

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Tuesday, March 4, 1975

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

QUESTIONS

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATIONS

The Hon. C. R. STORY: I seek leave to make a statement before asking a question of the Minister of Health, representing the Minister of Transport.

Leave granted.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: I should like to ascertain how many applications have been received by the Road Traffic Board for exemptions from provisions of Road Traffic Act Regulation 602 (3) (a) passed on June 27, 1974, which provides:

Any trailer, the laden mass of which exceeds 10 tonnes, shall have brakes acting directly on all road wheels . . .

Secondly, of those applications, how many have been allowed and how many have been rejected and, thirdly, on present indications will the amended date for the commencement of the regulations (namely, July 1, 1975) allow sufficient time for the regulations to be complied with?

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

MEDIBANK SCHEME

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: It seems, from a statement issued by the Minister, in conjunction with his Canberra colleague, the Minister for Social Security, that the acceptance of the Medibank scheme relies on a hospital cost-sharing arrangement between this Government and the Commonwealth Government. Can the Minister inform the Council of the nature of the cost-sharing agreement that has been made between this Government and the Commonwealth Government? At present, the State Government supports subsidised hospitals in South Australia to the extent of about \$2 daily for each bed; this covers subsidy payments to hospitals and payments made in relation to pensioner beds. Can the Minister also say what increase, under the Medibank proposals, he expects to occur in subsidy payments made to subsidised hospitals?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: The agreement has not yet been signed. However, the sum of money made available to subsidised hospitals that agree to join the scheme will not be reduced. The cost sharing will be on a 50 per cent basis and will include maintenance costs but not capital expenditure. Therefore, subsidised hospitals will in future be better off than they are now.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: How much do you intend to pay to subsidised hospitals under the new scheme? By how much will their subsidy be increased?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: I do not know what the increased subsidy will be. However, the cost of running a hospital will be shared by the Australian and State Governments. There is no reason why the cost of running hospitals will be more than it is now. Instead of hospitals receiving money directly from patients, money will be paid to them from the Hospitals Department for the occupancy of those

beds. There is no difference, as far as the patient is concerned; the cost will be shared equally between the Australian Government and the State Government.

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE: In the case of a person who goes into hospital, under the provisions of the Medibank scheme would he be entitled to choose his own practitioner or would a practitioner be allotted to him?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: The position would remain as at present. If a person goes into a public hospital he is not entitled to his own practitioner. A person who goes into the Royal Adelaide Hospital does not get his own private and personal practitioner. If the honourable member is referring to country hospitals where there is only one doctor, of course he will get the same doctor. The position will be no different from that at present applying in public hospitals. A patient in a public ward at the Royal Adelaide Hospital does not get his own doctor.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Can the Minister say, first, what is the average cost of a standard ward bed in subsidised and community hospitals in South Australia; secondly, what sum of money will be needed from the State Treasury to pay the excess over \$16 a bed day to be provided by Medibank?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: Obviously, I am unable to give those figures at this stage, but I shall be happy to get them for the honourable member.

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: My question follows that of the Hon. Mr. DeGaris. I understand that subsidised hospitals, in the terminology of many of our Acts, enjoy the status of public hospitals. I understand, too, that the Minister, in his public statements, has said that charges for intermediate and private ward accommodation provided in South Australian hospitals would be much reduced because of financial assistance being provided by the Commonwealth. Can the Minister say, first, whether subsidised hospitals are included in this proposal as public hospitals; secondly, if reductions in charges in intermediate and private wards in public hospitals are to be made, how soon will such reductions be made available?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: Obviously, there is some confusion on the part of the honourable member. I have said that charges for the present scheme should be at a reduced rate. If a person wishes to take out private insurance to cover himself for an intermediate or private ward, those charges should be at a reduced rate because, if a patient goes into a private ward, he will still receive \$16 a day off the account for a private ward. So, it is obvious that, if the funds do not have to pay \$112 a week (which sum is to be found by the Australian Government), the funds should not charge what they are charging at present for coverage. It is the hospital benefits fund charges that I said should be reduced as a result of the payments being made toward private hospital costs. Subsidised hospitals are not complete public hospitals.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: They are, under the Act.

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: Then, why do they charge for private wards and intermediate wards? There will be no charge at all at public hospitals, but this will not be so in subsidised hospitals when the scheme comes into operation. Subsidised hospitals will still have intermediate and private wards. There is no alteration whatever in connection with payment: the only alteration relates to how the payment is made.

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE: What would be the position of a person admitted to a private hospital? Under the present scheme he would be reimbursed under his private medical insurance, and he could have his own medical practitioner. Will he be reimbursed for ward payments, and will he be able to have his own medical practitioner?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: The only person who will be admitted to a private hospital is the person who wants to go to a private hospital. So, it is obvious that, if he goes to a private hospital, he will go to the hospital recommended by his medical practitioner, and he will have the practitioner's services while he is there.

The Hon. R. A. Geddes: Will that private hospital get a subsidy, too?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: It will be \$16 a day for that patient. So, if a private hospital's charges are now \$86 a day (I do not think they are as high as that) the patient will have to pay only \$70 a day.

The Hon. J. C. Burdett: What about the doctors?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: The patients will be covered under the Medibank scheme. It will be a matter of what arrangements the doctors come to in connection with their method of receiving payment—from the hospital, from the Government, or directly from the patient. If doctors require payments directly from patients, the patients will be able to claim in connection with the amount paid for their medical expenses. So, there are two different set-ups, and it is a matter of who pays.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: Would the Minister agree to a fee-for-service basis for payment to medical practitioners attached to hospitals, or will the Government insist on salaries?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: In country hospitals it has already been agreed that the doctors will be paid on a fee-for-service basis. In the metropolitan area negotiations are at present proceeding. We are not anxious to have a fee-for-service arrangement with the doctors.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: How long will that arrangement last?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: That is not in the agreement. The Leader gave the wrong information the other day. We are endeavouring to negotiate with the doctors so that they will supply their services by contract. It is definitely not on a fee-for-service basis.

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: I thank the Minister for the information he has given to the Council today, as I believe from the questions I have received from the public and from the questions asked on radio that the public generally is confused about the proposed medical scheme, as it seems much different from the variations that have been suggested over the years. Following the Minister's reply to my question concerning subsidised hospitals, I still seek further information. The Minister said that \$16 a day for each bed will be made available to all hospitals through this scheme, and I understand that until the introduction of this scheme the Commonwealth Government has already made a certain subsidy available to supplement the medical benefits scheme now existing. I now ask the Minister two further questions. First, as \$16 a day is to be made available as a subsidy on all beds in all South Australian hospitals, will the other existing subsidy be discontinued, and secondly, for those people who wish to pay their own way

and carry on subscribing to a medical benefits scheme, will their subscriptions still attract an income tax concession?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: In answering the second question first, yes, contributions to hospital benefit funds will still be an income tax deduction. Concerning the \$16 a day, I make it clear that the subsidised hospitals will possibly get even more than \$16 a day because, if it costs a hospital, say, \$50 a day for each bed, then the subsidised hospital will receive \$50. It is only a matter of who is paying. The Commonwealth Government will be providing \$16 to all recognised hospitals as a funding amount with which they can carry on.

The Hon. G. J. Gilfillan: Will this apply to intermediate and private rooms as well?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: Yes. The \$16 will be the amount paid to private patients wanting to go into private care. The \$16 a day will not be the minimum amount that a hospital will receive. They will get the full cost of running the hospital.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: In public wards.

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: That is so. The \$16 applies to a reduction in a private patient's account. All public wards will be on a 50 per cent sharing basis, and it could involve \$50 a day if that is the cost.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: I should like to ask two further questions regarding this scheme. Did the Minister recently make a joint statement with Mr. Hayden, the Commonwealth Minister for Social Security, to the effect that, following agreement on the Medibank scheme, the Commonwealth Government would provide \$20 000 000 in 1975-76 for expenditure in South Australian hospitals? Secondly, can the Minister say whether, if South Australia had refused to enter into the agreement regarding Medibank, the \$20 000 000 would still have been made available for hospital expenditure in South Australia?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: The State Government believes that, as a result of the Australian Government's entry into this scheme, it will be saved \$20 000 000.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: I seek leave to make a statement before asking the Minister of Health a question. Leave granted.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: In a letter written to the non-profit and charitable hospitals, the Director-General of Medical Services said:

It is considered that at least 70 per cent of all hospital beds in the Adelaide area should be available to standard ward patients. This would imply a need for approximately 300 beds in the non-profit charitable and religious hospitals to be made available for this purpose. This would enable metropolitan Government public hospitals to admit a correspondingly greater number of non-pensioner patients seeking free standard ward care.

Can the Minister explain that statement: how can more beds be made available if only 300 are moved out into other beds? Secondly, if 70 per cent of all available beds in the metropolitan area are under the Medibank scheme, will it mean that 70 per cent of patients in the metropolitan area will not have a choice of doctor?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: Let us get this matter of the choice of doctors straightened out. If a patient wants to go into a private hospital and to have a choice of a doctor while he is in hospital, he can do so.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: But there will be only 30 per cent of the beds—

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: Not just 30 per cent at all. If a patient wants to go into a private hospital and to retain his usual doctor, there is no doubt that he will continue to take out the extra cover with a hospital

benefits fund. The beds that will become available as a result of moving pensioners into non-profit, charitable and religious hospitals will be used mainly by people who need semi-nursing bed accommodation, and who are generally in hospital longer than people requiring medical care. With 70 per cent of public beds in the metropolitan area being under the Medibank scheme, there will be no delay in persons getting into hospital. The question of medical practitioners is entirely a matter that is up to the patient.

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: Under the Medibank scheme, will the Commonwealth Government still subsidise medical funds on the doctors' charges made to patients in private hospitals and who have a doctor of their own choice?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: I am not conversant with what the Commonwealth Government is at present subsidising. If it is paying subsidies in this respect, I am not sure what they are. Does the honourable member mean subsidising the payments?

The Hon. J. C. Burdett: Subsidising the fund for medical care.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: They are not subsidising the fund. They are paying a certain amount to the patient, and the patient pays the rest.

The Hon. J. C. Burdett: It's the same thing.

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: If I am paying into a fund and it is costing me \$6 a week, I am not being subsidised by the Commonwealth Government. I am not receiving \$4 from the Commonwealth Government: it is costing me \$6 flat. The Commonwealth Government will continue to subsidise hospitals on a 50 per cent basis. Indeed, it will subsidise payments to the extent of \$16 a day and, if a patient goes into a private hospital, the subsidy will still be paid.

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: In the case of country subsidised or community hospitals, will the standard ward patient still receive free X-ray, physiotherapy, optical, and other treatment that is already provided?

The Hon. A. J. Shard: Physiotherapy treatment is not provided in this way at present.

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: If physiotherapy cover is required, one must pay extra for it. If one wants to continue having physiotherapy cover in future, one will have to take out that type of insurance with a medical benefits fund.

The Hon. R. A. Geddes: Medibank will not look after that?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: No, it does not extend the service. One does not get physiotherapy treatment in this way now unless one is in a public ward.

The Hon. R. A. Geddes: What about X-rays?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: Yes, X-rays will be subsidised on that basis.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: I seek the Minister's advice. From July 1, which is the suggested date for the scheme to be implemented, will the Minister advise people in South Australia to continue with their present hospital and medical insurance cover, or is he completely satisfied and can he give an assurance that satisfactory and adequate medical and hospital coverage for all medical, hospital and paramedical services will be available under the Medibank scheme?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: In no Medibank scheme have 100 per cent of the people given up their medical benefits. In Queensland, where free hospitalisation has

been provided, 50 per cent of the people have continued to be covered by insurance.

The Hon. M. B. Dawkins: I am asking the Minister what he thinks about it.

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: If the honourable member gives me an opportunity I will tell him what I think the position is.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: I am not likely to dodge the issue. I think I have been very good to members opposite. Let me inform honourable members that, as I shall be speaking tomorrow on the motion moved last week by the Hon. Mr. DeGaris, I think I could include that reply in my remarks then. I am being as open about the matter as I possibly can be, and I do not like the implication of the Hon. Mr. Dawkins that I am attempting to dodge the issue; I am not. This affects everyone in South Australia, and everyone is entitled to know about it. However, if members opposite are going to try to shoot me down, they can go right ahead, and they will get their answers tomorrow. I am trying to assist honourable members, because they have had the A.M.A. on to them for some time now, and the pressure has been building up. Members are coming down in droves and saying, "Toss the Minister on this one."

The Hon. A. J. Shard: They are not tossing you; you are doing all right.

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: I know; it is members opposite who are being upset.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: Keep on upsetting them.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: If any person in the community is not satisfied in his mind that all services will be available to him, I suggest that he should continue with his hospital insurance to see how the position settles down or until he becomes clear in his mind that the services are available.

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: I seek leave to make a brief explanation prior to directing a question to the Minister of Health.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: Following my previous question, as I understand the position at present, if I engage a general practitioner (or a specialist, if I go through a general practitioner), whether for treatment out of hospital or for treatment in hospital, I present the bill to the medical benefits fund to which I belong. I get back a cheque made up of two components: one component is a portion contributed by the fund, and the other a portion contributed by the Commonwealth Government. Under Medibank, if I go into a private hospital and have a specialist of my own choice whom I have consulted through a general practitioner in the same way, and if I present my bill to my medical benefits fund in the same way, will the Commonwealth Government still furnish the funds it provides at present?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: Now the honourable member is shifting a little. It will not be providing money to the funds; it will be paying the patient 85 per cent of his medical charges. This is what Medibank is all about. There will be no need to be in a fund to receive medical benefits, because the Commonwealth Government will be paying 85 per cent. The subsidy will still be provided and, what is more, the Commonwealth Government will be paying 85 per cent of the medical costs and the patient will be expected to pay 15 per cent, with a maximum of \$5.

That means that, if the account is for about \$50 and the difference between 85 per cent and \$50 is more than \$5, the patient will pay only \$5.

The Hon. J. C. Burdett: That will still apply?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: Yes, that is what the scheme is all about.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: I seek leave to make a short statement prior to directing a question to the Minister of Health.

Leave granted.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Following my earlier question regarding the \$20 000 000 and Medibank, can the Minister say whether he made a joint statement to the effect that the additional \$20 000 000 would be available to South Australia if and when South Australia entered the agreement on Medibank with the Commonwealth?

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: This is a payment by the Commonwealth?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: That is right. Can the Minister also inform me whether, had he not agreed with the Commonwealth to enter Medibank, we would have obtained that same sum for hospital expenditure in South Australia? I understood the Minister to say in his reply that, in effect, the \$20 000 000 is what South Australia would save as a result of entering Medibank. Putting it another way, I understood him to say that the benefit to South Australia of entering Medibank would be the equivalent of \$20 000 000. In the press statement issued by both Ministers was a clear statement, as follows:

Under the agreement the Australian Government will provide an additional \$20 000 000 in 1975-76 for expenditure on hospitals by the South Australian Government.

Provided that my understanding of what the Minister said is correct, would he not agree that the press statement was blatant misrepresentation?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: No. A statement was issued on behalf of the two Ministers. The sum of \$20 000 000, as I have said before (and I believe that this is the \$20 000 000 that the honourable member is talking about), is the benefit that will accrue to the State as the result of our joining the Medibank scheme, as this sum will be available to spend on extended facilities.

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: Specialised charitable non-profit hospitals, such as Ashford Community Hospital and St. Andrews Hospital, often have expensive operating theatres for surgical patients. If they are forced to take geriatric patients under the Medibank scheme, will the hospitals' running costs not be increased and will there then not be under-usage of their sophisticated equipment?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: Honourable members are now getting around to thinking that there will not be any private patients. Honourable members originally thought that the public did not want the scheme. We want the hospitals to state how many beds they are willing to make available for pensioners. If the hospitals are now operating at only a 70 per cent daily average bed occupancy, there will be an opportunity for them to provide the other 30 per cent of the beds for pensioners. So, the hospitals will achieve a greater usage of beds. I assume that the hospitals will state how many beds they are willing to allocate under the scheme.

The Hon. B. A. CHATTERTON: Some doctors charge patients only what they will get back from the health funds. Will it be necessary for the patients to pay the 15 per cent that is not covered by the Medibank scheme if the doctors use direct billing to Medibank?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: The patient would not have to pay the 15 per cent if his doctor agreed to direct billing. The Australian Government arrived at the figure of 85 per cent because it believed that doctors would be saved 15 per cent as a result of direct billing. The Australian Government has therefore made its offer to the doctors. If the doctors will not have a bar of it, it is the doctors, in effect, who will be making the patients pay the 15 per cent.

DENTISTS

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: I seek leave to make an explanation prior to asking a question of the Minister of Health.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: I was somewhat surprised to read on Sunday that two dentists in South Australia had been receiving unemployment relief recently. The Minister knows of my continuing interest in the problems at the Royal Adelaide Hospital Dental Department where, I understand, the waiting lists have not decreased in any way; so, it was surprising to read that these dentists had been receiving unemployment benefits. Can the Minister say whether it would be possible to have people such as those employed at the R.A.H. under the Regional Employment Development scheme or whether he could employ such people to ensure that the waiting lists are decreased? Although the Medibank scheme has always been described as total medical care, I know of one example of a person in a country town where dental care is not available under the scheme that operates at the Dental Hospital. This person has a dental problem that is causing medical problems; he has an infected mouth as a result of bad teeth. He can have the mouth treated under the existing scheme, but he cannot have anything done about his dental problem unless he comes to Adelaide, which he is unable to do because of his immobility. Can the Minister say whether Medibank will cover such problems and whether people with a problem that requires dental help will be covered under the Medibank scheme?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: No, the scheme does not include dental treatment, unless the dental problem is the result of an accident or something of that nature and the person is admitted to hospital, any more than there is at present any cover for dental care. Regarding the unemployed dentists, I do not know who they were or how this came about. There is a shortage of dentists in the country. It is the same old story, namely, the distribution of services, and most dentists want to remain in the city. I do not know how there could be any unemployed dentists, because people report to me that they have a long wait before they can get an appointment to see their private dentist. Regarding the Government's employing these so-called two unemployed dentists, as I have pointed out previously, the Dental Hospital is a teaching hospital; it is not there for the sole purpose of extracting teeth. In those circumstances, we do not think that we will be employing the two dentists.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD: I seek leave to make a statement before asking the Minister of Health a question.

Leave granted.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD: I was as surprised as anyone else to read on the weekend that two South Australian dentists were unemployed and drawing social service benefits. I realise that there may be specific reasons why these two dentists prefer to stay on the dole rather than seek employment elsewhere. Will the Minister therefore inquire regarding the authenticity of the press report and, if it is authentic, will he inquire why the dentists concerned are receiving the dole?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: I shall be pleased to obtain a reply to the honourable member's question, because the report did not sound right to me. However, I am not saying that the report was incorrect. The fact remains that some people go on the dole for various reasons, and these two dentists may not have wanted to continue working. I will try to obtain whatever information I can for the honourable member.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The Hon. B. A. CHATTERTON: As some honourable members have received representations from certain organisations about keeping this State's schools secular, and as a result of seeing *Monday Conference* last evening, during which it was said that representations would be made by concerned citizens, will the Minister of Agriculture ask the Minister of Education to make available in the Parliamentary Library the curriculum and various project material, together with other relevant information, so that honourable members may inform themselves of the facts of the case, thus obtaining a much better understanding of the issues involved?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I will refer the honourable member's question to my colleague and see what can be done along the lines the honourable member has suggested.

POPULATION GROWTH

The Hon. B. A. CHATTERTON: I seek leave to make a short statement before directing a question to the Chief Secretary, representing the Premier.

Leave granted.

The Hon. B. A. CHATTERTON: In the *Advertiser* of March 1 a news article states, in part:

South Australia's population increase rate is said to be below zero population growth. And our fertility apparently is declining. A study of population trends in the past three years by the South Australian Right to Life Association's research committee has found this.

The news item continues to suggest that the net reproduction rate in South Australia is now less than one. Will the Chief Secretary ask the Premier to obtain the correct information in this regard? The Borrie report, just issued by the Australian Government, gives a completely different set of figures showing that the net reproduction rate for South Australia is not less than one, and it does not predict that it will be at the rate of one until some years into the future. It would be most useful for all honourable members if the correct position could be made clear.

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: I shall get a report for the honourable member and bring it down as soon as it is available.

CORNISH FESTIVAL

The Hon. JESSIE COOPER: Has the Chief Secretary a reply to my question regarding a subsidy to the Cornish Festival for bringing out two Cornish wrestlers?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: The scheme proposed for the Cornish Festival is considered to be a good one and is likely to be of value both to the festival and to the pre-festival publicity. Nevertheless, it is considered that

it is premature and should be followed up after the festival has been established better than at present. The organisers of the festival have been informed that negotiations should continue with a view to the wrestlers attending in 1977, and that further consideration will be given to their proposal after the success of the second festival is known.

NURIOOTPA SCHOOLS

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: Has the Minister of Agriculture a reply from the Minister of Education to my question of February 20 about Nuriootpa schools?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: It is not possible at this stage to say when the proposed music suite for Nuriootpa High School can be constructed. The school has been advised to resubmit its request for consideration for the 1975-76 priority list. Until all submissions have been received and considered, priorities, which will be on the basis of urgency of need, cannot be allocated.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: I seek leave to make an explanation prior to asking another question of the Minister of Agriculture, representing the Minister of Education.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: I draw the Minister's attention to the fact that, although he has been good enough to give me a reply, it contains no reference to what is regarded by many people as the more urgent part of my original question, namely, the replacement of Nuriootpa Primary School. As I have said before, this is an urgent need, so I ask the Minister to obtain the balance of the reply for me.

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I will refer the honourable member's question to my colleague and obtain a reply.

PRISONS

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: I seek leave to make a statement before asking a question of the Chief Secretary.

Leave granted.

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: As the Chief Secretary and other honourable members know, many of us have been concerned about what we consider to be the premature closing of Gladstone Gaol. The Mitchell report has been quoted extensively in connection with activities of the Correctional Services Department. The Mitchell report states that Gladstone Gaol should be phased out. However, rather than being phased out, it is almost being frantically pushed out of existence. Instead of a phasing out over several years, as resistance among the staff at the prison has grown the period has been shortened to 12 months and now I understand to June of this year. This is causing much concern in the district. One of the reasons given is associated with the need for economy and the need to implement the Mitchell report. The report recommends the adoption of pre-release employment as part of rehabilitation. Some people will argue that, if a person is eligible for pre-release employment, he should be eligible for conditional parole. The Mitchell report also recommends that, where pre-release employment is taking place, the prisoners concerned should not be housed with long-term security prisoners: they should be in separate quarters. The report also suggests that Adelaide Gaol could be upgraded to serve this purpose. Further, the report recommends that dormitory accommodation for Aborigines be provided at Port Augusta prison to help in their rehabilitation. The report states that there should be provision for high-security accommodation at Port Lincoln and Mount Gambier prisons to handle prisoners requiring maximum security on a short-term basis, and that Yatala Labour Prison should be the maximum security prison,

with a maximum of 400 prisoners. Gladstone Gaol is being phased out almost frantically, and pressure has been put on the officers there to apply for transfer elsewhere, yet there is no plan, as far as I know, to recommend expenditure of large sums on putting into effect the building programme that must of necessity take place if the report is to be implemented. Because it could be some years between the first reference of the project to the Public Works Committee and the completion of the project, can the Chief Secretary say whether there is anything in the pipeline in relation to upgrading the prisons to give effect to the Mitchell report?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: Expenditure in connection with the Correctional Services Department has been considered by Cabinet. The first priority agreed to by Cabinet was that a new remand centre should be built. That is the first building proposal, and it is urgently required. The area we looked at first was Adelaide Gaol. It was recommended that what is now called the new building (which is about 100 years old, anyway) be demolished and a remand centre erected there; that was the first proposal. As a result of the Government's attitude to buildings in the park lands, and in view of the National Trust's ideas on Adelaide Gaol, it was decided that, before a final decision was made on where the remand centre be located, efforts should be made to find a suitable area in the metropolitan area close to the courts and to the lawyers so that difficulty in interviewing people on remand would be no greater than it need be. Unfortunately, we have not been able to find a suitable area. Further investigations are to be made, including the land the department owns in the Yatala area. I hope that a decision will be made soon. The remand centre is urgently required, and it is necessary that the proposal be referred to the Public Works Committee so that advance planning can be made for capital expenditure.

MARGARINE

The Hon. C. R. STORY: The Minister of Agriculture informed me recently that Agricultural Council had agreed to substantial increases in each State's table margarine quota. I understand that he asked for an increase from about 712 tonnes to 2 100 tonnes, the figure suggested during the debate and the subsequent conference of managers when the Margarine Act was amended in November, 1974. It was further agreed at the conference that the Opposition would support an increase to bring South Australia's quota for the manufacture of table margarine in this State to the Australian average per capita consumption, which, I calculate, is about 2.72 kg a head. This would allow the Minister to approach the council for an increase to, say, 3 000 tonnes to be manufactured in South Australia. At present, only one licence is current to manufacture margarine in South Australia, namely, that held by Unilever. Will the Minister seriously consider issuing more licences to margarine manufacturers so that a competitive situation may be created? Also, can he say whether a start has been made on drafting the new margarine legislation agreed on when the matter was last before Parliament?

The PRESIDENT: I point out that it will be necessary to move for an extension of the time allowed for Question Time.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS (Leader of the Opposition) moved:

Standing Orders be so far suspended as to enable Question Time to be extended to 3.30 p.m.

Motion carried.

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: The reply to the first part of the honourable member's question is "Yes". The reply to the second part of the question is that I am now negotiating with the Secretary of the Agricultural Council (Mr. Power), who queried my statement at Agricultural Council recently that, in view of the proposed 50 per cent increase for Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, and Western Australia, and an increase from 600 t to 1 300 t for Tasmania, we would increase our quota by about 50 per cent. What the honourable member has said is correct, namely, that, during the course of discussions between the managers of both Chambers, it was agreed that Parliament would adopt the attitude that we would take an average of the per capita consumption in this State. I have now compiled figures in my office and I hope to have further discussions with Mr. Power to put him in the picture so that we can introduce legislation to bring us up to date with what the conference managers agreed to last year. I understand (and Mr. Power rightly pointed out) that the other Ministers took the 50 per cent to be based on figures as at last November, which was before we increased our quota, but I think that they are trying to pull the wool over our eyes, and I do not want South Australia to miss out.

FORESTRY

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: Since 1873, South Australia has developed significant softwood forests, one of which is situated in the Mount Crawford area. I believe that the Government must be facing a problem with regard to the use of the timber stocks there. As the Government has undoubtedly formulated a policy with regard to the use of these timber stands, can the Minister say whether the Government intends to develop sawmilling capacity for these forests?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: As Minister of Forests, I believe it would be in the interests of forestry for the department to engage in sawmilling operations in the Adelaide Hills. We have done well in the past in the South-East, and I see nothing wrong with developing sawmilling activities in the Hills. I think it would be a step in the right direction, and I hope that we can do this soon.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I thank the Minister for his reply. However, has the Government considered whether it would be economically sensible for it to try to interest private enterprise to establish sawmilling operations in that area? I believe that if private enterprise conducted this activity it would be more efficient, particularly in the industrial field. Secondly, if the Government takes the steps necessary to build a sawmill complex at Mount Crawford, what policy would it follow regarding existing enterprises already established and relying on supplies under licence from Government forest areas?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I do not agree with the first part of the Leader's question, when he said that private enterprise could work in this field more equitably than could the department—

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: More efficiently.

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: —or more efficiently. At the sawmills at Mount Gambier, Nangwarry and Mount Burr, I think that the Woods and Forests Department produces the best timber in Australia, and at a rate that is more than competitive with those of other sawmilling activities.

Moreover, as the proceeds of this activity go into general revenue, it is a most profitable activity for the State. The department is inundated with orders from other States for its timber, because it is superior to any other timber produced in Australia. I believe we can engage in the same sort of activity in the Adelaide Hills. I am now considering what amount of timber would be required to go through a mill, if one is established in the Adelaide Hills, to make it an economic proposition. Until I have figures in relation to that, I am unable to follow that up any further. However, the Leader must realise that we are a competitor. Surely members opposite do not for one moment want to stop competition. We have proved that in the South-East, and we hope to do it in the Adelaide Hills. After all, it is our timber, and if we can compete competitively with private enterprise there is no reason why we should not do so. I hope that we will be able to do that in the near future.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: As I have one final question to ask the Minister, I seek leave to make an explanation before directing my question to him.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I am pleased to hear the Minister say that the Government does not intend to stop competition. That is the crux of the question I have directed to him. However, there are several ways in which sawmilling activities could be established in the Mount Crawford area. Such activities could begin by the establishment of a Government sawmill, by the establishment of a Government sawmill with licences provided to the private enterprise sector to maintain its sawmilling activities, or by the Government engaging in the takeover of existing sawmilling facilities. If the last course of action is foreseen (that the Government will take over an existing private enterprise mill in the area), will the Minister assure me that the Government will pay a competitive price for that mill in line with the price that would be paid for the mill by private enterprise if it sought to take it over?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I can assure the Leader that the price we would pay would be a reasonable price. I do not say it would be a competitive—

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: I said "competitive".

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I do not want the Leader to trap me on that. The question is what the Leader means by "competitive price".

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: You used the word. What do you mean by it?

The Hon. C. M. Hill: Reasonable to whom?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: The Leader wanted to know whether I would offer a competitive price, if such a sale were transacted, in comparison with the price private enterprise would be willing to offer. I do not know what private enterprise would be willing to offer. There are ways and means, and the Leader knows this. There are ways and means by which people can put a certain price on a manufacturing business, or on a sawmill in this case, and they can call it something quite different in order to obtain a tax evasion. This is common in business practice, and the Government will not be a party to that type of transaction. If the Leader wants to pursue the matter any further he is entitled to do so, but that is the situation.

MALVERN INTERSECTIONS

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Has the Minister of Health, representing the Minister of Transport, a reply to my recent question concerning the traffic arrangements in the Malvern and Fullarton area?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: My colleague states that the Road Traffic Board prepared the plan after consultation and agreement with the city of Unley. It was based on recommendations made in the Report on Road Safety prepared by the South Australian Government Committee of Inquiry into Road Safety in November, 1970. Plans of the scheme were displayed in the city of Unley's offices, and a brochure was enclosed with the council's rate notices for 1974. Ratepayers were invited to visit the council offices to view the scheme and to discuss the proposals. Ratepayers who viewed the scheme were generally pleased that the scheme was to be implemented. The aim of the scheme is to reduce the amount of through traffic using residential streets as short cuts, to reduce the accident risk by converting intersections into road junctions, and to reduce noise and vehicle exhaust pollution in a predominantly residential area. No time limit has been set for the scheme, but its effects will be closely examined to ascertain whether any modifications are necessary.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT: PRISON OFFICERS

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: I wish to comment on publicity last week concerning the situation between prisoners, prison officers at the Yatala Labour Prison, and the Department of Correctional Services. As recent press comment has contributed to a number of misunderstandings, I believe it essential that these misunderstandings be cleared up here and now. For instance, there was a recent example of a newspaper headline announcing a "New deal for prisoners"; that phrase was not used by me. A journalist rang me for information regarding an article which had appeared in the press based on a letter from an ex-prisoner. I gave him information regarding a new Prisons Act which the Government hopes to introduce into Parliament this year. The new Act is simply a continuing process in the introduction of many of the recommendations of the Mitchell report. Some of the recommendations have already been introduced. It is a continuing process and not a situation I would describe as a new deal.

I must also comment further on that letter in the newspaper which quoted reports of prisoners being lazy, rebellious, and violent. Such statements make the prisoner/prison officer relationship strained and difficult. Officers undertake training courses prior to commencing duty and during their careers, and all courses stress man management and principles of human behaviour. The interest and constructive response by officers indicates that their interest lies in these methods of management rather than oppressive and retaliatory measures. The long history of comparative peace that has existed at Yatala indicates that most officers are well aware of potential institutional situations and handle both the inmates and the procedures in a competent and humane manner.

I wish now to refer to allegations made by three prisoners in court yesterday. It was alleged that prison officers at Yatala had ill treated prisoners who had been involved in an assault on a prison officer during an attempted escape. I intend to have a complete investigation of these allegations. Discussions have been taking place between the Attorney-General and me regarding the form of these investigations.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL
PLANNING AND RESEARCH BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from February 27. Page 2606.)

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT (Southern): I support the second reading with considerable reluctance. I listened with interest to the two previous speakers, the Hon. Jessie Cooper and the Hon. G. J. Gilfillan, and I agreed with what they said. Last night I listened to the television debate on *Monday Conference* dealing with religious education in schools under the Education Act. Indeed, that was the debate referred to by the Hon. Mr. Chatterton earlier today. On that programme I heard the President of the Keep Our State Schools Secular organisation say that he feared that under the programme providing one half-hour's religious instruction a week there would be an unduly Christian bias. I recalled what the Hon. Jessie Cooper had said, that under the present system of instruction in ordinary subjects in schools, especially in colleges of advanced education, there is an anti-Christian, or at least a non-Christian, bias. It did not seem to me that there could be in that half-hour portion of the curriculum for children in State schools on a subject of religious education a possibility of a Christian bias. I did not think that it would do much harm. It seems to me that the Bill is unnecessary: I cannot see any need for it or for the council that is to be set up under it. I say this despite having studied the Karmel report referred to in the Minister's second reading explanation. I do not believe that the report necessarily related to the type of combined council referred to in the Bill. In saying that I consider the Bill and the council to be unnecessary, I refer to clause 14 (1) of the Bill, which refers to the powers and functions of the council. It provides:

The council shall have the following powers and functions:

- (a) to conduct, or commission the conduct of, such investigations and research as the council considers desirable with respect to the provision of educational services and the use of educational resources;
 - (b) to promote the development, rationalisation and co-ordination of educational services;
 - (c) to establish and maintain a library and to accumulate statistical evidence relevant to the functions of the council;
 - (d) to publish reports, papers or documents relating to educational planning and research;
- and
- (e) to perform any other functions that may, in the opinion of the council, be reasonably incidental to the foregoing.

These things could already be done under the existing administration without the Bill and without the council.

The Hon. G. J. Gilfillan: They probably are now.

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: They very likely are. I am sure there has been no failure in this area, and I do not know what abuse or problem this Bill is setting out to remedy. It seems to me that the Education Department, the colleges of advanced education, universities and so on will be able to carry out these functions by request, of the Government if necessary, and I have no doubt that if they set out to do this the views and co-operation of such people as the Director of Catholic Education, the independent schools, and so on, would be readily available to them and could easily be obtained.

As I consider that the Bill and the setting up of the council are unnecessary, I ask what are the real motives for introducing the Bill. What was the real reason for setting up the council? Where a Bill is clearly necessary

and remedies some evil or provides something that has not existed previously, and where the Minister's explanation is credible, one does not look for ulterior motives. However, when there is no real need for this Bill, and the Minister's explanation of it is not credible, one wonders what is really behind it.

This Government and the Commonwealth Government have spoken much about open government, community involvement in government, and participatory government. This Bill shows that this talk is largely a sham. It is a subterfuge for the Government's doing what it wants to do and what it has every intention of doing, anyway, and claiming that the community was involved. As the Hon. Mrs. Cooper said, the majority of the council to be set up by the Bill is to be appointed on the Minister's recommendation, and the council will comprise people who will have regard to the Minister's opinion.

It seems likely that the majority of members will be people of the same educational, moral, social, and perhaps political persuasion, as the Government. What will happen is that the council will consider matters; the majority representation will favour the Government's view; the views of, say, the Director of Catholic Education, vice-chancellors of universities, representatives of independent schools, and so on, will all be swallowed up in the majority opinion; and the Government will do what it wanted to do, anyway. If the Director of Catholic Education and the other people to whom I have referred subsequently complain, it will be said, "Well, you had your say in the council. This is participatory government and democracy, and you can hardly expect to be heard again." In fact, instead of giving a greater role to the various parts of the community concerned with education, a lesser role will be allotted to them. At present, if the Director of Catholic Education, university vice-chancellors, and so on, wish to protest, they can make an effective protest and expect to be heard. If those people protest in future, it will be said, "Well, you were represented on the council. You can hardly complain now, because you have had your say." The voice of the independent interests will, in effect, be lessened and not increased. Protests will be stifled, because it will be said that these interests have already been heard and that they have had their say.

The Hon. R. A. Geddes: When you say that they have already had their say, you mean that their representatives on the council have had their say.

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: That is so. It will be said that they have had their representatives on the council and that the matter has been democratically decided. However, in the first place the Government has taken good care to ensure that the people who will have the same views as it has will be in the majority on the council. This is a subterfuge for a stifling of independent criticism and protests, instead of being what it pretends to be, giving real involvement to independent views in educational matters.

Because I can see no real purpose in the Bill (I cannot see how it will achieve anything), I can only conclude that its function will be to put a rubber stamp on whatever the Government wants to do. One thing that I have noticed when looking through the Bill is that the only clause which says anything at all about the powers and functions of the council is clause 14, which is a short clause. It is the only substantive clause in the Bill. The remaining 18 clauses merely set up the procedure for electing the council, and relate to the remuneration of its members, and how it will conduct its business. There are also financial and other ancillary provisions. This is one of the worst examples I

have seen of the tail wagging the dog. There is only one clause in the Bill that has any guts in it. For the reasons I have given, I support the Bill, although with much reluctance.

The Hon. C. M. HILL secured the adjournment of the debate.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL (CITY PLAN)

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from February 27. Page 2607.)

The Hon. C. M. HILL (Central No. 2): Honourable members will recall that the City of Adelaide Development Committee came into being as a result of an amendment to the Planning and Development Act in 1972. The Bill was debated at length in the Council in August and September of that year. Under the Bill, the proposed committee could, by proclamation, go out of existence (if I can use that phrase) prior to the date that was fixed for the completion of its term of office. That date was inserted by an amendment moved and carried in this Chamber; it was June 30 of this year. The committee comprises seven members, four who were to be Government nominees and three to be appointed by the Adelaide City Council. The Government agreed that one of its four members would be the Lord Mayor of the City of Adelaide, and therefore the city of Adelaide had a considerable say in the affairs of the committee.

The Government chose this method of interim development control for the city of Adelaide by separate amending legislation rather than by following the interim development control provisions contained in section 41 of the Planning and Development Act, 1966. The purpose of the committee's being established was to hold the *status quo* in relation to development within the city until such time as the City of Adelaide Development Plan could be adopted. After the appointment of the committee, the city of Adelaide appointed Urban Systems Corporation Proprietary Limited to prepare such a development proposal. That has now been produced and the period for lodging objections has expired; the committee and the city of Adelaide are considering the objections. The Bill simply extends the life of this committee for a further 12 months, from June 30, 1975, to June 30, 1976.

First, I want to make the point that the committee, in my view, has not worked satisfactorily. Time and time again, one hears criticism and complaint in relation to its activities. The criticisms mostly are to the effect that the committee has been too inflexible and quite unrealistic in many of its decisions. It has been a powerful committee, and although we must have a strong committee for interim development control it has been too powerful in comparison with the corporation itself.

I have been informed by people whose opinions I respect of some tragic increases in expenditure on development within the city of Adelaide brought about as the result of the deliberations and decisions of the committee. I have been reliably informed that the cost of the Adelaide Children's Hospital will be increased by more than \$3 000 000 as a result of delays caused because the committee held up approval of plans lodged for redevelopment of the hospital. That amount includes structural alterations, but does not involve only structural alterations.

In a period of inflation and greatly escalating building costs, astronomical increases actually have occurred in the cost of building construction in recent times. That is a most serious matter. I have been informed, too, that in relation to development work at the Helping Hand Centre

in North Adelaide, even after the council had approved plans and after the building contract had been signed, the committee stopped the plans proceeding. In the estimate of my informants that delay cost ultimately a further \$1 500 000.

Those are most serious matters. They are not affecting private enterprise developers; they are affecting institutions which are well known to us and which cannot afford such losses in today's world. In such respects, this committee has much to answer for. At the other end of the scale, one hears from time to time examples of quite unrealistic decisions. Only last week, representations were made to me by a party representing South Australian Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited, which organisation was refused permission to demolish a small cottage behind its premises facing South Terrace. I inspected the cottage and found it completely beyond restoration. It was substandard in every way, with salt damp, dampness, and in general disrepair.

The Hon. T. M. Casey: What about downy mildew?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: If the Minister went there, that would be the first thing he would think was wrong with it, because his mind does not go much beyond agricultural matters.

The Hon. T. M. Casey: Don't you believe it!

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Perhaps I should make one exception. The cottage was on a corner site, with streets on two sides and parking areas on the other sides. This decision is utterly unrealistic, as the cottage is beyond restoration in my opinion and, I am sure, in the opinion of any reasonable person who wants to see restoration of cottages in the city of Adelaide which are able to be restored for reasonable habitation.

The committee has refused its permission to demolish the cottage. Apart from the condition of the building, however, one must look at the environment in which people will live in future. With car parking on two sides and streets on the remaining two sides, the environment certainly is not very pleasant. I do not wish to dwell on that criticism, but I think it is only right to mention it because, in the public arena, this committee has been severely criticised. It is at such a time, when Parliament is considering giving a further 12 months of life to this committee, that such matters should be raised.

I dwell now upon the actual mechanics that will be involved if the Bill is passed, if some amendment is made to it, or if it is rejected by Parliament. It would appear that they are the three courses Parliament could consider. It could reject the provision, which would mean that the committee would go out of existence on June 30 next; it could accept the Government measure, which would extend its life until the middle of next year; or Parliament could decide that its life should be terminated at some point in between those dates.

Moving to the study of the city of Adelaide plan, I understand that about 700 objections have been lodged. If those objections are given full consideration (and I have no reason to doubt that they will be), and if some of the objectors wish to place further evidence or to appear personally before the committee, it will be a considerable time before all such objections are dealt with. Then, it would appear to me that a further plan would have to be prepared, taking into account the objections accepted by this committee and the City Council; that would take a considerable time, and I would think that it would probably not be until about the end of this year before a plan that conformed to this initial response from ratepayers could be fashioned for further scrutiny.

The final plan will have to undergo further scrutiny, because the objections already submitted are not final

objections: a preparatory response to the original proposal was sought from people involved in the city of Adelaide. Side by side with that, the Government intends to bring down special legislation introducing permanent development control within the city of Adelaide. In other words, this control will be administered by an Act altogether separate from the Planning and Development Act.

Then, there must be another phase after that legislation is approved: the final plan must be adopted. After that, regulations will have to be brought down; I would think there would be a considerable number of regulations, because the legislation to which I refer will probably be enabling legislation rather like our modern building legislation. That process could take to the end of this year or beyond.

Probably there will be an election early next year. This will probably mean that the next Parliamentary session may end in the middle of November or toward the end of November. Following the election, if it is held early in 1976, Parliament may not meet until April, May or even June. These points must be borne in mind when we consider this Bill.

If this Bill was amended to provide for a shorter period for the life of this committee, it might mean that the final development plan and all related matters would be hastened within the City Council and by the consultants; it might also mean that there would be a gap between the committee administering interim control and the actual introduction of permanent control. Any haste that might be occasioned because of the fixing of an extension shorter than a 12-month period would not be in the best interests of the city of Adelaide. For those reasons I support the Bill.

I can well understand people who may believe that the period is a little long and that it would be in the best interest of everyone if it was shortened. However, bearing in mind the points I have made, I believe that a strong case can be made for supporting this Bill.

The plan produced by Urban Systems Corporation Proprietary Limited has come under very severe criticism from responsible ratepayers and others interested in the city. The city of Adelaide has a clear duty: it must not abrogate to any other committee the planning of the city's future to the extent that it has tended to do during the life of the City of Adelaide Development Committee.

The city of Adelaide itself must accept responsibility and must plan the city's future carefully and realistically and in accordance with the wishes of the total South Australian community but with particular reference to the wishes of ratepayers within the city of Adelaide. This challenge facing the Adelaide City Council must not be rushed. It will take time, and it should take time, if the best result is to be achieved. Because the Bill is not unreasonable, I support it.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS secured the adjournment of the debate.

UNDERGROUND WATERS PRESERVATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from February 27. Page 2608.)

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS (Leader of the Opposition): I support this short Bill. As the Minister's second reading explanation says, it arises because of a decision that the

use of underground water in the Padthaway area should be restricted. Having made that decision, the Government was limited in its application of means of restricting the use of water. Section 17 (2) (b) of the principal Act provides that, where restriction has to be imposed on the use of underground water, meters must be installed to record the water usage. There are other means by which the use of underground water can be restricted, and I believe that the Government wants to use other methods. I cannot see any reason why those other methods should not be used. I was involved when restrictions on underground water were imposed in the Virginia area. Most people realise that the supply of ground water, too, is limited.

In the South-East we have a vast potential for the use of underground water, but even there it is realised that it is impossible to draw unlimited quantities from underground; restrictions are necessary in some areas to preserve the future of underground supplies. There is the question not only of over-use of underground supplies but also of increasing salinity in the underground basin as water is drawn from the basin, used for irrigation, and then allowed to seep back into the basin with a salt content. A similar position is developing in underground basins as has developed in the Murray waters: there is an increasing salinity count.

We tend to believe in South Australia that, because of our many dry areas, the South-East is a high rainfall area. However, only a small part of the South-East has a 760 mm rainfall and, when one reaches the Padthaway-Naracoorte area, rainfall drops to 510 mm or even below. By world standards, a 760 mm rainfall is looked on as being a fragile rainfall; so, the South-East has a fragile rainfall. Underground water, although important to our development, must also be used in such a way that there is no deterioration in its quality, nor any possibility of over-usage, thus causing the intrusion of other water into the underground basin, and thereby rendering it unsuitable for irrigation and development.

The preservation of underground supplies is important and, although much work has been done in South Australia over the years on hydrological surveys, I consider that insufficient is being done in this area, because before one can do anything about the problem one must have an understanding and knowledge of what supplies are present and what quantity can be drawn off without damage, and the consequent rationing of those supplies. In a State such as South Australia it is important that we collate the information on our underground water and ensure that we use it to the best advantage of all, with the idea of preserving the basin for the future. I am not arguing the case of whether restrictions in the Padthaway area are necessary but, if restrictions are necessary for the basin's preservation, they must be placed on the actual use of the water. I support the Bill, which merely gives the Government a discretion in the means by which the use of the water may be restricted.

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT

At 4.3 p.m. the Council adjourned until Wednesday, March 5, at 2.15 p.m.