans. Of the \$32,000,000 being currently lent for housing, about 6 per cent to 8 per cent is to purchasers of Housing Trust houses, and these will be affected in the same way as other houses.

RIVERLAND FROSTS

The Hon. C. R. STORY: I seek leave to make a statement prior to asking a question of the Minister of Agriculture.

Leave granted.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: I refer to the frosts that have occurred in the Riverland area in the last few days. I understand that on Friday, September 14, a light frost occurred and that on Wednesday, September 19, and Thursday, September 20, much more severe frosts were experienced. Has the Minister of Agriculture any reports on this matter to give the Council and can he say whether, if the situation is as serious as I have been told it is, the Government will take any action to alleviate the difficulties with which the producers will be confronted? I understand that sultana grapes and some wine grapes will be most affected.

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I have called for a report on the estimated damage that has been caused by frosts in the last few days and, as soon as I have that report, I will inform the honourable member. As he said, the crops most likely to have been affected are the sultana and some wine grapes. Until I have that report I am unable to comment further.

FRUIT CO-OPERATIVES

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: I seek leave to make a statement prior to asking a question of the Minister of Agriculture.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: I have received a letter, with which I understand the Minister of Agriculture is familiar, from the Secretary of the South Australian Canning Fruitgrowers Association, which states:

Reading South Australian *Hansard* of September 13 (pages 745-6), we see that in two places you, as Minister of Agriculture, state that "the Commonwealth and State Governments put more than \$3,000,000 into this industry more than two years ago". Whilst admitting that this was the intention of the Governments concerned and that the eventual result in, say, 15 years time might be that this will be accomplished, the fact is that the only beneficiary to date has been the State Government of South Australia, which received some \$800,000 from the Commonwealth. This money is being held by the State Treasury and interest payable by the two canneries has ceased on some \$1,800,000. The amount of this interest, however, is still being paid by the growers into an amortization fund by an annual levy of some \$4 a ton from the growers. The only benefit the grower received from the \$383,000 advanced by the Commonwealth Government just prior to the elections was that the grower was paid this money a couple of months earlier than would otherwise have been the case.

On September 13, I asked the Minister a question about the problem of marketing in the Riverland area caused by the currency devaluation overseas. This letter is confusing inasmuch as it does not help provide the answer. Can the Minister clear up this matter of where the Commonwealth and State Governments stand as regards the Riverland area and the growers?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I shall have to get a comprehensive report so that we can, if possible, clear up this matter.

BIRDSVILLE TRACK

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Has the Chief Secretary a reply to my recent question about the state of the construction and repair of the Birdsville track?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: Work currently being undertaken on the Birdsville track has resulted in a general upgrading as far north as Clifton Hills, but such work is not designed to bring the road to an all-weather sealed standard. This leaves about 86 miles of road still to be upgraded as well as some work in places such as the Coopers Creek crossing. Work will continue to be carried out as and when weather and funds permit. Expenditure during 1972-73 amounted to \$433,000. Construction and sealing of the Birdsville track to provide an all-weather road are most unlikely in the foreseeable future but, provided special assistance is given by the Australian Government, upgrading will continue. The Premier has sought such assistance recently and it is hoped that provision will be made in the new Commonwealth Aid Roads Act for work beyond the current financial year.

TOTALIZATOR AGENCY BOARD

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: Has the Chief Secretary a reply to my recent question about the Totalizator Agency Board?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: This is the first occasion when a fourtrella dividend that has been declared by the Totalizator Agency Board control centre has subsequently had to be amended. The South Australian Totalizator Agency Board records show that during the last 12 months five dividends were incorrectly calculated initially. Two of these dividends were adjusted before they were declared and the other three resulted in a Joss to the board in each case. The total amount involved was \$643.25. There were no dividends under-declared.

JAPANESE CARS

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Has the Chief Secretary a reply to my recent question about the proposal that some Japanese car manufacturers be given the opportunity to set up vehicle building and manufacturing plants in Australia?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: In view of the importance of motor vehicle manufacture to the South Australian economy, both in terms of employment and contribution to gross product, the Government is naturally concerned about any developments having important implications for the long term viability of the industry. The Government views with some concern the prospect of additional motor vehicle manufacturers in this country. In this regard the Premier made representations to the Prime Minister earlier this year to stress the importance of the motor vehicle industry to this State and to ensure that this Government was given the opportunity to make detailed representations before decisions were taken on questions such as the desirability of admitting new manufacturers, the need to retain the system of motor vehicle plans and the future assistance to be accorded the industry by tariffs and other means. The Australian Government has referred several questions relating to the motor vehicle industry to the Tariff Board for inquiry and report. The Australian Government's future policy in relation to the motor vehicle industry will not be known until the Tariff Board's inquiry is complete and its report has been considered by the Commonwealth Cabinet. The Industrial Development Division is currently having discussions with representatives of the motor vehicle industry concerning representations by the State Government at that inquiry.

ROAD ACCIDENTS

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: On September 11, I asked a question of the Minister of Health, representing the Minister of Transport, regarding road accidents involving primary producer vehicles. Has the Minister a reply?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: My colleague states that, as police accident reports do not indicate the occupation of the owner of a vehicle involved in an accident or the nature of the load carried on the vehicle, it is not possible to supply the information requested.

GRAPE INDUSTRY

The Hon. C. R. STORY: I seek leave to make a short statement with a view to asking a question of the Minister of Agriculture.

Leave granted.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: Recently, the Federal President of the Grapegrowers Council (Mr. A. D. Preece) made a statement regarding the situation of the grape-growing industry. As a result of the recent Commonwealth Government projects that have been announced, it seems that the industry will face a most difficult situation as a result of the Australian dollar being revalued, the cutting of import duties, the abolition of the sales tax exemption on soft drinks containing 5 per cent of natural fruit juices,

and the removal over a three-year period of the excise differential of \$3 a gallon (4.5 l) between brandy and other spirits. Can the Minister, being of the same political persuasion as the Government that has brought in these matters, bring some pressure to bear on those responsible to see that the South Australian industries, particularly the wine and apple growing industries, are not seriously affected as a result of what has happened in the Commonwealth Budget? While I know that it is not possible for the Minister to wield a big stick over the Commonwealth Government, he may be able to do something to alleviate the problems facing people in the Hills district of South Australia, the Riverland, and the Barossa Valley.

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I indicated to this Chamber some time ago that this matter had already been brought to the attention of the Prime Minister by the Premier. I agree with the honourable member regarding the impost of charges on the industry in South Australia as against the other States because, after all, South Australia produces 68 per cent of Australia's wine and greatly exceeds that percentage for brandy production. I assure the honourable member that the matter has been voiced strongly to the Commonwealth Government and that I will raise it with Senator Wreidt personally at the next Agricultural Council meeting.

REHABILITATION AND COMPENSATION SCHEME

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Has the Chief Secretary a reply to the question I asked on September 13 concerning the rehabilitation and compensation scheme that the Commonwealth Government has under review?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: The State Government accepts the concept of a national rehabilitation and compensation scheme. It is likely, of course, that it will require some change in the operations of the State Government Insurance Commission but it is early days as yet to be precise as to what the changes may be. The Government and the commission will co-operate with the Australian Government in implementing its scheme.

BOOL LAGOON

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: I seek leave to make a short statement prior to asking a question of the Minister of Agriculture, representing the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: My question relates to the Bool Lagoon game reserve. Recently, the Minister of Environment and Conservation met a group from the Field and Game Association, along with adjoining landholders, at Bool Lagoon when concern was expressed about the level at which the lagoon was maintained at this time of year. At the meeting, adjoining landholders agreed that a higher level would not affect them adversely, and the Minister said he saw a need for action, as requested. However, when the party went to the western entrance of the lagoon, officers of the South-Eastern Drainage Board were opening the gates to lower the level further. On what basis does the board maintain the level in the lagoon, and on what basis is it lowered at this time of the year?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I will obtain a report from my colleague and bring it down as soon as possible.

GRASSHOPPERS

The Hon. C. M. HILL: As I have been informed that the Agriculture Department has been warned about the possibility of grasshopper infestation in rural areas, particularly the Eyre Peninsula and Orroroo regions, can the Minister of Agriculture assure the Council that the Gov-

ernment will give maximum aid to producers if a serious threat develops in respect of this year's harvest?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I can give that assurance, and can go further and cover a wider field than that mentioned by the honourable member, as grasshoppers breed in many other areas, too. My departmental officers have been carrying out surveys in the last 12 months in many areas and have tabulated all available information by liaising with district councils. I assure the honourable member that we will not only liaise with landholders in this State but also with people from Victoria and New South Wales, with whom we are now partners in the fight against locusts, and with whom we will liaise if there should be an outbreak during late spring. This is being viewed seriously by the department, and we shall do as much as we possibly can to eliminate the problem if it should arise. We can do this only with the landholder's co-operation and, without it, all we have done will be in vain. We can contain a considerable infestation only if we catch it in the early stages.

POTATO MARKETING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. T. M. CASEY (Minister of Agriculture) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Potato Marketing Act, 1948-1970. Read a first time.

REGISTRATION OF DEEDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

The House of Assembly intimated that it had agreed to the Legislative Council's amendment.

ART GALLERY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

The House of Assembly intimated that it had agreed to the Legislative Council's amendment.

MARGARINE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Returned from the House of Assembly without amendment.

STOCK MEDICINES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Returned from the House of Assembly without amendment.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2)

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 20. Page 859.)

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS (Leader of the Opposition): This Bill proposes a total provision of \$622,890,000, made up of \$498,516,000 in general appropriations, together with \$114,374,000 authorized by special Acts and a provision of \$10,000,000 for expected Public Service wage and salary increases during 1973-74. The total receipts are estimated to be \$611,636,000, and a deficit of \$11,254,000 is budgeted for. Already this year increases have been granted to many Public Service groups and, if at this stage one predicted that the \$10,000,000 provided for wage and salary increases had already been absorbed, I do not think that one would be far off the mark. In examining the Budget figures the following picture emerges (and I have used for the purpose of comparison the estimated figures for 1972-73 and for 1973-74). I had considered using the actual 1972-73 figures, but when one is comparing actual figures with estimated figures I do not think that the correct picture emerges.

On the receipts side, as regards State taxes, the estimated receipts for last year were \$107,800,000, whereas they will be \$137,700,000 in 1973-74. This represents an increase of just under \$30,000,000 (or the rather staggering increase of 24 per cent) to the Treasury. In public undertakings,

last year the estimated receipts were \$108,800,000, whereas this year they are estimated at \$125,900,000; this represents an increase of \$17,100,000 or 15.7 per cent. On recoveries of debt services, last year the estimated receipts were \$37,100,000, whereas this year they are estimated to be \$40,400,000; this represents an increase of \$3,300,000, or 9 per cent. In departmental fees and other receipts and charges, last year the estimated receipts were \$51,000,000, whereas this year they are estimated to be \$81,700,000; this represents an increase of \$30,700,000, or 60 per cent.

Regarding territorial receipts, \$3,270,000 was estimated last year, whereas \$3,410,000 is estimated this year; this represents an increase of \$140,000 or 4 per cent. Regarding Commonwealth reimbursements, \$201,300,000 was received last year, whereas an estimated \$222,500,000 is the figure for this year; this represents an increase of \$21,200,000, or 10.5 per cent. The total estimated receipts increased by \$102,400,000, or 20.1 per cent, from last year's figure of \$509,200,000 to this year's figure of \$611,600,000. I ask honourable members to compare the total increase in estimated receipts of 20 per cent to the increase of 24 per cent in State taxation. Compared to last year's estimates, State taxation has increased by a staggering 24 per cent. Last year it was estimated that State taxation would increase by 17.9 per cent. This means that State taxation has in the last two Budgets increased by the even more staggering figure of 47 per cent.

To put this increase in its true perspective, it means that, if the level of State taxation continues at the present rate, it will double every four years. To put it even more forcefully, if this year's rate of increase is maintained for the remainder of the life of this Parliament, State taxation will double by the time the 1975-76 Budget is introduced. This puts the magnitude of the increase in State taxation in its true perspective: if the rate of increase in taxation in this Budget is maintained, State taxation will double every three years. Also, there is an increasing rate of increase each year. In 1971 it was 14 per cent; last year it was 17.9 per cent and this year it is 24 per cent. This makes one wonder whence the Treasurer drew his inspiration to inform the people of South Australia recently that no significant taxation increases were contained in the 1973-74 Budget. I sometimes wonder when the taxpaying public will demand from its public administrators a little more attention to economy in expenditure and a little less attention to what I term "emotional expenditure".

The second matter that deserves attention is the increase of 60 per cent in estimated departmental fees and receipts. Although the increase in this respect is about \$30,700,000, it is not quite what it appears to be on the surface. Because the Commonwealth Government is assuming financial responsibility for tertiary education as from January 1, 1974, the special purpose grants are being increased by \$14,500,000. However, to offset this, \$12,000,000 has been deducted from the State grants and \$2,500,000 will be required to pay institutions in lieu of fees lost by them. As honourable members realize, it is the Commonwealth Government's policy to abolish tertiary education fees. Therefore, although the 60 per cent increase in departmental fees and receipts may be an accurate estimate, adjustments need to be made as a result of the changes to which I have referred.

I wonder also whether the Prime Minister, Mr. Whitlam, in the figures he keeps quoting regarding increases that the Commonwealth Government intends to allocate on education finance, has adjusted his figures as a result of the reduction in State grants for education, the Commonwealth having assumed financial responsibility for tertiary

education. If he has not done so, the figures he keeps quoting regarding education expenditure are misleading.

I return now to the figures contained in the Treasurer's second reading explanation. Similarly, some adjustment must be made to Commonwealth Government reimbursement figures, details of which I gave earlier. Last year, the Commonwealth reimbursement was \$201,300,000, and it has increased by \$21,200,000, or 10.5 per cent, to \$222,500,000 this year. As well as adjusting the increase in fees and other receipts received by certain departments, one must also adjust this figure. Even if this adjustment is made, the Commonwealth reimbursement percentage increase does not compare favourably to the increase of 16.9 per cent for the 1972-73 financial year.

If one examines the Commonwealth Government reimbursements, particularly the special reimbursements for expenditure in the dormitory areas of Sydney and Melbourne, one can see that the Commonwealth Government has not treated South Australia with any great feeling in its recent allocation. Despite this, one does not hear the same bitter complaints being made by the Treasurer that we heard 12 months ago, when the deal South Australia got from the Commonwealth Government was much more advantageous to South Australia than that which we received this year. When these necessary adjustments are made, my calculations show a decline in real terms of Commonwealth reimbursements to South Australia.

I turn now to the expenditure of each South Australian Government department. One must bear in mind that total State receipts have increased by about 20 per cent. Dealing with the proposed expenditure in the various departments, I refer, first, to the Premier and Treasurer. Last year the estimated expenditure was about \$47,400,000 and this year it is estimated to be about \$59,600,000, an increase of \$12,200,000, or 25.4 per cent. I refer now to the Chief Secretary and the Minister of Health, which I still regard as being one department because, whenever one telephones the department, the telephonist answers by saying, "Chief Secretary and Minister of Health". One wonders, therefore, who is in charge of this department at times. The expenditure in this respect was estimated to be \$86,400,000 in 1972-73, and this financial year it has increased by about \$18,400,000, or 21.3 per cent, to about \$104,800,000. I refer now to the Lands, Repatriation and Irrigation expenditure. In the 1972-73 financial year it was expected to be \$8,300,000; this year it is estimated to be about \$6,700,000, a decrease of about \$1,600,000, or 19.4 per cent. In explaining that decrease, I point out that about \$2,000,000 in metropolitan unemployment relief does not appear this year. Nevertheless, even with that expenditure removed, one can see that this year there is practically no increase in expenditure under this heading.

Expenditure of about \$6,700,000 was estimated for the Agriculture Department for 1972-73; this year the figure is about \$7,500,000, an increase of \$800,000, or 11.9 per cent. Last year, about \$42,400,000 was estimated to be spent by the departments of the Minister of Works and Minister of Marine; this year the estimated expenditure is about \$48,800,000, an increase of about \$6,400,000, or 15.1 per cent. About \$139,500,000 was estimated to be spent in education in 1972-73; this year the estimate is about \$178,400,000, an increase of about \$38,900,000, or 27.8 per cent. Last year the allocation for the Labour and Industry Department was about \$1,290,000, and this year it has increased by \$410,000, or 31.7 per cent, to \$1,700,000. Roads and Transport: last year, \$56,900,000; this year, \$67,000,000—an increase of

\$10,100,000, or a percentage increase of 17.6. Attorney-General and Community Welfare: last year, \$17,100,000; this year, \$19,200,000—an increase of \$2,100,000, or a percentage increase of 12.3. Environment and Conservation: last year, \$2,400,000; this year, \$2,700,000—an increase of \$300,000, or 12.5 per cent.

The overall increase in expenditure is about 20 per cent, and we can see the various departments and their increased allocations for this financial year. The departments that have received allocations greater than the 20 per cent rise are the Premier and Treasurer, Chief Secretary and Health, Education, and Labour and Industry. The departments with allocations less than the 20 per cent general increase are Lands, Agriculture, Works and Marine, Roads and Transport, Attorney-General and Community Welfare, and Environment and Conservation.

It is also interesting at this stage to examine the position last year by using a similar yardstick. Last year the increase in expenditure was about 14 per cent and the departments receiving a smaller increase than the average were Lands, Agriculture, Works and Marine, Education, and Roads and Transport. We can, I think, determine from these comparisons, both this year and last year, a pattern of priority that I have drawn to the attention of this Council previously. From these figures and general remarks I have made on them, several avenues can be pursued into more specific areas of the Budget.

I intend today to confine my remarks to a limited number of these, knowing that other honourable members will enlarge on other parts of the Budget or, indeed, make contributions to the debate on the various items I wish to draw to the Council's attention. The first thing any honourable member would pick up on reading the Budget document is the continuing losses of the South Australian Railways and the rapid escalation in the size of those losses. I quote from the Auditor-General's Report as follows:

The continued and significant increase in losses on the South Australian Railways is most disturbing and some action is essential to reduce or at least hold these losses.

Last year, in the Budget debate, I drew attention to the fact that there had been a large increase in moneys transferred from the Treasury to the Railways Department, in expectation of an increased deficit in that department. I think (I stand to be corrected here) that last year it rose from \$15,000,000 to \$22,500,000, and this year it rises from \$22,500,000 to \$30,000,000. The actual loss figure this year is about \$26,000,000, I think.

The Hon. C. M. Hill: It is \$25,800,000.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: Yes. I think I am right in saying that the figure (I am not quite sure) was \$15,000,000 in the previous year, but there has been almost a doubling of expected revenue losses from \$15,000,000 to \$30,000,000 in a two-year, or at the outside a three-year, period. The transfer this year is expected to be \$30,000,000. This amounts to about 5 per cent of the total State expenditure. Also, if we like to make comparisons, the expected railway loss this financial year is more than double the cost of the State Governor's establishment, the Legislature, the Lands Department, library expenditure in South Australia, the Agriculture Department, the Labour and Industry Department, the Environment and Conservation Department, the Public Health Department, and the Mines Department combined. If we think for a moment about that list of nine items I have just given to this Council and the expected railway losses being greater than the combined expenditure on those nine items, perhaps we can realize just how important is this matter of at least being able to contain the ever-increasing items in railway losses.

One could spend much time debating the whole matter, and even in covering merely the matters reported on in the Auditor-General's Report, but certain parts of that report deserve to be brought to our attention. I make clear that in no way am I criticizing those people employed in the Railways Department. The problem is much greater than just this particular point. Also, railway losses are not peculiar to South Australia: all State Revenue Budgets suffer from the severe imposts that the State transport system places upon them. So, it is not an isolated situation in South Australia. I have tried to compare expected losses in South Australia with the expected losses in other States, and I find that the Parliamentary Library, too, is awaiting the most up-to-date figures from other States in this regard, so no true comparison can be made yet. Nevertheless, the losses last year in the various departments of the Railways Department, not taking into account debt charges, were as follows: in city and suburban passenger services, \$5,468,000; in country passenger services, \$4,180,000; in inter-system passenger services (that is, interstate services and with the Commonwealth), \$1,217,000. This makes a total loss (operating loss, nothing to do with the servicing of capital) on the passenger services of \$10,865,000.

The loss on cartage of freight and livestock was \$7,901,000, making a total loss in operating costs of \$18,766,000. If we add to that the total debt charges of \$8,595,000 we find that the total loss on the South Australian Railways amounted to almost \$26,000,000 for the financial year. In the year 1972-73, working expenses increased by \$5,820,000, and to go a little further in analysing this position, the average cost of carrying passengers on suburban lines in South Australia is 64c a passenger. The average income a passenger carried is 17c, so we see that every passenger carried on a suburban railway line receives a subsidy of 64c while the average income from each passenger carried is only 17c. On country passenger services, the average cost of carrying a passenger is slightly more than \$19, and the average fare received is \$3.07. On inter-system passenger services the average cost a passenger is \$14.88, and the average fare collected is \$8.

This, to me, illustrates the first area where some close examination is required, because here we are dealing, in relation to passenger-carrying services, with a working loss of over \$10,000,000 a year in South Australia. On examining this question, I find that, on one Bluebird service with 150 trips (and members in this Chamber would understand the cost of running a Bluebird), the average passenger density was 1.4 passengers a trip, and on 55 trips (35 per cent) no passengers at all were carried. If the department provided a free taxi service in place of that Bluebird passenger service it could save money. At times, the Railways Department must provide a service that does not pay; every honourable member would accept that position. However, there is no valid reason to continue running a service that could be replaced by an alternative service with probably increased efficiency and huge savings for the tax-paying public.

The matter I have dealt with in relation to passenger carriage applies equally to some points regarding freight services. I know that the few cases I have highlighted are glaring examples and merely one part of a large problem, but it is necessary that these examples be faced, otherwise, as taxpayers, we will be saddled with increasing demands upon the public purse to maintain services that are no longer justified or that could be replaced with more efficient services, less costly to the taxpayer. It is not easy at the moment to find comparisons with the

other States, but it appears that the percentage of the total Budget appropriated for railway losses is higher in South Australia than in any other State. I cannot check that fully, because the figures are not available at the moment in the library, so it cannot be said with any certainty, but from what I have been able to ascertain by looking at Budgets of other States it is reasonable to expect that this is the case. A larger percentage of our total Budget is devoted to meeting railway losses than is provided in any other State in the Commonwealth. I am certain it is factual to say that the annual contribution per capita in South Australia to offset railway losses is higher than in any other State.

The next matter to which I wish to draw the attention of the Council is the frightening escalation of the cost of hospital services in South Australia. Last night, with the Minister of Health and other members of Parliament, I attended the annual meeting of a community hospital. The community hospital system is unique to South Australia, and has provided first-class service to the people of the State at a relatively low cost to each patient treated. It is a system that I feel (as others do) may be in jeopardy with a possible change in financing of the health services in Australia by the present Commonwealth Government. I can demonstrate my concern in the matter of escalating costs of patient treatment in hospitals by looking at the annual report of this hospital, presented last night. The fee for a ward bed on June 30, 1972, just over 12 months ago, was \$22 a bed per day; the cost at the end of June, 1973, 12 months later, was \$27, a rise of more than 23 per cent. It was expected, if one listened to the annual report given, that in the near future a further rise would be necessary and it would not surprise me if, in the period of two years from June 30, 1972, to June 30, 1974, the total rise in ward costs at community hospital level were of the order of 50 per cent.

To take this matter further, I have examined two major hospitals mentioned in the Budget and, while there may be some variation in the figures I present because of factors I cannot quite determine, nevertheless I present those figures for the bed costs in two Government hospitals in South Australia. Those figures also must give some cause for concern among honourable members. I remember in 1969 looking at hospitalization in many countries of the world, including Sweden, and I was shocked, on examining the Swedish system, to find a complete lack of what might be termed community style services with which we are well served in this State, and also to find the cost of patient treatment in that country. The building costs of hospitals in Sweden in 1969 were about \$A100,000 a bed and the cost of maintenance was \$100 a bed day. I am sure honourable members would agree that those figures were extremely high by our standards. The maintenance a bed day at the Royal Adelaide Hospital, as expected in the Budget and according to Budget figures, is between \$65 and \$70. The escalation in bed costs at Government hospitals over the past two years has been between 30 per cent and 35 per cent. The figure of \$65 to \$70 a day does not take into account any cost of servicing the capital investment in the hospitals concerned.

By a similar sum, looking at the Budget figures, one can see that the cost a bed day of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is expected to be between \$50 and \$60. From experience and from reading reports of community hospitals and subsidized hospitals in this State (a system which I think every honourable member wants to see preserved, as it has provided a high standard of patient care at a low cost to the patient), one can see that there will be further

rapid escalation in hospital costs in these areas. Whilst the question of escalation of hospital costs can be looked at in isolation, at the same time this is the general philosophy one sees right throughout the Budget documents presented to us. One could go on with similar analyses, but those I have given illustrate the point. This philosophy in the Budget is further borne out by the budgeted deficit of about \$11,000,000, in itself a philosophical approach to the Budget and also, if I may say so, a pressure in relation to inflation.

The last matter to which I shall refer briefly concerns the necessity for the State to maintain an active mineral exploration programme, both in the private sector and departmentally, especially relating to the discovery of fossil fuel deposits. The welfare of the people of South Australia (indeed, one could go further and say the very future of the people of South Australia) is tied, in my opinion, to an adequate supply of electric power at reasonable prices. To provide this power in the most economic way we need to develop and utilize our own fossil fuel resources. Under present conditions Leigh Creek can supply South Australia's needs for about 20 years, but this depends on many factors. Of course, 20 years is a relatively short period. The natural gas pipeline delivered about 26 000 000 000 cubic feet of gas (740 000 000 m³) for power generation in the last financial year. To ensure an adequate supply of fossil fuels a vigorous search programme for future supplies must be undertaken and encouraged, whether undertaken by private or public authorities. From analysing previous Budgets it is evident there is a downturn in departmental expenditure in search programmes not only for fossil fuels but for other minerals as well, and unless a high search activity is maintained South Australia could be in a serious position in providing electric power at reasonable costs to the consuming public.

Apart from the question of future supplies, we can be assured that there will be a substantial rise in the cost of electric power to the consuming public in the near future because of political decisions, inflation and other factors over which the Electricity Trust of South Australia has no control. I quote from the E.T.S.A. report of September 3, as follows:

The welfare of the people of South Australia is intimately bound up with an adequate supply of electric power. The trust sincerely hopes that early action will be taken to ensure that adequate supplies of natural gas can be guaranteed for South Australia's use.

I hope this plea is heeded by the Government, through the Mines Department, to intensify exploration activity in South Australia.

There are many other aspects of the Budget to which I could refer; however, I have discussed the Budget in general and have made comparisons with previous Budgets. This is the largest Budget, in money terms, introduced in South Australia and contains the highest percentage rise in State taxation, and certainly the highest increase of money collected by the Treasury. With those remarks I support the Bill.

The Hon. C. M. HILL (Central No. 2): I, too, support the Bill. This Budget is inflationary and adds to the worrying inflationary spiral affecting all South Australians. More and more money is being taken from the people by taxation and service charges this year; and more than is being taken is being spent. This is indicated by the estimated deficit of \$11,254,000, to which the Chief Secretary referred in his second reading explanation. The people of this State are faced with the worry of high prices, high Commonwealth taxation and, now, high State taxation.

I listened with interest to the figures and statistics given by the Hon. Mr. DeGaris. I took out some figures, not based on former estimates of taxation increases but based on the actual increases that were stated in this year's Auditor-General's Report. The figures for the current year, of course, are estimates. My figures indicate that this year, irrespective of service charges, and dealing purely with State taxation, there has been an increase of 19.1 per cent. The increase for this year is far higher than the actual increase in previous years (it is the highest increase we have had apart from the year when pay-roll tax was introduced), which I believe stresses the inflationary effect of the Budget.

It indicates that the Government in this Budget is doing nothing to curb inflation. Indeed, it can be said fairly that the Government is living off inflation. All one can do in this place is to emphasize one's view that there is an urgent need for the Government to exercise restraint and to curtail and even to slow down, in an endeavour to stop this worrying inflationary spiral that is affecting all South Australians.

The approach to the question of inflation, as far as the Budget is concerned, is a decision of the Government, and one cannot help being struck by the fact that much revenue is being taken from the people and is being spent unwisely or being spent where it should not be spent. It did not surprise me to hear the Hon. Mr. DeGaris mention some of the areas where expenditure has reached such bounds that the Government must face the charge that it is being irresponsible, especially in relation to the losses incurred by the Railways Department.

The Hon. T. M. Casey: It had losses when you were Minister in charge of the department.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: I will mention some of the losses for the Minister's information shortly.

The Hon. T. M. Casey: What did you do to correct it?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: I shall mention that shortly, and I hope that when I have finished I will have proved in some respects that the records of the two Governments are as different as day is from night. However, at present, I am dealing with general topics. When one looks at the Budget one undoubtedly sees areas of wastage of public money, and if the necessary action were taken there would not be the need for high State taxation, and the 19.1 per cent, to which I referred earlier, could be reduced.

In the public arena, among people generally, there is a rather inevitable opinion that, irrespective of the Government in office, prices and taxation must soar and that inflation in today's world must reach dangerous limits: I do not agree with that contention at all. I believe that, with careful management of this State's finances, taxation could be lowered and there could be a better financial situation than exists at present. When one concentrates study on various departmental figures, as disclosed in the Budget, one can see that in some instances there are cases where wastage occurs. I stress that, in speaking in this way, I am not being critical of heads of departments, the Public Service, or employees in semi-government institutions: the responsibility must be accepted by the Ministers and the collective responsibility must be accepted by the Government of the day.

When one thinks about some of the problem areas, one sees that these errors usually occur through decisions that are political in the extreme. Unfortunately, it is this political attitude that causes a great deal of expenditure which ought not to take place. Again I stress that, if such errors did not occur, the people would have more

money for their own personal needs and would pay less in taxation.

The first glaring example to which I refer (and it is mentioned in the Auditor-General's Report) is a matter I have raised previously, namely, the dial-a-bus situation. Page 158 of the Auditor-General's Report states:

The amount expended on transport research during the year included \$17,471 for the dial-a-bus project. Total expenditure on this project to August 15, 1973, amounted to \$31,673, and included \$25,408 paid to consultants, \$3,713 for a field trial and \$2,352 for public relations work. That loss occurred, as we know, against expert advice and the recommendations of at least one feasibility study, and the way in which politics entered into that matter was disgraceful. The point I am concerned about is the one I mentioned earlier, namely, that the \$31,673 loss is met by the South Australian people, but something politically imaginative seemed to surround the whole dial-a-bus project. So, I believe that, for political reasons, dial-a-bus was launched because something had to be kept on the front page, and this matter was newsworthy to the media.

There had to be something to keep people's minds off the lack of decision on a much-needed and urgently required comprehensive transportation study for metropolitan Adelaide. There had to be something to keep people's minds off the fact that the Government had spent more to acquire freeways this year, as disclosed in the Bill before us, than in any other year.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill: On what was the public relations money for dial-a-bus spent?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: I do not have the details, but that is an interesting point. I am sure that the Minister will be good enough to supply additional detail on that matter. The item totalled \$2,352. I should be satisfied (and undoubtedly my colleague is interested in this matter) if the Minister would provide information as regards to whom it was paid and the exact purposes for which it was spent.

I know that we are dealing with an expenditure Budget of over \$622,000,000 and that the point to which I am referring involves only a small sum by comparison. However, the principle is there, and I believe that the Government stands condemned in the eyes of the people of this State for that wastage of public money. If that is a small item, then the matter to which the Hon. Mr. DeGaris has referred, namely, the loss by the South Australian Railways Department, is a gigantic one.

There was, as the Leader said, a total loss by this department, including debt charges, of \$25,883,986 last year. This year (I know I am repeating this, but I believe that it is so important that it should be repeated) the public is being asked to find \$30,000,000 to bolster up the expected railway losses. I believe that this enormous loss should be reduced forthwith if the Government is a responsible Government. When one thinks that the total estimated State tax increase this year, as disclosed in Parliamentary Paper No. 18, is \$22,147,000 (which will be totally absorbed), and that over \$7,000,000 will have to be added to it to make up the loss in this one department, one realizes the enormity of the impact this item will have on the Budget.

I do not accept (and I am now coming to the point the Minister of Agriculture made by interjection) that this state of affairs is inevitable. For the Minister's benefit, I remind him of the total deficits of the Railways Department, as follows: for the year ended June 30, 1968, \$12,734,294; for 1969, \$12,316,723; for 1970, \$12,773,959; for 1971, \$16,124,101; for 1972, \$19,477,475; and for the year ended June 30, 1973, \$25,883,986.

These figures indicate that, for the first year in which the previous Liberal and Country League Government was in office, there was no increase in the deficit but a \$417,571 decrease. In the second and final year of that Government the deficit increased by \$457,236. The net deficit increase during the two years in that Government's term of office was the small sum of \$39,665, or 0.3 per cent.

I remind the Minister of the situation in the three years ended June 30, 1973. I quote (as the Hon. Mr. DeGaris did, and because there is a need to emphasize it for the Minister's benefit) from the Auditor-General's Report:

The total deficit of \$25,884,000 represented more than twice the deficit of three years ago.

So, there was an increase of over 100 per cent compared to an increase of 0.3 per cent; that is why I have said that it was like comparing night to day, and I think I am justified in making that claim, if one thinks about those figures. There was, therefore, a vast difference in the results achieved and, of course, in many matters concerning the Railways Department during the two years that the former Government was in office and the three years that the present Government has been in office. I refer, for instance, to the total earnings of the South Australian Railways, which figures I take from the Auditor-General's Report.

In 1968-69 the total earnings by the department increased by 8.1 per cent; in 1969-70 the total earnings rose by 10 per cent. Then, in the following year (the first year of office of the present Government), the increase in earnings fell to 3.2 per cent; in 1971-72 the increase in earnings fell again, to 2.8 per cent; and last year the earnings decreased by .8 per cent. These figures, which illustrate the gigantic losses suffered by the Government and its total failure in this respect, are undeniable, and I ask the Government what it is doing about the matter. It is no good the Government's turning a blind eye.

The Hon. T. M. Casey: I see that it got a vote of confidence in another place the other night.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: This is not a time to be facetious. I am talking about saving the people of this State about \$30,000,000. That may not interest the Minister very much. The figures regarding country railway services should be of grave concern to the Minister, his constituents, and all those who support him. I am justified in asking what the Government intends to do about this matter. Year after year the Auditor-General's Report highlights this serious problem. On page 183 of the Auditor-General's recent report, which honourable members received only a few weeks ago (and this is yet another aspect of the whole unfortunate picture), the Auditor-General states that the total railway losses have so far cost this State \$296,000,000. Although the Leader of the Opposition may already have referred to this aspect, I will repeat it because it is in bold type in the report. The Auditor-General continues:

The continued and significant increase in losses on the South Australian Railways is most disturbing and some action is essential to reduce or at least hold these losses.

He then goes on to highlight the point raised by the Leader of the Opposition regarding individual losses. I ask the people in the metropolitan area to look at each passenger train as it passes them and say to themselves, "For each passenger in that train the public of South Australia is paying 47c." Also, if people in the country see a train carrying passengers travelling not to other States but solely to destinations in South Australia they should say to themselves, "Each passenger on that train is costing the people of this State \$16.02 and the Government is not doing

anything about it." Perhaps then the calamity of this whole situation will be brought home to the public.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: Some people would moan if their services were cut out.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: There will always be some objections.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: We would always be in strife if there was a possibility of closing a line.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: There will always be some objection to change. However, I am sure country people do not realize that every passenger who travelled on a country train last year cost the people \$16.02. The same principle is involved with inter-system coaching, that is, trains that travel to other States. Persons who go to the Adelaide railway station of an evening and watch the people catching the train to Melbourne must realize that each passenger has to be subsidized by the public of this State to the extent of \$8. One can therefore appreciate some of the shocking circumstances that surround this whole matter.

The Hon. T. M. Casey: You are advocating the abolition of all country rail services, are you?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: No.

The Hon. T. M. Casey: What else am I led to believe?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: First, the Government ought to take heed of the situation and cancel some passenger services.

The Hon. T. M. Casey: Some?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: That is correct. For example, where 158 trains have travelled over one track in this State for six months with an average of only 1.4 passengers on them, and where 54 of those trains have had no passengers on them at all, why will not the Minister—

The Hon. T. M. Casey: You'd cut them out?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: —agree that the service ought to be stopped? Of course, in his heart the Minister agrees, and he is not the only member of Cabinet who would agree, either. Although I realize that opinions change with time I wish to refer now to what was said some years ago. On February 16, 1968, when speaking to 200 people at the Whyalla Town Hall, the Premier said that the Government had firmly declared that it would make the railways system efficient and that it would not hesitate to undertake necessary economies where the need for them was clear and urgent. I recall, too, the Hon. Mr. Corcoran being reported in the press of May 8, 1968, as having said:

It is rather ludicrous to run uneconomic passenger services when people are just not using them.

One is therefore justified in asking what the Government is doing about the matter. In my view, it has completely lost control of the situation. I believe the Government sacked the former Railways Commissioner. Of course, one can only make such an assumption from the meagre information that is published in the press from time to time. I believe it was stated at that time that the Government was not going to appoint a new Railways Commissioner. Instead, it appointed an advisory board. However, it then realized that, under the Act, it could not lawfully get along without a Railways Commissioner, as a result of which one was appointed. This is only one example of what I term "a loss of control". The Government needs to introduce a businesslike approach in relation to the Railways Department. True, in 1968 the then Government closed uneconomic railway lines and, for the first time, as far as I can ascertain from previous reports by the Auditor-General, the total deficit decreased by \$417,571.

The Hon. T. M. Casey: That was due entirely to the closure of the lines, was it?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: No, but that was a significant example of action that helped efficiency and productivity throughout the whole railways system.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: How much extra was carried by the railways then?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: I have not got that figure. However, the Minister will find it hard to rebut the points I am making.

The Hon. T. M. Casey: We are trying to help you.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: The Minister is not trying to help me. If he wanted to help the situation, that help should be given through Cabinet. However, I think the Government is too afraid to do that because on this subject, as on most transport matters, it puts politics before everything else. The introduction of politics into this matter is causing the trouble and is the cause of the people of this State having to find enormous sums, such as those mentioned, to fund the huge deficit of the Railways Department at present.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: I think you are making a political speech.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: I am not meaning to be political but I think it is unconscionable for a Government to go on without disclosing its plans to tackle this problem; it is as simple as that. No Government should proceed unless it takes some action to reduce, to contain, or to endeavour to restrain all these losses.

I saw in the press only the other day a refusal to close a line; the Government is afraid of the circumstances. Dial-a-bus and this matter are only two examples that we can find. If we had more time and went through the Budget we could see, not in every department but here and there, matters that could be raised where there could be a saving of expenditure to the advantage of the public. Again, I stress the fact that politics has come too much into this matter of budgeting and financial control.

I heard another example the other night, which the Minister of Agriculture will be interested to hear, of the overplaying of politics and the need to watch closely the financial situation not only of departments but also of semi-government authorities, all of which are mentioned in this Auditor-General's Report. I am talking now of the South Australian Meat Corporation. I was at dinner the other night when the Premier cited the South Australian Meat Corporation as a shining example of employer-employee involvement. He stressed, as I recall his address, that it was an example of worker participation at its best; it was held out as a classic example of efficiency brought about by happy industrial relations.

There were some gentlemen in the room at the time who gave wry smiles because they wondered whether a price was being paid for those happy relationships and this efficiency. The efficiency I do not criticize, because I am awaiting the first report from this new authority, but to me there are some rather alarming facts involved because, since that night, I have obtained details of the increases that wage-earning and salaried officers in that authority have received. Seriously, I wonder whether or not this authority will come up with the financial result that the State expects to see.

The increases I refer to are these. On September 20, 1972, (I am dealing with award employees) tradesmen, engine drivers and boiler attendants received a \$3 a week increase. Two months later, on November 1, 1972, tradesmen, engine drivers and slaughtermen received over-award payments, which were increased to \$9.50 a week; and other

employees there received over-award increases of up to \$8 a week. There were proportionate increases for juveniles.

At the same time, service pay to all employees, other than juveniles, increased from \$4.25 after three years to \$4.50 after two years service. On May 30, 1973, there was a living wage increase to all employees (proportionate to juveniles) of 2 per cent plus \$2.50 a week. One month later, on June 20, 1973, tradesmen, engine drivers, boiler attendants, etc., received \$3 a week, which was the second part of the Metal Trades Award increase. A month later, on July 25, there was a general increase to all employees (proportionate to juveniles) except tradesmen, engine drivers, and boiler attendants, of \$9 a week. On the same date, July 25, tradesmen, engine drivers, boiler attendants, etc., received the South Australian Industrial Commission recommendation inducement allowance of \$3 a week.

Then a month later, on August 29, there was a 10 per cent increase in value of extra rates payments, this being involved with dirt money, etc. Salaried employees, on May 30 of this year, received a living wage increase to all salaried employees covered by industrial agreement of 2 per cent plus \$2.50 a week. Two months later, on July 25, the salaried employees received an all works classifications increase of \$9 a week. On August 27, 1973, all administration clerical positions covered by industrial agreement received an increase of 12 per cent.

I shall watch with great interest the figures of this corporation to see whether the Premier's claim that this new body is a shining example of employer-employee industrial relations and employer-employee involvement is true, or whether industrial harmony is being achieved within that corporation by simply granting the demands as they are made. It will be an interesting study to make.

Getting back to the Budget, I contend that its out-goings could be curtailed, to the benefit of the people of South Australia. If the Government of the day spent the people's money more wisely and made curtailments in many areas, that would benefit all South Australians financially. I repeat that political decisions are adversely affecting the people, and especially the financial situation of the Railways Department. I am not so naive as to claim that politics does not enter into all our decision-making to a certain extent. I want to be frank and honest about that but, when we have the situation that has been stressed today about the South Australian Railways, surely in the interests of the people it is time to forget politics and set about making a businesslike approach to the problem of the railways. I am certain the railway employees, both salaried and unionist, would respond to this kind of leadership and to firm decision-making. The Government need have no fears on that score.

I believe that efficiency would improve if the Government adopted a businesslike approach. Most South Australians would welcome such a change. Political involvement in all matters can be highlighted, too, when we look at the Highways Department figures in front of us, and the expenditure on freeways. This expenditure is disclosed in the Auditor-General's Report. We have heard much from the present Minister of Transport that he is completely against freeways and much from the Government of the day that it, too, is completely against freeways. That is the public image that is being projected into the arena; but in the year under review, 1972-73, the Auditor-General states in his report that the present Government spent \$4,210,000 on the acquisition of land for freeways.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: For "high-speed corridors".

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Yes; but the Government cannot put that over the Auditor-General. I looked for the topical term in this report. Thank heaven we have an Auditor-General! The amount spent in the year ended June 30, 1973, was 51 per cent more than was spent on freeways in the previous year. In 1971-72, the Government spent \$2,780,000 for freeway acquisition, and in the year before that (its first year in office, when we heard so much about freeways being out) the Government spent \$3,487,000 on acquiring land for freeway purposes.

On what the Auditor-General calls the central north-south freeway (and we all know that in general terms as being the freeway in the M.A.T.S. Report running west of the city and from north to south), \$3,225,000 was spent on acquisition for what the Government calls a high-speed transportation corridor.

On the North Adelaide Connector, the expressway which has been extremely worrying to all of us because in some respects it affects the north park lands of the city, even though the Metropolitan Adelaide Transportation Study recommendation was that most of it should go underground, the Government spent in the last year \$61,000 for acquisitions. These acquisitions for freeways continue unabated. In the year just past the sum increased by 51 per cent on that spent in the previous year, and all this goes on while a political smokescreen goes up to the effect that we have stopped freeways and we are no longer interested in them.

I was most interested to read the remarks on freeways of the colleague of the Minister in Canberra. Even there, we have a commonsense approach, on this point at least. On April 30 last, when he addressed the Australian Road Federation, Mr. Jones said:

The question of freeways is one which provokes strong feelings and we must strive to remain objective and not get carried away with emotion. We must remember two things. First, all freeways are not good from a community viewpoint. They may, for example, involve the destruction

of large parts of the inner city area where there is potentially good housing stock at cheap rentals and where there are existing and valuable communities. Used to excess freeways may not even solve the problem of traffic congestion but merely involve more cars in it. Second, all freeways are not bad from a community viewpoint. Freeways can play a vital role in the balanced transport system which is the lifeblood of the quality urban environment the Australian Government has pledged itself to provide.

I wholeheartedly agree with Mr. Jones; what a great pity the Minister in this State does not agree with him, instead of continually attacking freeways simply for political reasons.

I hope that at some stage the whole question of politics will abate on this matter, because a large sum of the people's money is involved. The people foot the bill in all these things, and one has a clear duty to think of the question of taxation and the money that must be taken from the people in these times of high prices, high taxation, and so on. That money must be spent with great care and with great wisdom; if it is not, the Government concerned must face the charge of being irresponsible.

I believe that is what is wrong with the present Government regarding the matters I have mentioned. There is no need for the taxation increases imposed by this Government. We must bear in mind that the increased taxation is doing little more than push up inflation. The Government should improve its record in this whole area. With good government, people can be helped to live happier and more contented lives, and surely it should be the aim of all members of Parliament to provide a climate in which people can live in happiness and contentment.

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT

At 4.7 p.m. the Council adjourned until Wednesday, September 26, at 2.15 p.m.