

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Tuesday 30 October 1979

The PRESIDENT (Hon. A. M. Whyte) took the Chair at 2.15 p.m. and read prayers.

QUESTIONS

CORPORATE AFFAIRS COMMISSION

The Hon. C. J. SUMNER: My question is directed to the Minister of Corporate Affairs. Have any instructions been given by the Government to the Corporate Affairs Commission in relation to the appearance before the Supreme Court of the commission in the Bank of Adelaide case? If this is so, what general instructions have been given by the Government to counsel representing the commission? In particular, has the commission been instructed to support the proposed takeover in the courts and, if it has not, what is the brief of the commission before the court?

The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN: The Corporate Affairs Commission has been instructed to appear before the Full Court of the Supreme Court with respect to the Bank of Adelaide scheme of arrangement as *amicus curiae* as indicated in the newspaper report, and it is available to make submissions to the court on such matters as the court may request. It has no instruction to support or oppose the scheme of arrangement.

EMISSION STANDARDS

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: Has the Attorney-General a reply to the question I asked about motor vehicles on 17 October 1979?

The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN: The matter of the introduction of phase 3 of Australian Design Rule 27A relating to emission control of motor vehicles is currently being considered. When a decision has been reached a public announcement will then be made.

MEAT QUOTAS

The Hon. B. A. CHATTERTON: Can the Minister of Community Welfare, representing the Minister of Agriculture, tell the Council why the meat quotas of Mr. McPherson and Mr. Maney were increased by 50 per cent? Will the Minister tell the Council whether any conditions apply to these quotas for the entry of meat into the metropolitan area? If there are any conditions, what are they? Will the Minister also say what criteria he intends to use for all other abattoirs in this State, which at present are under quota, when they ask for an increase in this quota to bring meat into the Adelaide metropolitan area? Have any of these abattoirs and meatworks applied for any increases and, if so, which are they?

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: I will refer the question to my colleague and bring down a reply.

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: I seek leave to make a short statement prior to asking the Attorney-General a question about the Australian National Railways.
Leave granted.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: It is reported in the press that—

The Hon. N. K. Foster: Question!

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS:—the Australian National Railways Commission seeks—

The PRESIDENT: Order! "Question" has been called.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: Has the Australian National Railways Commission sought to close four railway sidings at Perponda, Kalyan, Mercunda and Mantung on the Karoonda-Waikerie line? Also, is it a fact that a meeting is to be held among residents of this area in protest of that possibility? As the General Manager of the Australian National Railways is considering a request to attend this meeting, will the Minister of Transport consider attending it also, if it occurs, or at least being represented? Will the Minister consider the representations of farmers in the area who are currently opposed to the closure because of the difficulties it could present?

The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN: I will refer the honourable member's question to the Minister of Transport and bring down a reply.

DEPARTMENTAL BRIEFINGS

The Hon. J. R. CORNWALL: I seek leave to make a short statement prior to asking the Minister of Community Welfare, representing the Minister of Environment, a question concerning departmental briefings.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J. R. CORNWALL: I am sure members have read a report on the front page of this morning's *Advertiser* about an indirect offer that has been made to me from the Minister of Environment to make his permanent head, Dr. Peter Ellyard, available to me for periodic briefings. The article also says that the Minister believes in open government and that this move is part of his policy. I appreciate very much the offer that has been made by the Minister, and I point out to the Council that it is what I describe as a sensible tactic. However, one of the grave problems that could arise from these briefings is that my position as the Opposition shadow spokesman on environmental matters could be compromised, depending on the class of information that I am given from time to time and the circumstances in which that information is given.

So that my legitimate role as a shadow spokesman will not be compromised in any way, I want an assurance on the following matters. Will the Minister give a firm undertaking that any briefings will be given openly without compromise and without restrictions regarding confidentiality? Also, will the Minister make available to me immediately all the details of the department's activities and involvement in Roxby Downs exploration and proposed development?

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: I will refer the honourable member's question to my colleague and bring back a reply.

COOBER PEDY

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: Has the Attorney-General, representing the Minister of Transport, a reply to the question I asked on 23 October regarding the sealing of the main street in Coober Pedy?

The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN: The present Minister of Transport will honour commitments given by his predecessor that the bitumen of the main street of Coober Pedy will be resealed this summer. Furthermore, the Highways Department will in the near future base a maintenance gang in Coober Pedy.

HOMELESS TEENAGERS

The Hon. ANNE LEVY: I seek leave to make a brief statement before asking the Minister of Community Welfare a question regarding homeless teenagers.

Leave granted.

The Hon. ANNE LEVY: Last week, the Minister answered a question that I asked on notice regarding homeless teenagers in Adelaide. One of the questions I asked was as follows:

If the number of homeless teenagers in Adelaide is found to be greater than the numbers who can be accommodated in the existing children's shelters, will the Minister support and finance further children's shelters?

In reply, the Minister said that projects that would provide accommodation for homeless teenagers in houses in the community with a resident supervisor were being developed in preference to additional children's shelters. In the light of that reply, I ask the Minister for information regarding these projects. How many houses are being considered as accommodation for homeless teenagers; where will they be situated; and when will they be opened? Also, what qualifications will be required for the resident supervisors in the houses, and what salaries will they be paid? For how many homeless children is it expected that these houses will cater? Has this approach to the problem been chosen because it is cheaper than the current scheme of children's shelters, or does the Minister have some philosophical objection to the existing children's shelters or any criticism of the way in which they are operating that leads to this different approach being taken?

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: As the question requires detailed information, I will consult with my officers and bring back a reply.

STAFF TRANSFERS

The Hon. C. J. SUMNER: Has the Minister of Community Welfare a reply to the questions I asked on 24 October relating to staff transfers?

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: The replies to the honourable member's questions are as follows:

1. Yes. Mr. Economou was transferred from the position of Temporary Community Advisory Officer at the Berri District Office of the Department for Community Welfare to that of Ministerial Officer, Premier's Department, to be a member of the Inquiry Unit, and to be located at the Berri District Office.

2. Mr. Economou's duties were to conduct inquiries into problems associated with the Greek community living in the Riverland area. Some of these problems were of a welfare nature, but a considerable amount also related to economic and financial matters. Mr. Economou was also responsible for negotiating with Government departments regarding the provision of services to the Greek community in the area. Matters referred by the Premier's Department were given priority. As far as I am aware, his work was satisfactory.

3. A permanent Public Service position of Ethnic Information Officer for the Riverland area has been created in the Department of Local Government. The Government believes that the establishment of this position will give greater continuity to the tasks which need to be performed in the area. The position is expected to be advertised next week and Mr. Economou will, of course, have the opportunity to apply.

S.G.I.C.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: In view of the fact that over a long period questions have been directed to the previous Government, both in Question Time and during debates on Bills, on alleged trading advantages enjoyed by the State Government Insurance Commission over private insurers, will the Attorney-General ask the Government to institute a thorough inquiry into those allegations that have been made? If such trading advantages do exist in favour of S.G.I.C., will the Government ensure that they are removed?

The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN: I am aware of the allegations and questions relating to the matter to which the Hon. Mr. DeGaris has referred. It is a matter with which I am not fully familiar so far as S.G.I.C. is concerned. However, I will undertake to refer the matter to the appropriate Minister and bring down a reply.

BOAT LAUNCHING FACILITIES

The Hon. G. L. BRUCE: Has the Minister of Community Welfare a reply to my question about boat launching facilities?

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: The Noarlunga council has produced plans for an all-weather boat launching facility south of Hallett Cove. However, Government consideration of the plans has been deferred pending the council's obtaining a suitable site. The estimated cost of the project as submitted by the Noarlunga council is between \$800 000 and \$1 000 000. The Government has not yet considered whether it will support this project financially.

PRICE CONTROL

The Hon. J. E. DUNFORD: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister of Consumer Affairs a question about the price of quarry metals.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J. E. DUNFORD: I was concerned to read an article in Friday's *News* headed "State Government to review price control". This, coupled with a letter from the Consumer Affairs Association referring to the Government's outburst during the election campaign and certain other statements, indicates not a review but rather a doing away with price control on certain commodities, which could affect the consumer price index series. The Hon. Mr. Hill, when in Opposition, continually went crook at the previous Government because of the escalating cost of houses in South Australia and, although I never agreed with his figures, that is my concern now. I would not like to see the Consumer Affairs Department arbitrate like a prices justification tribunal. People wanting price increases should not, as the report states, be allowed to make huge profits: they should be allowed only to meet normal running costs, wage and salary increases, and to make a fair margin of profit. The article states:

"Under the previous State Government the system became a sacred cow," Mr. Laidlaw said, "administered in a manner that made it essentially profit rather than price control."

Of course, it is a method of controlling enormous profits. The Hon. Mr. Laidlaw holds 20 000 shares in Quarry Industries and 27 000 shares in Adelaide-Brighton Cement and, of course, there are the shareholdings of Mr. Leverington, Treasurer of the Liberal Party. If price control were lifted on bricks, stone quarry, sand and metals, the value of these people's shares would rise enormously and we would be paying the same price for

bricks and aggregate mortar, etc., as the people in Victoria pay. The Hon. Mr. Laidlaw would become a much wealthier man overnight. Will the Minister of Consumer Affairs explain what he means by a review of the price control system in South Australia? Is it his intention to do away with price control on sand, metals and quarry products generally? Further, will the Minister ascertain the comparative prices of stone, sand and metal as between South Australia and Victoria?

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: I have stated on at least two occasions in the Council that a review is being conducted at present of methods of price control and of the price control system in South Australia. It was stated in an editorial in the *Advertiser* this morning that it had been a long time since there had been a review, and it was suggested that it was reasonable to look at the price control system.

The Premier stated the same thing in another place last week, namely, that a review was being undertaken. As I said last week, when one is conducting a review of a particular situation, one cannot say, before the review is finished, what the outcome will be. It is not reasonable to ask that. One of the honourable member's questions was about what I had in mind in conducting the review. My reply to that is that a committee has been established to look at price control from every point of view. The word "review" surely means just that, a review or a re-look.

The Hon. J. E. Dunford: I asked what was your intention as a result of the review. Are you looking to do away with price control?

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: I and the Government were intending to look at the report brought down and to decide what should be done after that. Surely, that is what a review is. There were no pre-conditions and no direction was given. It was simply a review, a genuine fresh look at price control and at what was being done. The review is for the purpose of having a fresh look at price control. When the report is obtained, the Government will consider whether there should be any changes. It may be that there will be none. Regarding the final question about the price of various commodities, I will consult my officers and bring back a reply.

HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT PROPERTIES

The Hon. L. H. DAVIS: Has the Attorney-General a reply to my question of 23 October regarding Highways Department properties?

The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN: When properties held in the name of the Commissioner of Highways are identified as being surplus to requirements, immediate action is taken to arrange for their disposal.

PRICE CONTROL

The Hon. J. E. DUNFORD: I should like to ask a supplementary question of the Hon. Mr. Burdett. Can he tell the Council who are the people on the committee conducting the review of the Prices Act?

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: This is a matter for the Government and Cabinet, and I do not think it should be revealed at this stage.

STATE GRANTS COMMISSION

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Minister of Local Government regarding the State Grants Commission.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: The Federal Grants Commission Act of 1973 extended the role of the Grants Commission to include the funding of local government. The Federal Grants Commission's task was to distribute these funds to local government authorities throughout Australia. When the Liberal Government took office in Canberra, apportioning of the grants passed from the Commonwealth to State Grants Commissions. The Local Government (Personal Tax Sharing) Act of 1976 also stipulated that a minimum of 30 per cent of the 1.52 per cent of personal income tax earmarked for local government should be allocated on a population basis. A maximum of 70 per cent, therefore, is left to the States to dispense as they see fit under, I think, the title of equalising grants. Can the Minister tell me what percentage of grant money the State Grants Commission intends to allocate on a population grant basis and the formula the State Grants Commission intends using to distribute the remaining percentage, if any?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: I will obtain that information and bring down a reply.

DAY-CARE CENTRES

The Hon. BARBARA WIESE: Will the Minister of Community Welfare say what steps have been taken to extend the number, and role, of day-care centres as promised by his Party during the recent election campaign?

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: No steps have yet been taken. I will consult with my officers and bring down a detailed reply as to the steps that are contemplated.

PRICE CONTROL

The Hon. C. J. SUMNER: Can the Minister of Consumer Affairs say whether the review of price control is being carried out by members of the Public Service and, if it is not, whether it is being carried out by people outside the Public Service? If it is, will the Minister reveal to the Council who those people are?

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: The review is being undertaken by members of the Public Service. The whole of this matter, which was beaten up in the press pretty well last week, probably arose out of a question that the Leader asked me about price control, as to whether it was intended to abolish it (the answer was "No"), and whether the intention was to review it, the answer to which was "Yes". The review is being conducted and, at a time when the review is being conducted and before even the Government or Cabinet has the opportunity of knowing what the review is, one might assume that there should be reasonable confidentiality about the nature of the review.

The Hon. C. J. Sumner: Have people been appointed to carry it out?

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: Yes, they have, and I met them this morning. They are actively conducting—

The Hon. C. J. Sumner: You're not going to tell us who they are?

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: No, but they are public servants.

The Hon. N. K. FOSTER: I seek leave to make a brief statement before asking the Minister of Consumer Affairs a question about price control.

Leave granted.

The Hon. N. K. FOSTER: This Council should not accept the non-answering of the questions that have been

asked of the Minister this afternoon. The Government seems prepared to ride roughshod over this Council and take unto itself and Cabinet a type of Executive control, which is not good enough for this Parliament or this State.

The Hon. L. H. Davis: Did you have a bad weekend?

The Hon. N. K. FOSTER: No, I did not. I could say—

The PRESIDENT: Order! I ask the honourable member not to be distracted and to keep to the explanation of his question.

The Hon. N. K. FOSTER: The Retail Traders Association—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. N. K. FOSTER: You can call out "Question" if you like, but shout out loud enough for the President to hear you. You need not ask Martin Cameron to ask questions if you have not got the guts to ask it yourself, Dawkins.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: I seek the honourable member's withdrawal of that comment about me. I was not speaking to him.

The Hon. N. K. Foster: What did I say about you?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. N. K. Foster: What did I say?

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: You implied that I had no guts.

The Hon. N. K. Foster: You haven't displayed any yet.

The PRESIDENT: Order! If the Hon. Mr. Foster wishes to continue with his explanation immediately, I will permit it.

The Hon. N. K. FOSTER: Thank you, Mr. President. I wish you had a sharper ear for the type of things that that man was saying to his colleague. A Mr. Black, by name and nature, representing the Retail Traders Association, had much to say during the election campaign. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry, manufacturers, metal groups, automobile groups, the pirates of Rundle Street (now the mall), the gunslingers' association, and all of those false business people who purport to have the community's interest at heart, lent themselves to a campaign of vilification on behalf of the miserable lot who sit opposite. Therefore, I ask the Minister in clear and concise terms whether the committee set up and described as being of a Public Service nature (if we can take what the Minister has said to be correct this afternoon) is consulting with Mr. Black, or with any other people in the Retail Traders Association or any other business organisation or group in the community. Are any of those people directly represented on the committee, or are they represented through being consulted by the group referred to as public servants? "Yes" or "No", and do not beat around the bush. Be honest.

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: I will not beat around the bush, and I will be quite honest. The answer is that none of the groups to which the honourable member has referred is represented in any way, directly or indirectly, on the committee.

The Hon. N. K. Foster: I asked whether they were being consulted.

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: If the honourable member will let me finish. None of these groups is represented in any way, directly or indirectly, on the committee. The committee is completely and entirely a committee of public servants, who can operate in their own way to bring back a report. The committee has been given no direction or request to consult with anyone. Whom they may wish to consult is up to them.

The Hon. C. J. SUMNER: First, can the Minister of Consumer Affairs say whether Cabinet provided the committee established to inquire into the Prices Act with specific terms of reference? Secondly, if it did, will the

Minister provide this Council with details of those terms of reference? Thirdly, will submissions be requested by the committee from the public and other interested bodies to assist it in carrying out its review? Finally, will the report of the committee be made public and tabled in this Chamber?

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: The Leader well knows that what Cabinet does is not made public, particularly—

The Hon. C. J. Sumner: A lot of it is. If you wished, you could make the terms of reference public.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT:—if it has not arrived at a decision. I do not intend to say what the Cabinet direction to the committee was. There is no earthly reason why I should, nor was it the practice, in this kind of thing, of the previous Government.

The Hon. C. J. Sumner: Terms of reference of committees were made public.

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: Not all of them, and not departmental ones, which these are. I do not know what consultations with the public the committee may undertake. It was given no directions as to what consultations it should have or to whom it should speak. Regarding whether or not the report will be tabled, it depends on the Government when the report is made known to the Government. It was a purely low-key departmental inquiry to assist the Government.

ROAD TOLL

The Hon. C. W. CREEDON: I desire to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister representing the Minister of Transport a question about the road toll.

Leave granted.

The Hon. C. W. CREEDON: Under the heading "Blitz on 'bombs' as toll grows", the following report in yesterday's *News* states:

A blitz on unroadworthy vehicles is planned by S.A. police to help reduce the carnage on our roads. So far this year, 257 people have been killed on S.A. roads, compared with 242 at the same time last year.

Senior police warned the toll is likely to exceed 300 for the year unless many motorists changed their driving habits. Six people were killed in S.A. at the weekend. It was one of the worst weekends on our roads for several months. The Police Crime Director, Sen. Chief Supt. Bruce Furler, said the weekend carnage shattered the good record that S.A. drivers had established in recent weeks. "Things were quiet, and then you get this," he said.

Road Safety Council Chairman, Mr. E. W. Hender, said: "All we can do is exhort people to take care—it is people who cause crashes—not cars or roads. Young people in particular should take care."

The Minister, in a pre-election policy statement, suggested the possibility of a roadworthiness test. For many years we have heard many reasons why road accidents occur, and the blame mainly goes to speed, carelessness, inattentiveness and drinking. However, we have heard little about unroadworthy vehicles being a major cause. Apart from the first paragraph of the article in the *News*, very little explanation has been made about this subject. Does the Minister have a report on the number of accidents caused by unroadworthy vehicles and, if so, what are the figures? Does the Minister intend to legislate to provide for vehicle roadworthiness tests?

The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN: I will refer the honourable member's question to the Minister of Transport and bring down a reply.

PRICE CONTROL

The Hon. B. A. CHATTERTON: Can the Minister of Consumer Affairs say whether the review that is being undertaken at present into price control will include a review of the minimum price for grapes? Will the Minister amend the price control legislation for grapes to close some of the loopholes that have occurred over the last year, when winemakers have purchased grape mulch rather than actual grapes, thereby avoiding provisions relating to the minimum prices that have been set by the Prices Commissioner?

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: The inquiry relates to price control generally. Therefore, it would certainly include minimum price control—

The Hon. B. A. Chatterton: It is a separate Act for grapes.

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: As I recall, provision for minimum price control for grapes is in the Prices Act. I am quite certain of that. The answer to the honourable member's first question is that the review relates to price control generally, which will include minimum prices for grapes or anything else. The answer to the honourable member's second question is that I have not yet considered any amendments to close any loopholes there may be.

The Hon. C. J. SUMNER: Does the Minister of Consumer Affairs have any objection to the committee, which has been established to review price control, inviting submissions from the public and other interested bodies?

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: The committee is a departmental committee, and I expect that it will operate departmentally. Departmental committees are frequently appointed; in particular, they were appointed by previous Governments. I would not think that the committee intended to seek information from the public.

The Hon. N. K. Foster: That is normally undertaken by departmental—

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: The committee may recommend the setting up of a public inquiry. However, at the moment the committee is not a public inquiry but a departmental inquiry. I have not expressed any objections, and I do not suppose I would have any objection to a public inquiry. On the other hand, it is unlikely that the committee would consult the public generally.

DEPARTMENTAL BRIEFINGS

The Hon. J. R. CORNWALL: I seek leave to make a short explanation prior to asking the Attorney-General, as Leader of the Government in this Council, a question regarding departmental briefings and confidentiality.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J. R. CORNWALL: When I rose to make an explanation prior to asking a question a short time ago my reference to confidentiality seemed to cause considerable merriment and guffawing from the Government members. That caused me considerable distress, because this Government is making public noises that it will be an open Government. However, its performance in no way matches its public statements. I have been quite disgusted with the way that Ministers opposite, particularly the Minister of Local Government, have consistently parried rather than answered questions in this Council. The approach made to me by the Department for the Environment was initially made by Dr. Peter Ellyard and was accepted by me on the telephone.

The Hon. C. M. Hill: He offered it to you, did he?

The Hon. J. R. CORNWALL: The offer was made in

pretty good faith and it was accepted in good faith.

The Hon. C. M. Hill: I am asking whether he offered it to you.

The Hon. J. R. CORNWALL: Yes, he rang me up and made the offer, and I accepted it in good faith, because I am not a cynical opportunist like members opposite. The public is heartily sick and tired of that sort of activity. Unlike the Government, the Opposition has no wish to be negative and carping. It distressed me that the next thing I knew about this, and before I had had any opportunity to discuss it further with the Minister or to have any guidelines set down as to the extent of the briefings, was when I was rung by Kim Tilbrook of the *Advertiser* who had this proposition put to him. The offer was made public by the Minister of Environment before it had been discussed with me in any way. I hope this is not a cynical attempt to gag Opposition members. I hope that is not the tactic that is being employed but, in view of the attitude of members opposite today, I am very concerned that that may well be so. I hope this offer can be perceived as an offer made in good faith, rather than an attempt to gag legitimate Opposition activity. Will it be Government policy that all Ministers will make their departmental heads available for full briefings to Opposition spokesmen? Will these briefings be given openly, without compromise, and without any restrictions regarding confidentiality?

The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN: I am not in a position to comment on the specific reference made by the honourable member. That is a matter between the Minister of Environment and the Hon. Dr. Cornwall. General Government policy has not been established on whether it will be policy for all Ministers to direct their departmental heads to be available to the Opposition. I can comment on that matter no further. Generally, if there are matters that have been given on a confidential basis to the Government, it would be improper for those matters to be disclosed to the Opposition or, if they are so disclosed, to be disclosed in a way that revokes any confidential requirement.

The Hon. J. R. CORNWALL: Will those conditions make a sham and a hypocritical political exercise out of the whole offer?

The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN: No.

MAINTENANCE PAYMENTS

The Hon. C. J. SUMNER: I seek leave to make a brief explanation prior to asking the Minister of Community Welfare a question about maintenance payments.

Leave granted.

The Hon. C. J. SUMNER: I have had referred to me a curious incident that occurred in the offices of the Minister's department on Friday, when a Mr. L. E. Dougherty attended the department's office to make a maintenance payment of \$120. Mr. Dougherty made the payment and then apparently received a receipt that was dated 29 October 1979 and not 26 October 1979, which was Friday's date. When he made further inquiries as to why the receipt was forward-dated, he received an explanation relating to convenience for the computer. This gentleman was worried that, if receipts are forward-dated, it might have an adverse consequence on people making payments to the Department for Community Welfare, because there may well be legal implications hanging on the date of a receipt. Is there a general policy within the Department for Community Welfare of forward-dating receipts for some purpose and, if there is, for what purpose is it done? Will the Minister investigate this particular incident?

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: If I were to be cynical, I could perhaps say that I would feed the honourable member's question into the computer and bring back a reply. However, I will be serious and state that I have no knowledge of the incident. I will have it investigated and bring back a reply.

REPLIES TO CORRESPONDENCE

The Hon. ANNE LEVY: I seek leave to make a statement before asking the Minister of Community Welfare, representing the Minister of Agriculture, a question regarding replies to correspondence.

Leave granted.

The Hon. ANNE LEVY: It was six weeks ago today that the new Ministry was sworn in following the election. As soon as it was announced that the member for Alexandra in another place had been appointed Minister of Agriculture, I wrote to him stating (I will not quote the entire letter) that I had been appointed by the previous Minister of Agriculture to a fruit and vegetable marketing working party, whose duty was to consider the report of the East End Market Location Committee in relation to the marketing of fresh fruit and vegetables in South Australia. In view of the circumstances of the change of Government, I offered the Minister my resignation as a member of that committee, but very much commended to him the committee's work and the important areas of its investigation. I said I hoped that the committee would continue in existence to enable it to fulfil the very important terms of reference with which it had been provided by the previous Government.

I appreciate that the Minister of Agriculture may wish to examine the whole matter of whether such a working party should continue in existence, although I cannot see that there is anything in any way Party political in looking at the system of fruit and vegetable marketing in this State, taking into consideration the interests of all the people involved, from the producer, through the marketing system to the consumer. I realise that the Minister may wish to consider whether such a committee should continue in existence or whether its terms of reference should be altered. However, in the six weeks since I wrote to the Minister, I have not yet had even an acknowledgement of my letter, let alone any reply to the detailed points contained therein. I therefore ask the Minister when I can expect either an acknowledgement of or a reply to the letter I wrote six weeks ago.

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: I will refer the honourable member's question to my colleague and bring back a reply.

LICENSED RESTAURANTS

The Hon. G. L. BRUCE: I seek leave to make a statement before asking the Minister of Community Welfare a question regarding licensed restaurants.

Leave granted.

The Hon. G. L. BRUCE: I refer to an item written by Mr. Paul Limpus, President of the Restaurateurs Association, in the 28 October issue of the *Sunday Mail*. In that report, Mr. Limpus referred to certain facts and figures. He said that in 1968 there were 22 licensed restaurants in South Australia, and that in 1979 there were 269 such restaurants, representing an increase of 1 223 per cent. He also said that, if all the dining rooms in licensed restaurants, hotels and licensed clubs enjoyed a 50 per cent occupancy, 161 400 people would have to dine out each week. Also, he said that there were 550 000 people in

South Australia under the age of 18 years or over the age of 65 years, and that this would put a strain on those of us who were left to dine out once a week. In 1968, there was one restaurant for every 51 136 persons, whereas in 1979 there was one restaurant for every 4 833 persons. It seems that applications for licences are still pouring in. In fact, the Licensing Court receives an application for a restaurant licence every two working days.

Will the Minister obtain and advise on any available figures relating to the turnover of licensed restaurants? Secondly, will he obtain and advise on any figures relating to bankruptcy occurring in the area of licensed restaurants? Finally, does the Minister consider that the granting of so many licences for restaurants affects the viability of the industry?

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: The honourable member will realise, if he looks at the Licensing Act, that restaurants do not involve a rationalisation system. If the honourable member looks at the sections of the Act that relate to the granting of new restaurant licences, he will find that, broadly speaking, the terms of reference given to the court involve the public need and the suitability of the premises. Those provisions have applied for many years, and the present Government has not amended them. Certainly, I will advise the honourable member regarding the figures that he requires regarding the number of licences, turnover, bankruptcy, and so on.

DEPARTMENTAL BRIEFINGS

The Hon. J. R. CORNWALL: Will the Attorney-General, as Leader of the Government in the Council, say whether the Liberal Government considers it desirable that the Opposition operate through departmental briefings or departmental leaks or, alternatively, whether it considers that it is better for the Opposition to be kept in the dark altogether?

The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN: Various Ministers adopt the view that, if Opposition members seek information regarding certain matters, they can ask for the information by question or by making private inquiries direct to the respective Ministers. Answers will generally be provided.

SHOPPING HOURS

The Hon. N. K. FOSTER: I ask the Minister of Consumer Affairs the following questions. First, will the relevant committee ascertain what additional cost would be involved with later shopping hours involving a five-day week? Secondly, will the Minister further instruct the Government to ascertain the existing award provisions for penalties paid for Saturday afternoon and Saturday evening trading? Thirdly, will the Minister ask the Chief Secretary to ascertain the additional cost to be borne in relation to all aspects of Sunday trading? Fourthly, will the Minister ensure that the committee inquire as to the total loading which may be imposed on all trading to meet any increase as a result of weekend and late-night shopping?

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: The answers to the honourable member's questions are: (1) no; (2) no; (3) no; and (4) no. The terms of reference—

The Hon. N. K. Foster: You are the weakest thing that ever wriggled out of a burrow.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: The terms of reference were entirely wide terms. Broadly speaking, they were simply to review price control, certainly not to undertake the kind of detailed investigation which the honourable member has predicated in his question.

The Hon. N. K. FOSTER: Is the Minister aware that, when late-night trading was the subject before the Industrial Court, the previous Government went to great pains to ensure that all of those foregoing questions were dealt with by the court at a public inquiry?

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: The answer is "Yes". This is a question not of trading hours but of price control.

VOLUNTARY AGENCIES

The Hon. BARBARA WIESE: Will the Minister of Community Welfare state whether he has fulfilled his Party's election promise to determine which voluntary agencies are worthy of being upgraded? If so, will he name the agencies and say how he proposes to upgrade them? If he has not yet assessed the worth of the voluntary agencies, will he advise when this is likely to be done and what criteria will be used?

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: Pursuant to the Community Welfare Act, there is established a community welfare grants fund advisory committee. It was established by Statute under the previous Government and still remains. A line in the Budget provides \$697 000 for voluntary agencies; the amount is provided for this fund. It is the function of the committee to advise how this fund is to be allocated. The committee is sitting today. I would expect that, before the end of the year (perhaps by the end of November), the voluntary agencies will be able to be advised as to the amounts they can expect out of the fund or, at least, a primary allocation. It may be that some funds have to be reserved because of incidentals which may arise later. I believe that that answers the honourable member's question in regard to direct monetary assistance. However, the kind of assistance which we contemplate goes beyond that. We expect to provide assistance in regard to departmental expertise, guidance and facilities. That matter is also being investigated at present.

BANK OF ADELAIDE

The Hon. C. J. SUMNER: Has the Attorney-General a reply to my recent question about the Bank of Adelaide?

The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN: Mr. R. Allert prepared a report with respect to the Bank of Adelaide. The report is of a confidential nature, and it is not intended to release it.

CRIME

The Hon. C. J. SUMNER (on notice): What specific legislative, administrative or other measures does the Government intend to take to fulfil its election promises to reduce the incidence of crime in South Australia and when will such measures be taken?

The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN: The answer to the question is still being processed, as it involves more than one portfolio. The Leader will recognise that all answers to Questions on Notice are processed through the Premier's Department and the department of the Minister of whom the question has been asked. The answers are considered by Cabinet. That is the procedure that the previous Government followed. The Leader and former Ministers on the Opposition side will know that, to enable this procedure to be followed, it is desirable to allow two weeks between the date of asking a question and the date requested for reply. I would ask the Opposition to recognise that situation. If the Leader cares to put his

question on notice for next Tuesday, it will then be answered.

The Hon. C. J. SUMNER: I am prepared to do that. I must confess that I thought it was the practice for questions to be answered within a week, where possible.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! This is not a debate.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION: QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The Hon. C. J. SUMNER (Leader of the Opposition): I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

The Hon. C. J. SUMNER: As I was saying, the Leader of the Government snuck in a statement which was useful to the Council but did not give me a chance to reply. When I made some comment on the matter, I was out of order. As I understood the position, under the previous Government, questions were placed on notice for answer the following week. The Leader of the Government has spoken to me about this matter, and I intend to take it up with my colleagues to arrange some system that will facilitate the Government in answering the questions. Obviously, we do not wish to have delays in answering the questions, and we realise that there are practical problems. However, I would have thought that the desirable aim would be an answer within a week; that was the aim set by the previous Government. I recognise that the aim was not always fulfilled, but it should be the aim. I will take up the matter with my colleagues and with the Leader of the Government to see whether the matter can be regularised to some extent.

QUESTIONS RESUMED

MINISTERIAL MEETINGS

The Hon. C. J. SUMNER (on notice) to the Attorney-General:

1. What meetings of Commonwealth and State Ministers covering each of the responsibilities of the Minister have been held since 15 September 1979?

2. Could the Minister provide the following information:

- (a) details of the agenda;
- (b) decisions taken on each item of the agenda; and
- (c) the attitude adopted by the South Australian Government in relation to each item?

The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN: The replies are as follows:

1. A meeting of the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General was held on Friday 12 October and Saturday 13 October 1979.

2. It is not proposed to provide the information sought because it is confidential to the Standing Committee.

The Hon. C. J. SUMNER (on notice) to the Minister of Local Government:

1. What meetings of Commonwealth and State Ministers covering each of the responsibilities of the Minister have been held since 15 September 1979?

2. Could the Minister provide the following information:

- (a) details of the agenda;
- (b) decisions taken on each item of the agenda; and
- (c) the attitude adopted by the South Australian Government in relation to each item?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: The replies are as follows:

1. A meeting of Commonwealth and State Ministers for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs was held in Sydney on 19 October 1979.

2. Such details remain confidential unless a consensus of Ministers agrees to release this information.

The Hon. C. J. SUMNER (on notice) to the Minister of Community Welfare:

1. What meetings of Commonwealth and State Ministers covering each of the responsibilities of the Minister have been held since 15 September 1979?

2. Could the Minister provide the following information:

- (a) details of the agenda;
- (b) decisions taken on each item of the agenda; and
- (c) the attitude adopted by the South Australian Government in relation to each item?

The Hon. C. J. BURDETT: The replies are as follows:

- 1. None.
- 2. Not applicable.

The Hon. C. J. SUMNER (on notice): Will the Government adopt the practice of providing to the Parliament a report on each conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers, including the following information:

- (a) details of the agenda;
- (b) decisions taken on each item of the agenda; and
- (c) the attitude adopted by the South Australian Government in relation to each item?

The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN: Information relating to matters discussed at meetings of Commonwealth and State Ministers is confidential to the Ministerial committees. It would not be possible to provide such a report to the South Australian Parliament without breaching that confidentiality, and it is therefore not proposed to adopt the practice suggested.

At the conclusion of each such meeting, it is the practice of Ministerial committees to release publicly such information relating to the meeting as is agreed between the Ministers. This is done in the form of a news release. In addition, matters which are considered to be of particular public interest which are cleared for release are often given further publicity by individual Ministers. Obviously, some items on agendas must remain confidential, at least in their early stages, and it would just not be feasible to supply details of all matters under discussion.

BUDGET PAPERS

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. K. T. Griffin:

That the Council take note of the papers relating to the Estimates of Expenditure, 1979-80, and the Loan Estimates, 1979-80.

(Continued from 25 October. Page 417.)

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: I intend to keep my remarks brief, because this is a much better Budget than any other that I have seen in my nine years in Parliament, despite the fact that it had to be brought in at such short notice as a result of the previous Government's obviously not being prepared to introduce a Budget and then hold an election. That Government did not want to face the people (and this is the second time it has occurred) with a Budget and answer for the sort of expenditure it had incurred and for the expenditure it proposed to bring about.

I congratulate the Government on the speedy way in which it has fulfilled many election promises. That is something to which we are not accustomed. The previous Government had a dismal record regarding election

promises, and it took me more than an hour to list some of them. I covered only two Ministers in that time: I could have done research and found the same number of broken promises by other Ministers. The present Government has got straight into action and has done the things that it said it would do. Clearly, some items will have to wait, but certainly they will not have to wait up to nine or 10 years, as did many items promised by the previous Government for which the taxpayers and the Opposition were waiting.

One matter that I want to speak about is one that I gave an indication of in my Address in Reply speech, namely, Monarto. That is something that all South Australians are now extremely concerned about, because of the huge amount of taxpayers' funds now tied up in what is a clearly useless project. The total amount of taxpayers' funds now employed in this grandiose scheme that was announced as an election promise in 1973 is \$28 000 000. The scheme has never reached fulfilment and, in my opinion, it never will. We must now consider the scheme so as to find out what we will do with it in future.

The Hon. Mr. Carnie asked a question about the value of the land held by the Government at Monarto. My recollection is that the amount was \$6 800 000. After the expenditure of \$28 000 000, we have an asset worth approximately \$7 000 000, allowing for some inflation. If we sell the land, we still will have \$21 000 000 tied up. The previous Government did not pay the interest: each year it capitalised the interest on this programme. That is why the present Government faces a white elephant of monumental proportions that would defy even the most competent board of directors in Adelaide.

The capitalised expenses are \$12 116 000. It is interesting to see in the Auditor-General's Report (page 273) how the accounting for this project is done. Under the heading "Funds represented by fixed assets", land and improvements are shown at \$10 388 000. That seems higher than the amount of \$7 000 000 that I have just quoted, but note (5) at page 274 gives an indication of why the amount is higher. That note states:

The land presently held by the Commission would not be expected to realise the amount shown in the balance sheet if sold for purposes other than urban use.

That wipes out the difference between the \$10 388 000 and the \$7 000 000. Another item, under the heading "Fixed assets", states:

Planning and investigation, \$1 494 000.

The Hon. J. C. Burdett: What sort of asset is that?

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: That is what I am wondering. It is an interesting fixed asset. The next item is Design, at \$1 233 000, and capitalised expenses are shown as a fixed asset at \$12 116 000. The total fixed assets are shown as \$27 955 000. If I were a businessman and were asked what were the fixed assets of Monarto, I would say they would be the land, at \$7 000 000, not all these nonsensical items that cannot be termed fixed assets. How can capitalised expenses be a fixed asset? If I were doing the accounting, I would say that they would be a non-recoverable liability. It may be an accounting practice to term them a fixed asset, but there should be some hint in the report to indicate that there was only one real asset, namely, the land, at \$7 000 000.

The taxpayers have a non-recoverable liability of \$21 000 000. Even if we sold the land, we still would have to pay interest, because we owe all that money to someone. If we paid the interest for ever, we would not get anywhere. Unless we write it off, it will stay on the books. Regarding the losses by Monarto last year, at 30 June 1979 there were nine people employed there. One claim could be made that, if we got rid of Monarto, some jobs would be lost. The Monarto deficit last year was \$119 000 a job,

if we base it on nine jobs. The sooner we get out of it the better, because it is costing too much to keep nine people employed.

The annual loss on this project is now 24.3 per cent, or \$2 235 000, which is nearly one quarter of the total real asset there. I have not yet heard what the present Government intends to do with this project, but I believe it would be in order for it to consider the sale of the land, or at least the fixed asset. That is because there is no way that we can go anywhere but into further financial trouble, as a State, by continuing to hold this land, because it is still costing South Australia money. Unfortunately, it will go on costing South Australia money. We must do something to try to reduce the amount of expenditure.

Question after question from the Opposition concerns community welfare and the problems of the needy in the community. I agree that we should expend as much of our funds in that area as possible, and one way of doing that is to cut down on expenditure on useless items such as Monarto, which is a white elephant created by the former Government as an election gimmick but which is something that the taxpayers of South Australia will go on paying for.

The Hon. D. H. Laidlaw: You said that before, and you were right—

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: I thank the honourable member.

The Hon. D. H. Laidlaw: —as usual.

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: I do not know about that, but it is very kind of the honourable member. I have hinted that I would have something to say about the Land Commission, and the present Government has already indicated that it is investigating the commission. Certainly, the commission needs investigating. The total funds employed by the commission amount to \$88 000 000. Between the commission and Monarto, South Australia has \$116 000 000 involved in two projects, one of which is completely useless and the other of doubtful value. I doubt that the State should be involved in those projects.

I do not know the exact amount that South Australia obtained from the railways transfer, but I suggest that these two items have completely cancelled out any benefit that South Australia may have obtained from the sale of its railways. It did not take the former Government long to go through the money it received from that sale, if it received that much.

Last year the Land Commission had total sales of \$8 035 000. The interest on those sales was \$7 788 736, which means that on interest alone, if one takes the total sales from the interest bill, using interest alone as one of the items of cost, South Australia made a profit of \$246 000 for a total taxpayer involvement of \$88 000 000. If there is any criticism of land dealings in South Australia by any other body, then the former Government and its members ought to look at their own history. If any private organisation had such a record it would no longer be in existence. Why is this branch of the commission still in existence? It is not paying its interest instalments. Like Monarto, the commission capitalised its interest and now has a total capitalised interest debt of \$20 749 000. The commission has not yet paid an interest bill and has merely gone on adding to the amount it owes. That is bad business.

If the Land Commission had been established to gain reasonably priced land for taxpayers, then perhaps it could be justified, but I do not believe it is doing that. In many cases the commission has paid far too much for land. Indeed, I would be interested to see what is now the value of land held by the commission if it were to be sold on a forced-sale basis. The amount that has been paid for land

is now far above its value because of the general downward trend of prices and because there is no longer the demand for land that there was.

Honourable members should not forget that the commission was established to provide land in the outer-metropolitan area and at the same time, as I have stated, South Australia employed funds at Monarto for the same purpose: to provide for the over-spill of population from Adelaide. The Government needs to look carefully at the commission and see whether its existence is justified. Secondly, it should see whether some of the land that is held should not be sold to reduce the burden that is being thrust upon the taxpayer by this item.

I was interested to examine the Auditor-General's statement surrounding the South Australian Housing Trust, especially as I found that the trust also has vast holdings of land. At page 330 of his report, the Auditor-General indicates that the value of vacant land held by the trust amounts to \$39 255 000, and that is in addition to land held by the Land Commission and the Monarto holdings. Why South Australia needs two bodies dealing in land is beyond me. The Government should look at whether or not there should be a rationalisation between these two bodies, because this year the Housing Trust spent \$7 325 000 on land, and I assume that it would obtain most of that land from the body already holding land, and that is the commission.

However, I do not believe that that is the case, because the commission sold blocks to 783 people, an increase of 56 per cent over the previous year. The average value of these blocks is about \$8 000, which means that the sale of land for residential allotments amounted to \$6 264 000, which leaves only \$1 771 000 as the difference between the total sales and the number of residential allotments sold to individuals. Obviously, the trust must have purchased its land outside of the commission. Perhaps that aspect should be carefully examined. Either there is a lack of communication between the trust and the commission, or else the commission is considered by the trust to be unsuitable and, if that is the case, we should have an investigation into why it is unsuitable. South Australia should no longer continue to invest taxpayers' funds in land for housing when we already have invested \$88 000 000 through the Land Commission. The trust and the commission should be brought together on that item.

Regarding the South Australian Health Commission, I totally agree with the view expressed by the Hon. Mr. DeGaris, that the information available to the Council and to Parliament this year is far too little on which to base any proper criticism or assessment of the manner in which the commission is operating. I say that particularly about the commission because of the problem that has occurred in the past. Honourable members need not be reminded of the Public Accounts Committee report, an extensive document that identified huge areas of waste. It would be wrong for the Parliament to have insufficient information available to it in order to make a proper assessment of those problems, of what has been done about those problems and about what we are going to do.

I trust that the new Government will not follow this trend and will allow the Parliament greater information. One way in which this can be done is by ensuring that much greater debate takes place on the Estimates. I intend to raise this matter in a later debate, because there is far too little investigation by Parliament of the detailed expenditure of taxpayers' funds. Parliament is entitled to know in detail what has occurred with those funds. One hears about many items and would like to ask questions about them, but when one does ask questions the inevitable answer comes back that the information is not

available, and that such detail is not possible to extract from the reports, or similar answers.

The Hon. J. R. Cornwall: Nothing has changed!

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: That is quite possible. The previous Government has set a very good trend over the last nine years; it was a most secretive Government. I was amazed to hear the previous Minister today indicating that he doubted the offer made to him in relation to departmental briefings. For the Hon. Dr. Cornwall to have the audacity to comment in that way is quite beyond me, because I distinctly recall having a discussion with one of the departmental officers, and out of that I extracted the most marvellous tale of how I was sneaking behind the then Minister's back and holding private meetings. In fact, Mr. Wotton and I were accused of all sorts of things by Dr. Cornwall's predecessor, and those departmental officers were threatened with the loss of their positions by the previous Minister for daring to talk to members of the then Opposition. It was indicated that in future any departmental officer who did that would be sacked. For the previous Minister, Dr. Cornwall, to now decry what has been offered to him by this Government is quite ludicrous.

The Hon. J. R. Cornwall: Do you think the way Mr. Wotton operated in Opposition was legitimate?

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: Yes, quite legitimate, because he could not get the information from the Minister. The secretive way the Government went about its business was quite incredible.

The Hon. J. C. Burdett: The Minister has now offered access to the Opposition.

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: That is right, and it is a very generous offer indeed, but the Hon. Dr. Cornwall is being quite ridiculous about it, and I suppose he has his own reasons for that. I believe the Hon. Dr. Cornwall does not want access to the department. I would have been happy if I had been offered that access by the previous Government, but it was never extended. In fact, I distinctly recall going to a Highways Department weighbridge one day with Mr. Chapman. He and I were travelling to the South-East, and we had travelled about half a mile past the weighbridge when Mr. Chapman, who was the then shadow Minister of Agriculture, said he had never seen one operating. Therefore, I turned around and went back. From that, the previous Minister of Transport, Mr. Virgo, extracted the most magnificent tale of how Mr. Chapman and I furtively went to this weighbridge and forced the officers present to give us access to it. In fact, the two weighbridge operators were extremely hospitable. Mr. Chapman and I introduced ourselves, and we were then kindly asked whether we would like a cup of coffee. The operators then offered to show Mr. Chapman how the weighbridge operated when he said that he had never seen a weighbridge working. There was then a discussion about the difficulty in weighing vehicles with tri-axes, and the operators acknowledged that they did have problems, and they offered us access to their figures. According to the then Minister of Transport the jobs of those two officers were threatened, because of our totally innocent visit.

The Hon. M. B. Dawkins: The Minister didn't even know who the two people were.

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: No, he had no idea. Those two officers actually had their jobs threatened by the previous Government because two members of Parliament happened to enter a weighbridge and ask to see how it worked.

The Hon. J. C. Burdett: As a result, the Minister changed the regulation.

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: Yes. The previous Minister did not want us to go there, because the

information we had been given in Parliament was wrong, but we did not realise how wrong that information was until these officers showed us how the weighbridge operated. For the previous Minister of Environment to cast aspersions on what the Hon. Mr. Wotton has offered him is quite ridiculous. I have referred to previous Ministers of the Crown threatening public servants. It was for that reason and others that the previous Government fell. It became so arrogant and bullying that it even threatened its own staff.

I have some friends in the Highways Department who told me what they thought of the previous Minister of Transport, Mr. Virgo, and the way in which he handled the incident I have just referred to. Everybody in the department was told the true facts by the two officers concerned who had personal knowledge of the incident and knew that it was innocent and unplanned.

I congratulate the Government on the excellent Budget it has brought down at such very short notice. I am grateful to the previous Government for leaving the Budget until the new Government could get in, straighten it out and do those things in the community that will return a bit of confidence. The previous Government realised that it did not have the community's confidence and that the people wanted a new Government, so it very decently held an election and gave my Party the chance to bring down a Budget. The new Government is very grateful for that opportunity and is grateful also that expenditure in line with its policies can be provided for in this Budget. I support the motion.

The Hon. J. R. CORNWALL: I support the motion to table the papers relating to the Budget. As the Leader of the Opposition has already said, we are embarking on a rather unusual course in the handling of this Budget. It is also the first Liberal Budget in South Australia for 10 years. It is even more unusual in that the Budget proposed for many departments has been adopted virtually unchanged from that proposed by the former Labor Government, which is a point sadly missed by the previous speaker.

I now briefly digress to comment on the remarks and performance by the Hon. Mr. Cameron. It is very sad to reflect on the Hon. Mr. Cameron's present role as he languishes on the back benches, compared to the heady days of the early 1970's when he was a member of the Liberal Movement and as such was one of the key political figures in South Australia. At that time, the Hon. Mr. Cameron developed a certain style that was very effective at the time for a member of the Opposition. Ultimately he came back into the fold, but he was never forgiven by the Liberal Party for his transgressions. The Hon. Mr. Cameron was never forgiven for deserting that Party and going to the L.M., and of course he has now paid the price: he is going to languish forever on the back benches until his political career finishes. It is most unfortunate that the Hon. Mr. Cameron cannot lift his game and realise that his Party is now in Government.

If the Hon. Mr. Cameron cannot do more research and come up with something more pressing, I suggest that it would be wiser for him not to participate in this sort of debate, because we live in a changed time and, indeed, we have a change of Government. Putting all of his nonsense on recycle does nothing to enhance his opportunities at all.

This debate is a valuable opportunity for a general discussion on the Tonkin Government's policies and priorities and the effects which these policies may have in the next three years. As the Leader has already said, we reserve the right to look more closely and carefully at the Budget in the Committee stage. It is important that, as

soon as possible after an election, the promises of a successful Party should be fully documented. That is a significant yardstick against which the performance of the Government can be measured in successive years. Although I do not specifically propose to detail the Liberal Party's election promises, many of my colleagues in this Chamber and in another place have done or will do so.

That is a legitimate and highly desirable exercise. In addition, I have warned the Government that our files are bulging with the many rash promises made by the Liberal Party early in the campaign when neither its members nor anyone else believed that it would win the election. Those promises were born in desperation and, I suggest, nurtured later in a grab for power.

As I said previously, I am a fair and reasonable man, and I will try to be perfectly fair as I watch them implemented. However, I am very concerned that many of them will take this State in the wrong direction and for the wrong reasons. Some of them, particularly those that we find least objectionable, may never be implemented. Since 15 September they have been qualified by the well-worn Liberal phrase, "in due course when finance permits". We will certainly be watching the "when finances permit" situation in the 1980 Budget.

As I said recently in the Address in Reply debate, State Governments are concerned principally with sound administration. They are judged on that basis at successive elections. As this Cabinet has a small head and a very long tail, that judgment may well be harsh. On the other hand, the Opposition has quickly grasped the realities of the position. We intend to devote our very considerable collective abilities to ensure that we regain Government as a completely revitalised Party at the next election.

I turn specifically to the Department for the Environment. I should like to list some of the major projects that were close to fruition immediately before 15 September. I fear that the Minister will have a hard row to hoe, given the prevailing attitudes of his Cabinet colleagues, particularly the Minister of Mines and Energy. Mr. Goldsworthy seems to be a unique species in the history of responsible government in South Australia. He is the first Minister ever with no idea whatsoever of where he is going to show such a simple-minded dedication to getting there. For this reason particularly environmental protection is an immediate and critical consideration.

The Environmental Protection (Assessment) Bill has been prepared by Parliamentary Counsel after lengthy and extensive consultation with many interested people and other Government departments. It is imperative that it be introduced before the Christmas recess so that it can be considered fully by all interested parties before the autumn session. This should ensure its early and speedy passage when Parliament resumes. The Minister of Environment has long supported the principles contained in the Bill. The Bill is ready to go, and he must now deliver.

This Government has clearly opened a very wide credibility gap with environmentalists. The Mines Department has been given an open season and is running riot. Swift action must be taken if statements on environmental protection are to be taken seriously. Even with proposed legislation, the ultimate approving authority will be the Minister, which in practice means Cabinet. Later this week, I will propose a significant step to impose an independent outside monitor on its actions in environmental matters.

I hope that the Minister of Environment will also release the review of the beverage container legislation as soon as possible for public scrutiny and comment. The overwhelming majority of South Australians would agree that the can

legislation has been an outstanding success. However, I know that there is strong pressure on the Government from the South Australian Brewing Company to suspend or repeal the Act. I hope that this approach will be resisted, as it is based on misinformation and doctored statistics.

It is also to be hoped that the Minister does not fall for the thimble and pea trick regarding litter control. At present, two approaches are propounded. The first, which is endorsed by all environmentalists, involves a three-pronged attack: recovery and recycling, reduction of the total litter stream, and reduction of litter in the municipal garbage stream. Such an approach would require uniform legislation, and I urge the Minister to have it placed on the agenda for the Australian Environment Council meeting in New Zealand in December.

The second approach, propounded by the packaging industry, is the "litter only" programme. This imposes a small resource tax on all packaging at the point of manufacture or distribution. The money raised is used to police littering, for clean-up programmes, and to dispose of litter, principally by burning or land-fill disposal. There is no real attempt to reduce the volume of packaging produced or to conserve resources and energy. Unfortunately, this is the accepted approach in Victoria and New South Wales at present. Again, I urge the Minister to resist it except as a second line of defence.

Mr. Wotton has recently confirmed that the Clean Air Bill, which I initiated, is being prepared. I will be interested to see whether the Minister includes therein a clause to make air pollution potential alerts compulsory for backyard burners.

Control of vegetation clearance and retention of native roadside vegetation are both matters that the Minister has supported while in Opposition. I will watch with keen interest his initiatives in these areas. Other matters on which the department is working include the proclamation of the Aboriginal Heritage Act and the appointment of the Aboriginal Heritage Advisory Committee. Planning for and allocation of the first funds from the Heritage Trust are also currently under way. The administration of the Heritage Act and Aboriginal Heritage Act must be resolved urgently.

The future role of the Coast Protection Board must be redefined. This year, the board has \$1 300 000 with which to recommend allocations. Unfortunately, in recent years the board has moved into significant areas of foreshore development, which is against the spirit, if not the letter, of the Coast Protection Act. This emphasis will need to be reversed.

The proposed Off-Road Recreational Vehicles Bill has had an extraordinarily long gestation. However, the report on suitable reserved sites for off-road vehicles is now completed. A report on special insurance and registration for certain classes of off-road vehicle is available. Again, in Opposition the Minister was an enthusiastic supporter of this proposed legislation. No doubt we can look forward to its being produced in Parliament very soon.

The noise control legislation is working effectively, although the unit is severely hampered by a staff shortage. I shall be interested to see how this is handled by a Government that is committed to reducing the public sector.

The future of the General Reserves Trust, the Black Hill Native Flora Trust and the Cleland Park Trust will be watched with interest. One of the major priorities in the National Parks and Wildlife Division will be the strengthening, both in numbers and expertise, of the inspection section. I suggest that the secondment of at least one relatively senior detective from the C.I.B. is a

significant step that could be taken immediately. This should be given serious consideration. It would allow this very important section to continue to function pending reorganisation. Again, it will be interesting to see how the section is expanded within the manpower ceiling.

Work was being done to significantly upgrade the salaries and career structures of the rangers and park keepers at the time of my involuntary resignation. I hope that this work is proceeding satisfactorily.

There are other current matters that are almost too numerous to mention. They include the future role of the Environment Protection Council. Certainly, Mr. Wotton will not be short of work. I only hope that he can convince his Cabinet colleagues of the importance of his department. As I said previously, I have grave misgivings about that, given the attitude of the present Cabinet.

I must express my bitter disappointment that the Lands Department has been again pushed into splendid isolation. That was a major leap backward. There is a high degree of complementarity between lands, environment and urban and regional affairs matters. Rural land resource management cannot be divorced from urban and regional land resource management or environmental protection.

For more than 50 years, there have been some very strange anomalies and anachronisms in the administration of the Crown Lands Act. Pending a completely rewritten Act, preferably incorporating the Pastoral Act, I had received Cabinet approval for more than 40 amendments to the Crown Lands Act. Those amendments would have removed a large number of anomalies. These range from the requirement that almost all approvals, even at the most remarkably trivial level, must be personally signed by the Minister in his own hand, to far more effective control of soil and rubbish dumping on unallotted Crown lands.

In my short period in the department, I formed the opinion that the enthusiasm in the Land Resource Management Division was enormous. I sincerely hope that the Minister does not dampen that enthusiasm, dedication and initiative, and allow a backward slide towards colonial days.

I turn now to the Department of Health and the Health Commission. I must say how disappointed I am that the Hon. Ren DeGaris was not given this portfolio. He is obviously the only person in either House from the Liberal Party who has any real grasp of health care delivery and finance problems.

The present Minister, Mrs. Adamson, has no political or administrative background in this area at all. Furthermore, it is obvious from her public statements that she lacks both the intellectual capacity and the compassion which should be brought to the portfolio. At present, she is suffering from an acute attack of foot-in-mouth disease. The ability to gulp large quantities of fresh air, brown bread and fruit juice will not be enough. Nor will rhetoric about value for the health dollar while it is confined to cleaners and domestic staff in public hospitals.

At present in Australia we are lurching into a crisis in medical and hospital care which is of massive proportions. We have moved towards it at an ever-accelerating pace for the past 10 years. In South Australia, throughout Australia and all around the world during this period, there has been an enormous growth in the provision of beds for acute somatic care. The bricks and mortar mentality has pervaded Health Departments everywhere. At the same time there has been an explosion in the growth of medical technology, an incipient trend to an over-supply of medical graduates and an ever-increasing tendency to doctor-initiated over-utilisation. Given the way health care is organised and financed in Australia, we had to run into major problems. At the same time political

debate in this country and in this State has ranged over about 5 per cent of the total health spectrum.

Recognising that health care should be available according to genuine need and financed according to ability to pay, the Whitlam Government introduced Medibank. It was based on the professional integrity and, even worse, the altruism of the medical profession. In the event, a large number of doctors displayed neither. A system of universal health insurance in a fee-for-service system is bound to fail unless it is accompanied by strict peer review.

Likewise, any realistic and genuine effort to cut hospital costs must fail without peer review. That is a basic lesson which Mrs. Adamson must learn. Concerned and intelligent consultants in the medical profession to whom I have spoken agree that approximately 95 per cent of over-utilisation is initiated by medical practitioners. In public hospitals this is common because of bad organisation. Often, it is simply more convenient to keep the patient hospitalised, in case further tests are required. This costs the taxpayer \$150 per day.

The Hon. R. J. Ritson: Private hospitals are cheaper than public ones.

The Hon. J. R. CORNWALL: That is not so, but I do not intend to debate that matter now. On other occasions, professional pride or pique causes unnecessary delays in seeking advice from more expert consultants. Outside the public system the situation is much worse. The motivation is often based purely on profit. What nonsense it is to have an overwhelming obsession with cutting waste at the Frozen Food Factory when the \$900 000 represents the annual net income of four people—two pathologists and two radiologists—in private practice in Adelaide. What rubbish it is to talk of decreasing the cleaning staff by 25 when even five patients are unnecessarily detained for one additional night at the Royal Adelaide or the Queen Elizabeth Hospitals.

How pointless it is to simply cut back public hospital beds while insured patients are kept for any number of additional days in community hospitals. That gives the lie to the sort of story that people like the Hon. Dr. Ritson would like to put up. There is no system of checks and balances in community hospitals, and they can never be cheaper until we have some way of controlling what medicos get up to in them.

The only patients who will be penalised by the present Government cutbacks are those who cannot afford to insure. Unless peer review is introduced and medical administration strengthened, elective surgery lists will lengthen at public hospitals and inefficiency will persist. The number of people forced to take private insurance which they cannot afford will escalate, the taxpayers will simply have their money transferred from supporting public hospitals to supporting community and private hospitals. Costs will continue to escalate alarmingly.

In the meantime, the bonanza for medical practitioners will continue. Can we really afford to persist with a system which guarantees busy general practitioners \$60 000 to \$80 000 net income per annum, and specialists and surgeons \$100 000 to \$250 000?

The Hon. R. J. Ritson: Where did you get that from?

The Hon. J. R. CORNWALL: I will repeat, for the honourable member's benefit, that a busy, competent general practitioner's net income is between \$60 000 and \$80 000 a year. Specialists' and surgeons' net income is between \$100 000 and \$250 000.

The Hon. R. J. Ritson interjecting:

The Hon. J. R. CORNWALL: If the honourable member does not agree with that, he has not had much to do with practitioners in private practice. It is common

knowledge that pathologists are doing extraordinarily well, as are radiologists. Why does the honourable member express so much surprise when I say that their net income is a quarter of a million? It is common knowledge that competent practitioners are making \$60 000 to \$80 000 a year out of the present system. Why does the honourable member think that there is such an extraordinary preoccupation with talking about tax-evasion schemes? Whenever one finds a group of medical practitioners together, one finds that they do not talk about their interest in cases or motivation in the profession—they talk about how much tax they have to pay and what sort of family trusts they can involve themselves in to overcome this. It is common knowledge and cannot be disputed.

To argue that we should confine this debate to those costs borne directly by the State Government is nonsense. It misses the point completely. The escalation of medical and hospital costs in Australia has pushed the percentage of g.n.p. which we spend on sickness, as distinct from health care, to almost 8 per cent. That continues to increase so rapidly that the whole system is in danger of breaking down. As individuals we are forced to pay too much, and as a nation we spend too much for too little return. Whether that money comes from Federal taxes, State taxes, is paid directly or, most inequitably of all, comes from payment of flat rate hospital and medical insurance, it still comes out of every wage and salary earner's pocket. Even worse, many of those so-called health dollars (Mrs. Adamson's expression, not mine) are being gobbled up by a plethora of unnecessary pathology tests, excessive or unnecessary radiology, by over-utilisation of acute beds, by unnecessary surgery and by medical incompetence.

At the same time, there is a very serious shortage of funds for other areas. Provision for geriatric and other chronic long-term patients is appalling. Pensioners go without dentures and children without orthodontists and other special oral services because there is no money. Community and preventive health programmes are deficient, neglected, and in many areas non-existent. The answers are no doubt complex but the areas which should be investigated can be summarised simply. While we persist with a fee-for-service structure, we need a system of universal insurance.

The basic concept of universal insurance and its funding is sound. It is the system of checks and balances that must be built into the system that needs consideration. It is essential that continuous peer review, including medical and surgical audits, be begun at the earliest possible time. This will involve Governments, whether they be State or Federal, Liberal or Labor, in a confrontation with the A.M.A., but it must be done and done soon. As part of that process it is just as essential that a system of continuous medical education and periodical reaccreditation of doctors be initiated. A degree obtained 25 years ago should not entitle a doctor to practice in 1980 unless he or she remains competent.

At the same time, it is imperative that any control by peer review instituted in public hospitals be extended to cover all hospitals. We cannot afford to have incompetence or over-utilisation in community or private hospitals any more than we can in public hospitals. Despite the impression that may have been gained by some of my colleagues, this is not a criticism of the medical profession in general. Many doctors in 1979 are better trained, better motivated, and more dedicated to their profession than

ever before. It is, however, a very strong criticism, indeed an indictment, of the way in which the profession is organised.

Before I leave the health field, special mention should be made concerning the rehabilitation of persons injured at work. This is an area where private insurers, like the money-changers in the temple, should be driven out. At present, legal implications are far more important than medical or humanitarian ones. The injured worker is the victim in a tug-of-war between doctors and lawyers, while he or she develops a deep neurosis as the case drags on. Lump sum payments, if and when they are eventually made, are wretchedly inadequate.

Unlike other tolerant and civilised countries, in Australia we seem prepared to continually sacrifice ordinary, decent working men and women to keep down the cost to industry.

The Hon. J. E. Dunford: What about Mr. Dawkins, his farm, and all the money he's getting on the side?

The Hon. J. R. CORNWALL: I am sure Mr. Dawkins has no idea of what it is like in the real world, with ordinary men and women.

If the Minister really wants to do something constructive, let her give up the brown bread, the clichés, and the posturing for a while and have a look at the total picture in the real world.

Finally, I turn to the portfolios of Local Government and Housing, and particularly the Minister, Mr. Hill. People may be surprised by the vigour with which I have pursued the question of Mr. Hill's financial interests. I want to make clear that I will continue to pursue Mr. Hill on these matters with all the sincerity, intensity and tenacity that I can muster. I take this opportunity to explain my reasons once again.

Because of his lifelong association with the real estate industry, the appointment of Mr. Hill to those portfolios is a dreadful and tragic mistake. It is dreadful because the hint of financial advantage or corruption will persist for as long as he is Minister. It is a tragedy because the stain will spread, quite unfairly, to every member of the real estate industry while he remains in the portfolios.

It is dreadful because it will demean every local government officer or councillor throughout Mr. Hill's term in office. It is a great tragedy because it reduces the public standing of every member of the Government and every member of the South Australian Parliament. There is no parallel. It is a complete fallacy to compare his appointment to any other.

With the exception of environment and planning, Murray Hill could hold any other portfolio in this Government and I would not object one iota on the grounds of pecuniary interest, but I am appalled that he persists with local government and housing with a total lack of sensitivity to public perception of his position. The Premier, as an honest and honourable man, has no option but to transfer Mr. Hill to another area. I appeal to him to do so at the earliest opportunity. I support the motion.

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 4.16 p.m. the Council adjourned until Wednesday 31 October at 2.15 p.m.