

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

URANIUM

Tuesday, October 11, 1977

The **PRESIDENT (Hon. F. J. Potter)** took the Chair at 2.15 p.m. and read prayers.

PETITION: GOODWOOD AND UNLEY ROADS

The **Hon. R. C. DeGARIS** presented a petition signed by 2 554 electors of South Australia alleging that the extension of existing clearway arrangements on Goodwood and Unley Roads would adversely affect trade and business along those roads, and praying that the Legislative Council oppose such extension until more off-street parking was provided.

Petition received and read.

PETITION: BEVERAGE CONTAINERS

The **Hon. R. C. DeGARIS** presented a petition signed by 1 735 residents of South Australia alleging that the regulations requiring a 5c deposit on all cans containing soft drinks placed an unfair burden on people employed in a closed environment, and requesting the Minister to make new regulations exempting canteen services where the can does not leave the premises, or to introduce legislation to provide for such exemption.

Petition received and read.

QUESTIONS**DROUGHT RELIEF**

The **Hon. N. K. FOSTER**: In response to a question asked by the Hon. Mr. Dawkins last week, the Minister of Agriculture quoted some figures regarding drought relief. I heard on an Australian Broadcasting Commission news service on Friday a statement made by the Federal Agriculture Minister, who has been denounced by his own people. Because of the discrepancy in the figures, will the Minister clear up the matter?

The **Hon. B. A. CHATTERTON**: I did say in reply to the question asked by the Hon. Mr. Dawkins that \$2 200 000 had been allocated so far in South Australia. On Friday, the A.B.C. carried a report that, in reply to a question in Federal Parliament, Mr. Sinclair quoted figures that were considerably lower than those in relation to what had been allocated in South Australia for drought relief measures. Having checked out the figures, I do not think Mr. Sinclair understood the difference between what had been paid out and what had been allocated. I explained, when replying to the Hon. Mr. Dawkins's question, that the payments would be made on a quarterly basis and that, when applications were approved, that money was put down as being allocated to the people concerned. However, the cheques go out on a quarterly basis. What Mr. Sinclair was referring to was the sum already paid out and what I was referring to was the amount allocated to those people who had put in successful applications. They will be able to budget in accordance with the approval and they will be able to know that they will be getting cheques on a quarterly basis, but they have received only one or two quarterly cheques so far. That is the reason for the two different figures.

The **Hon. R. A. GEDDES**: I seek leave to make a short explanation before asking a question of the Minister of Health, representing the Premier, dealing with uranium mining.

Leave granted.

The **Hon. R. A. GEDDES**: I understand that the Prime Minister has written to all State Premiers inviting them to assist in developing a uniform code of practice to apply to all uranium mining and any future nuclear activities in Australia. Bearing in mind the divergence of opinion in the Australian Labor Party on the problems of uranium and uranium mining, I should be interested to know whether the State intends to co-operate with the Commonwealth in regard to helping with the designing of a code of practice for uranium mining and other kindred activities.

The **Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD**: I will refer the question to my colleague.

CHRISTIES HOSPITAL

The **Hon. C. M. HILL**: I ask the Minister of Health whether he can say, further to announcements concerning hospital facilities at Christies Beach made a month or so ago, what is the present position of the Government's plans regarding provision of these facilities in that region of South Australia. Can the Minister say what will be the size of the first stage of the building, its approximate cost, and the approximate Government contribution to the cost of that first stage? Also, can he say when he expects that this new development will commence?

The **Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD**: I recently gave details of the Government's involvement in the cost of the facilities at Christies Beach, which I have pointed out previously were being done by a private developer, and I have pointed out that the Government is assisting considerably. I think the cost to the Government will be about \$250 000 in relation to the maternity suite that is to be provided there. As far as I am aware (and I have seen nothing to the contrary), I expect that the developer will have commenced work by late this year or early next year.

LAND AND BUSINESS AGENTS ACT

The **Hon. J. C. BURDETT**: I seek leave to make a brief explanation prior to asking a question of the Minister of Health, representing the Attorney-General. The question relates to the Land and Business Agents Act.

Leave granted.

The **Hon. J. C. BURDETT**: I have received several comments and queries from land brokers, members of the legal profession, and land agents in relation to the provisions of the Act. In particular, I have received one letter from a land broker, and I propose to read two paragraphs of that letter, which I think it necessary to read. Those paragraphs state:

As all correspondence clearly indicates that whilst one is obligated to make certain inquiries to comply with section 90 and regulation 44 of the Land and Business Agents Act, 1973, as amended, there is no compulsion in any Act whereby any council or any other Government authority is compelled to supply answers. Therefore it is my opinion that the general public is being misled into believing they are receiving a protection whereas in fact they are receiving very little or no protection.

It is my opinion that before section 90 and regulation 44 of

the Land and Business Agents Act, 1973, as amended, affords the general public the protection which was intended when the Act was proclaimed it will be necessary for Parliament to amend various other Acts to compel all councils and other Government or semi-government authorities to supply answers to the questions which licensed agents, licensed land brokers and solicitors are obligated to ask.

Also, it has been brought to my notice that, because many councils and Government instrumentalities refuse to comply with the requests, many agents have stopped making requests and have filled in the forms as if they had received an affirmative answer. The point is that the public is being misled: it is not receiving the protection it believes it is receiving.

Will the Government consider amending the Local Government Act and various other Acts to require local government authorities, and Government authorities, to provide the information which the Land and Business Agents Act and the regulations thereunder require to be asked?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: I will refer the honourable member's question to my colleague.

DROUGHT RELIEF

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: I seek leave to make a brief statement prior to directing a question to the Minister of Agriculture in respect of drought relief.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: The Minister has just replied to a question dealing with drought relief and the problem of Commonwealth recompense to this State. Can the Minister say whether the State is able to obtain the correct sum provided under the agreement reached with the Commonwealth under the system, which I believe is fair (it involves quarterly adjustments of drought relief funds), or should there be a review of the system in order that Commonwealth-State finances are working in mesh, so that the State is not a short-term loser in the deal?

The Hon. B. A. CHATTERTON: It is my understanding that the Commonwealth will accept its responsibility for the sums which have been allocated but which have not actually been paid out—

The Hon. R. A. Geddes: The committed sums?

The Hon. B. A. CHATTERTON: Yes. As I stated in reply to a previous question, that is the reason for the discrepancy. I understand that the Commonwealth will meet its commitments to the funds committed to individual farmers.

ANIMAL CLINIC

The Hon. C. M. HILL: I ask leave to make a short statement concerning the proposed animal welfare clinic before directing a question to the Minister of Health.

Leave granted.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: This matter concerned the Minister when he was Chief Secretary and, although I realise that that portfolio has been taken from him and given to a Minister in another place, I am sure that he will know the details of this matter. During the last session I asked the Minister if it was a fact that submissions had been made to him about a proposal to establish, in Adelaide, an animal welfare clinic. I understand that the clinic was to be based on similar organisations in Western Australia and in several American States.

In general terms, it was to collate the activities of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals,

the Animal Welfare League and other similar organisations, and it was intended to be of great help to pensioners and people of limited means. It would include an injured animal pick-up service and many other services in respect of animals and for those who like to keep pets at home. In his reply the Minister said or implied that he or the Government had received such a submission and that the matter was under consideration.

Can the Minister say whether the Government has concluded its deliberations in regard to the application and whether any decision is forthcoming as to whether the Government intends to establish an animal care clinic?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: As the honourable member indicated, following the reallocation of portfolios, this matter does not now come under my jurisdiction. So that the honourable member will have the latest information, I shall refer the question to my colleague.

ADELAIDE AIRPORT

The Hon. C. J. SUMNER: I seek leave to make a short statement before asking a question of the Leader of the Government in this Council representing the Premier, who is the Minister in charge of State-Federal relations. My question is about proposals to upgrade Adelaide Airport.

Leave granted.

The Hon. C. J. SUMNER: A report in yesterday's *News* contained a statement from the Federal Minister for Construction (Mr. McLeay) about upgrading Adelaide Airport. The report, headed "Airport may be in World Class", contains a reference by the Minister to a \$2 200 000 redevelopment plan which, if implemented, would bring the facilities at Adelaide Airport up to international standard. The report states:

The new facilities would include an air traffic control tower, operations building, a power generating plant, air-conditioning plant, car parks, roads and services . . . "Air space in Adelaide is becoming crowded, but with this new tower more traffic can be accommodated," he said . . . The redevelopment plan would take about 12 months to complete.

First, can the Minister say whether the State Government has been consulted about this proposed redevelopment? Secondly, will Adelaide be used as a full international airport following this upgrading and, if not, what change is envisaged in the use of Adelaide Airport as a result of the upgrading? Thirdly, has any estimate been made of the increase in air traffic resulting from upgrading these facilities? Fourthly, does the State Government believe that West Beach is an appropriate site for a full international airport, in view of its proximity to concentrated residential areas?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: I am not aware of any approaches to the Premier in this connection, but I shall refer the honourable member's question to my colleague.

PUBLIC SERVICE APPOINTMENT

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Can the Leader of the Government in this Council say what the Government's reasons are for transferring Dr. Inglis from his previous role as Director of the Environment Department to a new position which has been created in the Education Department and which is known as Deputy Director-General of Education (Museums and Botanic Gardens)?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: The transfer followed the reallocation of Ministerial portfolios. The Environ-

ment Department now comes under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Works, who is also Minister for the Environment and Minister of Marine. I shall refer the honourable member's question to my colleague.

BRITISH ART DISPLAY

The Hon. C. M. HILL: I seek leave to make a short statement prior to asking a question of the Minister of Health, representing the Premier, who I understand is also the Minister in charge of the arts, about a display of paintings from Britain commemorating the jubilee celebrations of Her Majesty.

Leave granted.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: I was informed during the weekend that a display of paintings and possibly other works of art has been sent from Britain as one of the promotions to commemorate Her Majesty's jubilee year. An organised tour is being arranged by some Adelaide people to travel to Melbourne to view this display. It appears to me from this information that it is a great pity that Adelaide people are not able to view this display within our own city. Is it a fact that this display is showing in Melbourne and elsewhere in Australia; secondly, and more importantly, what endeavours did the Government make to try to arrange for this display to be shown in Adelaide for the benefit of Adelaide people?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: I shall refer the question to my colleague and bring down a report.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION

The PRESIDENT: I have to inform the Council that a check has been made of the ballot slips returned from the election last Thursday of members of the Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation. It has been found that an error has been made in the number of votes I announced to Council. The actual result of the ballot is not affected and the correct ballot figures have been inserted in *Hansard*. Honourable members can look at the figures there.

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD (Minister of Health) moved:

That the resolution for the appointment of members to represent the Council on the Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation agreed to on Thursday last be rescinded, and that the Hon. N. K. Foster, the Hon. C. J. Sumner and the Hon. A. M. Whyte be appointed to represent the Council on the said committee.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS (Leader of the Opposition): I support the motion and, in doing so, wish to make two points. First, this Council has decided which honourable members will serve on a Parliamentary committee that has no powers except those of investigation and reporting to Parliament. The membership of that committee should reflect the will of each House of Parliament; it should be representative of the numbers in each House. It is a Parliamentary committee, and not a committee owned by the Government or one on which the Government has any right to demand a majority. If the Government controls such committees, it can instruct them what to do.

As I have said, this is a Parliamentary committee, not one which is governed or appointed by the Government.

Parliament should not be the servant of any Government. The idea growing in this State that the Government has the right to dictate terms to Parliament has no basis upon which it can rest. On other Parliamentary committees such as the Joint House Committee the membership should reflect the will of the House, and its members should represent the members in the House. Every shade of political opinion should be reflected on the Joint House Committee because it is not a Government committee but a committee of the members of this Parliament.

The Hon. C. M. Hill: Parliament is supreme.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: Absolutely. Already, we have seen evidence of the Government's turning a blind eye to the reports of committees.

The Hon. F. T. Blevins: But you know—

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Hon. Mr. Blevins is out of order.

The Hon. F. T. Blevins: So is Mr. Hill.

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Mr. Hill is also out of order.

The Hon. F. T. Blevins: But he was first.

The PRESIDENT: Both of you are out of order.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: Already, we have seen evidence and heard reports of the Government's turning a blind eye to the reports of committees, even those appointed by it. I refer, for example, to the matter of the Paringa Park school, regarding which the Public Works Standing Committee has made reports. However, the Government has not taken any notice of the reports made by that statutory committee.

The Hon. C. J. Sumner: How relevant is this to the motion, Mr. President?

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: If it is not relevant to the motion, the honourable member has his remedy under Standing Orders. Some committees are appointed by the Government, and others by Parliament, yet at times the Government has totally ignored their findings. I do not want to examine matters relating to the Public Accounts Committee that have already been aired. However, I do not accept the demand that the Government is making on this Parliament that it should bend to the Government's will in relation to a Parliamentary committee.

Secondly, I refer to this Government's mood. Already, in the press and on other media the Government has threatened, because this Council voted for a majority on the Subordinate Legislation Committee, to appoint only Government members from the House of Assembly. That is a threat. If this trend continues, the Government could indulge in the same attitude regarding the statutory committee and, if it so desired, take all positions, not appointing any Opposition member. In its present mood, the Government is capable of such retribution.

Because of this, I am willing reluctantly to support the motion. However, I emphasise that I reject absolutely the Government's attitude on these matters as being dogmatic, dictatorial, uncompromising, and not in the best interests of the Parliamentary institution.

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD (Minister of Health): I should like to point out what has been the mood of the Opposition in this regard. If the Government's mood was that as described by the Leader, I would not have moved this motion to get the Leader off the hook in relation to his Leader in another place. Let him say so if that is not the position. I am doing something to get the Leader off the hook because of the mood that he was in last Thursday afternoon, when he called for a ballot, thereby breaking the ground rules that had been laid down for years in relation to the appointment of committees. The Leader knew very well that in the past discussions had taken place and that it was desirable to continue to proceed along

those lines, yet the Leader has the gall to talk about the mood of the Government in this regard, when I am getting him off the hook, he being under pressure from another place.

The Hon. J. C. Burdett: That's not true.

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: The Hon. Mr. Burdett says that is not true. However, the Hon. Mr. DeGaris referred to what was in the press. It was stated that Mr. Tonkin would get on the Hon. Mr. DeGaris's tail and that there would be an altercation. That is what the press said, and I am the bunny that is getting the Hon. Mr. DeGaris off the hook. Despite that, and despite my being most helpful to the Leader, he has the hide to get up and talk about the mood of the Government, and to allege that it is dogmatic, undemocratic and all sorts of other things.

The Leader has said that the Government has not accepted recommendations made by various committees. How many times did Sir Thomas Playford knock back recommendations made by the Public Works Committee? Sir Thomas used publicly to say, "I do not have to worry what the Public Works Committee recommends. I must merely submit this project to it, and that committee must report on it. I can do what I like with it." Sir Thomas said that more than once. The honourable member has implied that the Government has not accepted the recommendations of other committees. However, it has done nothing more than Sir Thomas Playford did from time to time.

If this is the sort of attitude that we are going to see emanating from members opposite, we had perhaps best look at the way in which we will work in future. No-one can accuse me of not having co-operated since I have been Leader of the Government in the Council. Simply because a ballot was conducted in another place on Thursday before the election of these committees, and because certain Liberal members were disgruntled with the results, they took out their spite on this Council and would not permit it to function properly last Thursday. Now, they have come back to me. I am sorry I have fallen for the trap of getting the Leader off the hook. He will have to act in a more co-operative manner in future if he wants my assistance.

Motion carried.

SESSIONAL COMMITTEES

The House of Assembly notified its appointment of sessional committees.

ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD (Minister of Health): I move:

That the Council do now proceed to elect, by ballot, two members to be members of the Council of the University of Adelaide.

I understand that the Hon. Anne Levy and you, Mr. President, the present members, are both willing to stand again.

Motion carried.

A ballot having been held, the President and the Hon. Anne Levy were declared elected.

The PRESIDENT: The voting was 20 for me, one for the Hon. Mr. Cameron, and 21 for the Hon. Anne Levy.

FLINDERS UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA COUNCIL

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD (Minister of Health): I move:

That the Council do now proceed to elect, by ballot, two members to be members of the Council of the Flinders University of South Australia.

The Hon. Mr. Laidlaw and the Hon. Mr. Sumner are the two present members of the council and I understand, from the look on their faces, that they are looking forward to being elected again.

Motion carried.

While the bells for the ballot were ringing:

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Hon. Mr. Blevins must resume his seat.

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: The bells are ringing. Come on, Parliament is surely in recess when the bells are ringing.

The PRESIDENT: Not when he has voted. I am going to call for the doors to be locked and for the ballot-papers to be collected.

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: I think we should get a ruling on this. When does the ballot take place? Surely, when a ballot is taking place, those bells are ringing to allow members to get into this place. Irrespective of whether ballot-papers have been handed out, surely the ballot does not take place until the bells have ceased ringing. How can the President give a ruling that denies members an opportunity to be in this Chamber?

The PRESIDENT: My distinct impression was that the Hon. Mr. Blevins had completed his ballot-paper and handed it to another member to do something with. That is out of order.

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: Surely it is also out of order for you to issue an instruction to a member. I understand that the bells are rung to enable all members to be in or out of this Council for the purpose of carrying out the business of the Council when the bells have ceased ringing and, whether he is coming or going, a member should not receive instructions from the Chair during that period.

The PRESIDENT: Order! As I have said, I was going to direct that the doors be locked. Whether or not I did as the Minister thought I should have done, I warned the Hon. Mr. Blevins that, if he wanted his vote counted, he had to be seated. The doors had to be locked, they have been locked, and I now ask that the ballot-papers be collected.

I have to announce that, as a result of the ballot, the Hon. Mr. Laidlaw and the Hon. Mr. Sumner are elected with 19 and 16 votes respectively. The Hons. D. H. L. Banfield, F. T. Blevins, and C. W. Creedon each obtained one vote, and the Hons. J. E. Dunford and A. M. Whyte collected two votes.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD (Minister of Health) brought up the following report of the committee appointed to prepare the draft Address in Reply to His Excellency the Governor's Speech:

1. We, the members of the Legislative Council thank Your Excellency for the Speech with which you have been pleased to open Parliament.

2. We assure Your Excellency that we will give our best attention to all matters placed before us.

3. We earnestly join in Your Excellency's prayer for the Divine blessing on the proceedings of the session.

4. We associate ourselves wholeheartedly with Your Excellency's acknowledgment of the signal service rendered to the State by Walter Russell Crocker, Esquire, the Lieutenant-Governor.

The Hon. C. W. CREEDON: I move:

That the Address in Reply as read be adopted.

In moving this motion, I add my congratulations to our new Governor on his being chosen and on accepting his appointment. I wish both Mr. and Mrs. Seaman health and happiness.

Our Parliamentary opening of July 2, 1977, and the Labor Party policy speech for the September 17 election given by the Premier clearly reflects the attitude of the Australian Labor Party. We never claim or promise anything we know we are unable to carry out. Although we may at times promise something which, because of changing circumstances, we are unable to carry out, at the time, our intentions are honourable. We all know that there are times when we intend doing something and that quickly changing circumstances prevent us from going ahead.

After all, Mr. Tonkin promised as part of his election policy that he would print all of the A.L.P.'s broken promises. I have not seen it as yet but, if and when he does, I hope he remembers to compare the list with the broken promises of the Liberal Party, over the years, both on a State and more particularly on a Federal basis.

The Hon. Mr. DeGaris we found, as usual, praying that we would be delivered from the sinister ways of the A.L.P., saying that since the advent of a State Labor Government we had been cursed with an electoral system that favoured the Labor Party. Although the Labor Government had promised at successive elections that it would have a one man one vote system, I do understand his horror and anguish at the thought that people would be given, through a system designed to be as fair as possible, every opportunity to be as equal as their country brothers and sisters.

I know he does not consider it fair and democratic. I wonder where he has been all these years. We have never heard him complaining about the system under which Sir Thomas Playford operated. I have never heard the Leader say how unjust or unfair are the lopsided voting systems of Western Australia and Queensland. To the best of my knowledge the Leader has never been critical of his Party colleagues in other States—remembering that as Australians, no matter which State we come from, we are all brothers.

Perhaps when the Leader is next critical of what he describes as our unfair system he might take time to describe what he considers to be more unfair about our present system than the system we were subjected to for 40 years, or the system that is prevalent in other right-wing dominated States.

That is typical of the Leader's attitude, giving lip service to a principle, while at the same time ensuring that the principle is not put into effect. We have had examples of the Leader's attitude towards the Labor Party by his position in respect of the voting which took place in this Chamber last Thursday.

Are the recent rumours I have heard true, that the Leader intends to retire in three years and, until then, he will have one hell of a time and create a stir? Certainly, that appears to be what he is doing now.

It is easy for me to give credit to the South Australian Labor Government, which has done an extraordinary amount of work that has proved beneficial to the South Australian citizen and which intends to continue to look after the people of South Australia. The Government has found large sums of money to help with unemployment

relief. I stress that it can only help because unless the problem of unemployment is taken up on an Australia-wide basis, the best that an individual State can do is only to provide some relief. The Federal Government in its recent Budget had an opportunity to do something for the unemployed and the poor but, instead of doing something to relieve the problem of these people, it took the opposite action.

The Federal Government cut heavily into almost all fields of endeavour by depriving all sections of the community of the money needed even to keep up the standards of the previous year. There was no allocation in the Federal Budget for local employment programmes. It has been left to the State Government to find funds from its meagre resources to provide some relief by making grants to local government authorities, statutory authorities, non-profit community organisations and even Government departments, in the expectation that jobs for some of the people some of the time will at least boost the morale of those who have been looking for work for a lengthy period. Mr. Tonkin has heaped scorn on the scheme and declared it to be a waste on money. If giving productive employment to people is wasteful, it is high time that some people became more wasteful.

During the election campaign the Liberal Party resorted to a few dirty tricks. One of the dirtiest (and, of course, one could expect it from the member concerned) was the attempt to call the long-dead Northfield Hospital affair a scandal and try to lay the blame on the Government. The people concerned had been convicted and punished. This dirty trick showed how low the Liberal Party and some of its members would stoop in an effort to prove that the Labor Party had a scandal on its doorstep.

In Australia there are three States governed by the Labor Party, and three States governed by the Liberal Party. I remind honourable members that there are some scandals in all of the Liberal States. Western Australia has its Art Gallery scandal, and Victoria has its land scandal, as a result of which some Liberal Party members have resigned. Another scandal in Victoria is the electricity strike and the Government's inability to handle that strike. Last but not least, Queensland has its slave camp scandal, in which four defenceless old men were terrorised under the noses of the authorities. As far as I can gather, no charges have been laid against anyone in connection with this scandal.

In his policy speech Mr. Tonkin committed his Party to doing the impossible. We must take into account the attitude of his Federal colleagues. The new Federalism of his friends in Canberra seems to demand that the Federal Government will do a myriad of things for people, so long as the States accept the financial responsibility. This lack of acceptance of financial responsibility by the Federal Government is something that I suppose one must expect from the Conservatives. They seem to believe that the moneymakers of this world are those who will save mankind and that, unless a person is intent on making money and exploiting his fellow man, he is serving a useless function. The Conservatives expound federally that so-called private enterprise should and would be responsible for dragging Australia out of the doldrums of unemployment and inflation, if only they could find a way to reduce interest rates and earn bigger profits.

Recently I have noticed in the financial pages that many of the big companies are making bigger profits, but they are not increasing their employment potential. In fact, they are not engaging apprentices if they can avoid doing so. That is where they show shortsightedness, because engaging apprentices is one of the ways of creating future trained manpower. It is essential that we have apprentices,

but directors of big companies refuse to accept that responsibility. It is never the intention of big companies to increase wages if they can avoid doing so, regardless of how big their profits are. Big business wants big unemployment, and I understand their motive when they and the Government of their choice do everything possible to stifle public works programmes: in their opinion it is a sensible attitude to adopt to keep the workers in a sense of uncertainty. These tycoons have a very narrow, selfish and greedy outlook.

An ex-member of this Council once said, "The wealthier a man is, the wealthier he wants to become." That man was always looking for an extra \$5 000 to invest, and he was greatly upset if he could not lay his hands on it. I recently read a newspaper report from Sydney stating that wives of company directors were taking jobs as tea ladies. Surely an unemployed person or a widow would like such a job. Wives of company directors should be helping a charity, rather than taking bread and butter out of the mouths of more deserving people.

The capitalist system demands that all people be in debt up to the hilt. Further, the money-lending system is designed to keep people in debt all their lives. The first thing that a married couple buys is a house. If they are unfortunate enough to have a second mortgage, they may have to pay interest at the rate of 16 per cent to 18 per cent. Perhaps the Hon. Mr. Hill would like to discuss this point. The terms of loans for young married people are severe. A speculator who builds a house may have to borrow money from a finance company at the rate of 19 per cent, and the person unfortunate enough to buy that house will have to pay an even higher rate. I know of cases where builders have gone broke and have had to sell their houses at a price lower than that which they would otherwise charge. It is only in such cases that married couples can get a house at relatively good value. We never hear Opposition members condemning money-lenders who charge high interest rates.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: What does the State Government Insurance Commission charge?

The Hon. C. W. CREEDON: It charges 12 per cent on second mortgages.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: That is well above the bank rates.

The Hon. C. W. CREEDON: The bank rate is 11 per cent. Finance company rates are between 16 per cent and 18 per cent. Their rates used to be 14 per cent.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: What do you think of the S.G.I.C. charging more than the bank rate?

The Hon. C. W. CREEDON: I do not normally agree with high interest charges. At least the provision of finance by the S.G.I.C. makes it easier for people to obtain finance. If a young couple asks a bank for a loan the bank manager may say that his bank cannot provide the loan but, if the customer goes next door to the associated finance company, he can get the money at an interest rate that is 5 per cent or 6 per cent higher than the rate at which the bank would lend the money. The bank will never lend the full amount of money needed. A young couple may even have to go to the extent of a third mortgage and to keep the interest going while they pay off the second mortgage. It is unbelievable what man, in his pursuit of money, will do to his brothers and sisters and neighbours.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: Have you any money invested?

The Hon. C. W. CREEDON: No.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: Have you any money in a savings bank?

The Hon. C. W. CREEDON: No. When we bring in this new legislation making members of Parliament declare

their assets, it will not affect me; I spend money as fast as I get it. I might have to borrow some from the Leader one day! I have heard members opposite complaining that, for a variety of reasons, the State Government and the Australian Labor Party have been responsible for making housing so costly, but one reason is this 19 per cent interest charge for the period of the loan during which the house is being built. I want to make some comments now about local government.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: What about policemen?

The Hon. C. W. CREEDON: I will deal with that matter in my own time.

The Hon. C. M. Hill: What about the local government hospital levy?

The Hon. C. W. CREEDON: I think the Opposition promised to do away with that over a period of three years, but even if it were in Government we could probably expect to see that levy in operation for a long time yet. Local government has become very costly to people nowadays, because the money available a few years ago under Federal Labor Administration is not available now.

The Hon. C. M. Hill: They are getting more now.

The Hon. C. W. CREEDON: Certainly councils receive a proportion of money in untied grants. It varies from council to council, depending on each council's needs. There is nowhere near the money available to local government that there was three or four years ago. Money that was poured into local government for roads, drains, etc., in order to enhance the potential of the area concerned, has gone by the wayside; none of that money is available now. Councils are lucky to get grants at all.

The Hon. C. M. Hill: Are you talking about Highways Department allocations?

The Hon. C. W. CREEDON: Some money is available there, but little is available to local government from the Federal source; they are only small amounts compared to those available previously. Grants Commission allocations may be greater than when first made available under a Federal Labor Government, but if we take into account the ever-increasing inflation rate we see that probably many councils are receiving less than when the scheme was introduced three or four years ago. Many of the grants made were tied to council areas, but councils did not mind this, even if a project was to cost, say, \$100 000 and they received only \$50 000. Councils are now disadvantaged, because the money is not available, and they cannot go ahead with their schemes. We are a wealthy nation, and we need a lot of work done to make our country a pleasant place to live in, to be proud of and to show to others. However, the Federal Government restricts councils through providing insufficient finance, and there is much unemployment in these areas. I hope the position will change for the better soon, hopefully under a Labor Government.

The Lord Mayor of Adelaide is reported to have said that consideration should be given to the payment of councillors and possibly to compulsory voting.

The Hon. C. M. Hill: Do you think the mayoral allowance should be increased?

The Hon. C. W. CREEDON: I will come to that. Voting certainly should be compulsory; it would make people take an interest in local government. Payment to councillors and mayors is a way of life in many countries overseas, and some mayors receive \$25 000 a year or more. It sounds good in this country. It is a worthwhile goal to chase in overseas countries where councillors and mayors are fairly well paid, even though it involves full-time jobs. A person holding the office of mayor does not run another agency, and it is not just a nine to five job.

Councillors who appear to receive about \$12 000 or \$13 000 a year have to put a lot of time into their work and they are practically full-time employees also. There are a number of countries which operate in this way, all having a strict political system, so that if one does not belong to the correct Party one does not become a mayor or councillor.

The Hon. C. M. Hill: It is not much different from Brisbane.

The Hon. C. W. CREEDON: The Queensland Premier—

The Hon. C. M. Hill: I am talking about the Brisbane City Council.

The Hon. C. W. CREEDON: That is the sort of thing you find overseas. The Brisbane City Council is a region, and overseas one finds places operating as regions. Indeed, I have seen town halls there better than the building housing the Federal Parliament. In some places there is a governor as well as a mayor of a region. That person is also paid, but he has a six-year term and is not easily removed.

The Hon. J. C. Burdett: Do you agree with retaining State Parliaments in Australia?

The Hon. C. W. CREEDON: Not really; I do not believe in people being over-governed, as they are. Once we had a Federal Grants Commission and paid a chairman, board members and various clerks. Now we have a Grants Commission operating in each State, with seven chairmen to pay and, with two members on each, 14 members and the officers to pay. This all comes out of the grants that a council receives.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: You want regions and not States; why have regions? Get rid of them, too. Have the one man sitting in Canberra doing all the work.

The Hon. C. W. CREEDON: The Leader may want to be that person, but if I can have my way he never will be. I believe in control by people, not one man: otherwise we would have dictatorships, and that is what we do not want.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: I thought this was leading from your comment. How are you going to decentralise?

The Hon. C. W. CREEDON: It is the natural thing to decentralise, and there is no need for all sorts of governing bodies in between. If the Leader thinks I have changed my mind about State Parliaments, I have not.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: Are you going to replace State Parliaments with regions?

The Hon. C. W. CREEDON: I see no good reason why people cannot be governed by regions. It works in other countries, in Israel and in Sweden which are two places I immediately think of. However, in places like Canada there is a State Government, Federal Government, regional government and local government system. This is an unnecessary drain on taxpayers' money. I have referred to some of the salaries involved. I did not bother to check the salary of members of Parliament. However, if mayors and councillors are getting \$25 000, members of Parliament would be getting much more. I do not know, for instance, how much the chairmen of some of the smaller councils would be getting.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: Are you going to have mayors and councillors in all these regions?

The Hon. C. W. CREEDON: There have always been councils, and we have already formed regions in Australia. It may have been a sneaky way of doing it, but some areas involved from five to eight councils. I do not know how many regions there are in Adelaide, for example; there may be five or six of them. There are many varieties of boards and councils overseas, and I am sure that honourable members would be interested in something else that I came across. Churches in some areas are taxed. Therefore, the people who belong to a church must pay for

the upkeep of the church grounds and cemetery. Those concerned have the opportunity to opt out (an opportunity of which many people take advantage) by declaring that they do not belong to a State church. I do not know what happens when they want to get married or when they die. However, it struck me as being peculiar that one could be taxed for going to church. On the other hand at least it enables the church and cemetery grounds to be kept in good order.

The Hon. C. M. Hill: Was this a State tax?

The Hon. C. W. CREEDON: The money was gathered by the church for the upkeep of its grounds. However, that is enough regarding that matter. I do not want to say anything about political affiliations. Other than the Adelaide City Council, it has not been policy in South Australia for people seeking to become a councillor or mayor to be endorsed by political Parties. I am pleased to move the motion.

The Hon. ANNE LEVY: I second the motion and, in doing so, wish to endorse and wholeheartedly support the remarks made by His Excellency the Governor regarding the contribution made to this State by Mr. Walter Crocker, the Lieutenant-Governor. For six months Mr. Crocker acted as Governor of this State, and the dignity and courtesy with which he tirelessly carried out his official duties has earned him the admiration and respect of all with whom he came in contact. Mr. Crocker is indeed a scholar and a gentleman in the best sense of that old-fashioned term, and it is appropriate that his service to the State be recognised in this Parliament. I should like to add my gratitude and appreciation to those expressed by the Government, and to wish Mr. Crocker a long and fruitful future.

His Excellency the Governor's Speech in opening Parliament was brief and succinct. I am sure I am joined by all my colleagues on the Government benches, however, when I categorically reject the suggestion made by the Hon. Mr. DeGaris that His Excellency's Speech was an insult to this Parliament. The Labor Government was returned at the recent election with an increased majority, and the overwhelming majority of South Australians have thereby endorsed the policies of the Australian Labor Party, as set out by the Premier in his policy speech. The details of that policy and of the legislation foreshadowed in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech three months ago should be well known to all honourable members, and it would be unnecessary repetition to enumerate the details thereof yet again. If the Hon. Mr. DeGaris is not fully familiar with them, I should be pleased to provide him with a copy of the Premier's policy speech.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: Don't you think the Governor's Speech should have referred to the drought conditions in the North of the State? That was completely ignored.

The Hon. ANNE LEVY: There is not much that the Government or the Governor can do about it. I certainly look forward to the legislation that will result from our policies over the next three years, measures which have been so enthusiastically endorsed by the electorate and which will be of tremendous benefit to the people of this State when enacted.

It is indeed incredible that members opposite can still be mouthing phrases such as "blatant gerrymander", when we consider that six of their number are still here as a result of a most undemocratic election held nearly five years ago. The people of this State have for the fourth successive time chosen to entrust their good Government to the Australian Labor Party, yet Liberal Party representatives in this Council still have a majority here

and dare to pontificate on the meaning of democracy. I find it embarrassing to have to explain to constituents that democracy does not yet apply in the Legislative Council.

To all right-thinking citizens, there should have been an election for half the members of this Council at the same time as the House of Assembly election held on September 17. My anger rises each time I must explain that the only reason why such an election did not occur was the intransigence and selfishness of honourable members opposite, who were so concerned with their perks and privileges of position that they refused last year to change the law to permit half of this Council to face the electorate whenever the House of Assembly did. It is a travesty of democratic principles that the Liberals still have a majority in this place when on four successive occasions the electorate has clearly preferred the Labor Party.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: That's not true.

The Hon. ANNE LEVY: How can members opposite look at themselves in the mirror in the morning and not blush with shame?

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: That's not true.

The Hon. ANNE LEVY: It is. The Labor Party polled—

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: You polled less than the Opposition.

The Hon. ANNE LEVY: The Government polled more than the Liberal Party did.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: It's a minority Government.

The Hon. ANNE LEVY: Members opposite cannot pretend that they have any justification for obstructing or amending any Government legislation, particularly a Bill to ensure that half the members of this House are judged by the electorate whenever the Assembly is so judged. By all democratic principles and tenets of natural justice, the Opposition should warmly endorse all Government legislation that will come to us in the next three years, and,

if it has any sense of decency and fair play, I should expect it to do so. Let them not forget which Party won the recent election and the three elections before that. Until all members of this Council have been democratically elected, let us have no more hypocritical mumbo-jumbo about gerrymanders and democracy.

I turn now to a different matter. I wish to draw to honourable members' attention that hypocrisy and a lack of fair principles are not limited to Liberals in South Australia, but are alive and well in their counterparts in Canberra. I refer to what may seem a minor matter to some but which is far from being so to many women in this State.

The Family Planning Associations in each State receive money from both the Federal and State Governments and, as I have previously indicated in this House, the South Australian Government has been far more generous than any other State Government in the support it gives to its local Family Planning Association, and this greater generosity continues in the current Budget. The money from the Federal Government comes into two quite separate categories: firstly, a health programme grant to cover clinical costs and, secondly, a grant for non-clinical costs which is specifically mentioned in the Federal Budget as a grant for family planning.

This non-clinical cost grant covers the educational programme of the Family Planning Association, which is extensive throughout many secondary schools, factories, corrective establishments, and other institutions and groups in the State. It also covers provision of a social worker and provision of a domiciliary sister who visits families with particular difficulties and problems, and part of the administrative cost of the association. It also finances the many training programmes being run by the Family Planning Association, for doctors, nurses, community health and infant welfare nurses, pharmacists,

Table of Government Grants

State	Federal Government		State Government		
	Non-clinical costs 1976/1977	Non-clinical costs Requested 1977/1978	Non-clinical costs Actual Grant 1977/1978	1976/1977	1977/1978
N.S.W.	110 000	199 000	149 095	5 000	5 000
Vic.	58 000	100 640	60 640	20 000	20 000
Qld.	55 000	109 000	40 000	57 500	57 500
W.A.	47 400	42 226	32 000	6 500	7 500
Tas.	13 800	26 600	8 790	6 500	7 000
A.C.T.	30 000	30 000	20 000	32 000	40 000
N.T.	19 000	22 907	22 907	2 000	2 000
S.A.	72 533	58 538	18 232	124 000	124 000
A.F.F.P.A.	75 000	123 700	93 700		

(W.A. Govt. also pays rental + all pathology)
(W.A. Govt. also pays rental + all pathology)
+ new premises anticipated
Dept. of N.T. (Rental)
Dept. of N.T. (Rental)

and others whose professional work involves the health care of the community. None of this work is unimportant or trivial, and I am sure all who have contact with this non-clinical side of the Family Planning Association's work would endorse its value and great benefit to our community.

Information received in the last couple of weeks indicates that the non-clinical grants for 1977-78 are being cut in most States, and that the cut for South Australia is particularly vicious and savage, and out of all proportion to that for the other Family Planning Associations in Australia. I have a table showing the actual non-clinical grants from both State and Federal Governments for 1976-77, and for 1977-78, for all Family Planning Associations in Australia and I seek leave to incorporate this table in *Hansard* without reading it, so all members may judge the facts for themselves.

Leave granted.

The Hon. ANNE LEVY: Summarising the table briefly, I point out that in New South Wales the State Government grant remains unaltered at \$5 000, while the Federal grant is rising from \$110 000 to \$149 095, a rise of 26 per cent on the previous year's sum, although only 75 per cent of what was requested. In Victoria, the State Government grant remains at \$20 000, while the Federal grant is rising from \$58 000 to \$60 640, a rise of 4 per cent although only 60 per cent of what was requested. In Queensland, the State Government grant remains at \$57 500, while the Federal grant is falling from \$55 000 to \$40 000, a fall of 27 per cent and only 37 per cent of the sum requested. In Western Australia, the State Government grant is rising from \$6 500 to \$7 500, while the State Government will also continue to pay the rent for the headquarters in a central position on St. Georges Terrace, Perth, as well as all pathology costs. The Federal grant to Western Australia is falling from \$13 800 to \$8 790, a fall of 32 per cent and only 33 per cent of what was requested. In the Australian Capital Territory, the non-clinical costs grant is falling from \$30 000 to \$20 000, a cut of 33 per cent, and in the Northern Territory the grant is rising from \$19 000 to \$22 907, a rise of 21 per cent, and no cut on what was requested. Compare these figures to the situation for South Australia, where the State Government grant is remaining at \$124 000. The Federal Grant is being cut from \$72 533 to only \$18 232, a fall of 75 per cent. We are receiving only 25 per cent of what we received last year, and only 31 per cent of the sum requested as absolutely essential to continue the existing programme, let alone provide for any increased or expanded activity.

Let me re-emphasise these figures, so honourable members can fully appreciate the discrimination being inflicted on this State. In New South Wales, Victoria and the Northern Territory, there are rises of 26 per cent, 4 per cent and 21 per cent respectively. In Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania there are cuts of 27 per cent, 32 per cent and 32 per cent. In the Australian Capital Territory there is also a cut of 33 per cent, but in South Australia there is a cut of 75 per cent. I hope our local press will report this savage and discriminatory cut by the Federal Government, so that all South Australians will be aware of the treatment being meted out to our local Family Planning Association and the far greater hardship being imposed on South Australian women than on their sisters interstate. What justification does the Federal Government give for this discriminatory action? I quote from letters received by the Family Planning Association from the Federal Department of Health, as follows:

The allocation has been determined after consideration of the support you receive from other sources including State Government funds.

Again:

We have taken into consideration the total activities of each State association, and the anticipated level of health programme grant and State Government support. This should be seen as a recognition of the generous support of the South Australian Government, and not as a criticism.

We see quite plainly that the Federal Government is discriminating against South Australia purely because our own Government has been so generous and wholehearted in its support of family planning in this State! What nonsense this all makes of the so-called "new federalism". We have been told on numerous occasions that the States were to get a certain proportion of income tax revenue, and that special section 96 grants would be reduced, so that the States could determine their own priorities in spending of available funds. Yet, when this State determines that its priorities include generous support of the local Family Planning Association, the Federal Government does not accept this autonomy of priorities, and penalises the South Australian Family Planning Association! What a mockery this makes of State autonomy in determining priorities!

Big Brother Liberal in Canberra does not apparently approve of our priorities, and so the South Australian Family Planning Association is cut back savagely in such a discriminatory manner. What is to happen to the programmes financed by this grant? Is the domiciliary sister to be sacked, penalising those in our community who are least able to help themselves, the poorest and Aboriginal families, or should the schools programme be savagely reduced, preventing our schoolchildren from receiving the information and help they need to lead responsible sexual lives in the future, or both? As lack of family planning affects women more than men, we again have a demonstration of how little this Federal Government cares for matters that affect women, of how the poor, the young and the women of our community are to bear the greatest sacrifices while handouts and help are given to the rich, the middle-aged, and the men of the business and mining communities.

This is not surprising, of course, from this Federal Government, but the extra discrimination against South Australia in particular is new and should be thoroughly understood by all in this State. Perhaps it is a punishment for having supported Don Dunstan on September 17. How petty and small-minded can the Federal Liberals be! I am sure South Australians will not forget such discrimination whenever the Prime Minister ceases playing the vacillating and coy young maiden and decides when the Federal elections are to take place.

Another indication of how the present Federal Government treats women is the suggestion recently made by the Federal Minister for Health that abortions should not be covered by medical benefits. This to me is absolutely incredible! The idea has been put forward that, because some members of the community do not approve of abortions on any grounds, their taxation money should not be used to finance Medibank payments for abortions, or that their contributions to a private health fund should not pay for abortions for other contributors to that fund. This is a piece of logic that I cannot accept.

Taxpayers' money is used to finance many activities of which individuals may disapprove. Members of the Workers Party disapprove of old-age and widows' pensions. Should these cease to be funded out of General Revenue as a result? Jehovah's Witnesses think blood transfusions are immoral. Should blood transfusions therefore be removed from the medical benefits schedule, so that their contributions cannot be regarded as funding for others a procedure which they oppose?

What about contraceptive advice and devices? These, too, are considered immoral by a section of the community. Should they also be removed from the medical benefits schedule? This sort of logic would lead to a complete breakdown of organised society and help for individuals, if any minority were to be catered for in this way.

Abortion is a legal operation in this State when carried out by a legally qualified medical practitioner, provided certain statutory criteria are met. The suggestion that one legal medical procedure should be singled out for different treatment under the medical benefits schedule is untenable to me. Such discriminatory behaviour towards women should be roundly condemned, and I trust that our Government will make its views on this matter known to the Federal Minister of Health.

If such a discriminatory practice were to be instituted, we would again have a situation of one law for the rich and another law for the poor: the rich could get their legal, safe, medical abortions, yet the poor would once more be driven to backyard, unqualified, dangerous abortionists, whatever the law said about their right to safe abortion.

Therefore, let us insist that all legal medical procedures be covered by health insurance. If illegal abortions occur anywhere in Australia, let the police take the appropriate action, but women have as much right to have their legal abortions covered by health insurance as their legal tonsillectomies and their legal sterilisations, despite what some individuals may feel regarding the morality of any particular medical procedure.

I wish now to turn briefly to another matter. Last week I asked a question of the Minister representing the Minister of Education concerning the report of the Committee on the Evaluation of Religious Education. It has become apparent to me that this report, and even the existence of the committee, is not common knowledge at this stage, and I feel its findings are important and should be widely discussed by all who are interested in educational matters.

The separate subject of religious education was first introduced into a small number of South Australian schools in 1975, replacing the old style religious instruction by clergy and others brought in from outside the school. The curriculum used for this new course had been developed by a special religious education project team, set up in the Education Department, following the passing of the new Education Act in 1973. There were some criticisms of the new curriculum expressed in various quarters and the Primary Schools Advisory Curriculum Board recommended that a special committee be set up to evaluate the religious education programme.

Eventually, two committees were set up, one for the primary course and one for the secondary course, which together have produced the report to which I referred the other day. The 12 members of this combined committee represent a wide cross-section of interests, and include teachers at both primary and secondary level (one of them a teacher of religious education), a tertiary education specialist, a representative of the Combined Schools Welfare Clubs, a parent, two superintendents of schools, and a research officer.

This committee commissioned critical analyses of the course from five interstate and independent experts in the fields of education, philosophy and sociology. A thorough empirical evaluation was also requested to be carried out by the Research and Planning Division of the Education Department, and this study is still being continued although its preliminary results are included in the committee's report.

This study surveyed teachers and students, both in schools giving the new religious education course and in

schools without the course, and both at primary and secondary levels, to assess the suitability of the aims and approaches of the course, the suitability of the curriculum, the teachers' views regarding integration of religious education with other parts of the curriculum, and whether bias and indoctrination were evident. The committee also requested submissions from any interested organisations and individuals, and considered over 80 submissions made to it.

As a result of all this evidence, the report of the Religious Education Evaluation Committee sets out 17 recommendations to the Education Department with detailed reasons for each recommendation. I do not intend to read all 17 but, basically, the committee applauds the achievements of the religious education project team, while suggesting certain changes in wording and emphasis in the curriculum. In particular, it feels that at senior levels a study of religion should include critiques of religion and religious conflict as part of a balanced study of religion.

It feels the title "religious education" would be better replaced by an alternative such as "religion and other beliefs", to better express the board's aim and the open-ended approach of remaining neutral between religious and non-religious positions. The committee also believes that individual schools should be free to provide religious education courses in the form and at the level they see as appropriate for their students and that continuing research be done on the priority religious education should have in a school's programme.

The committee strongly expressed the opinion that at secondary level religious education courses should be elective rather than being part of the curriculum core. They also recommend that the Education Department set up a committee to recommend ways of integrating religious education into the rest of the curriculum at primary level, in order to eliminate overlap and duplication, while ensuring that the aims and topics peculiar to the religious education course receive adequate time and attention.

Primary schools should be free to integrate the courses if they wish to do so, and the formal opting-out provisions for parents on conscientious grounds should be replaced by more flexible arrangements for withdrawal or provision of alternative activities where particular religious topics are objected to by parents.

The committee also recommends that a broad curriculum committee for religious education be established by the Education Department, and that research on the effects of religious education on individual students be continued and expanded. It also strongly suggests that schools be encouraged to deal with moral values, either as part of the general curriculum or as a distinct course, so that students can realise that to some people ethical questions have no necessary connection with religion. The committee is in favour of making a clear distinction between religious education and moral education.

I certainly recommend that all honourable members interested in educational matters read this report, which is a most valuable document and which is of great benefit to the general education of the children of this State. However, there is one point arising from this report which does have legislative consequences, and it is for this reason that I raise the matter today.

Section 102 of the Education Act makes provision for the teaching of religious education in Government schools, under such conditions as may be prescribed. Yet nowhere else in the Education Act is any part of the curriculum mentioned, other than a general provision in section 82 that the Director-General shall be responsible for the curriculum provided in Government schools. It

may surprise people to know that the teaching of reading, spelling, arithmetic, writing, science, mathematics, etc. is not mandatory in South Australian schools, though I cannot imagine any school not teaching such basic educational material.

However, it is a fact that they are not specifically mentioned in the Education Act, but are left to the discretion of the Director-General. To me it is anomalous that religious education alone should be laid down by law, as if its educational significance was in some way different from that of all other subjects taught in our schools.

It may be argued by some that section 102 as it now stands could inhibit the implementation of some of the recommendations in the report of the Religious Education Evaluation Committee. I refer particularly to the recommendations that schools be free to provide religious education courses in the form and level they see as appropriate for their students, that at secondary level it be an elective subject, and that at a primary level individual schools be free to integrate the material into the general curriculum if they so wish, while preserving the spirit and intentions of religious education. I am not a lawyer, so I cannot judge whether, in fact, section 102 would prevent

the flexibility recommended by this expert committee. But I suggest to the Council that, if such an interpretation does have legal backing, we should consider amending or deleting section 102 from the Act.

This would in no way suggest that we opposed religious education in our schools. On the contrary, it would acknowledge that teaching about religion is to be treated in the same manner as every other subject in the curriculum: it would acknowledge that the subject should be handled by the Education Department in the same way as it does every other subject in the curriculum, without it being regarded as in some way educationally different or less valid as educational material, requiring special legislative consideration. I support the motion.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT

At 4.1 p.m. the Council adjourned until Wednesday, October 12, at 2.15 p.m.