

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Tuesday 27 October 1981

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

## ASSENT TO BILLS

His Excellency the Governor, by message, intimated his assent to the following Bills:

Fire Brigades Act Amendment,  
South Australian Health Commission Act Amendment.

## PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Minister of Local Government (Hon. C. M. Hill)—

*Pursuant to Statute—*  
Firearms Act, 1977—Regulations—Fees (Amendment).  
Sewerage Act, 1929-1977—Regulations—Qualifications.

By the Minister of Arts (Hon. C. M. Hill)—

*Pursuant to Statute—*  
The State Opera of South Australia—Report, 1980-81.  
Auditor-General's Report, 1980-81.

By the Minister of Community Welfare (Hon. J. C. Burdett)—

*Pursuant to Statute—*  
Stock Diseases Act, 1934-1976—Regulations—Goats.  
Movement of Stock.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT: NURSING HOMES

**The Hon. J. C. BURDETT:** I seek leave to make a statement about future arrangements for State nursing home beds at Windana and Magill Home. I have spoken to the Attorney-General, who will make appropriate additional time available at the end of Question Time.

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** I rise on a point of order, Sir. I do not wish to refuse the Minister leave to make a Ministerial statement, but recently there has been some controversy in another place and in this Chamber about the content of Ministerial statements. I believe that the practice should be that those who wish to make a Ministerial statement should approach members on this side or the relevant shadow Minister to ask whether there is any objection. A copy of the document should be provided. The Attorney-General has adopted that practice in recent times, and on that basis the leave can be granted. I understand that that is the procedure that ought to be followed, and I ask the Minister whether he will consent to do that.

**The PRESIDENT:** A point of order having been taken, I make the point that this is an arrangement that should be agreed to amongst members themselves and that it does not concern the Chair.

**The Hon. J. C. BURDETT:** I am quite prepared to adopt that procedure in future. I am not aware that it was a procedure; it was not always carried out. I have available copies of my Ministerial statement.

**The PRESIDENT:** Is leave granted for the Minister to make his statement?

Leave granted.

**The Hon. J. C. BURDETT:** The Council will be aware of community concern to ensure that nursing home beds available at Windana are commissioned. These beds were established for the care of 90 adult patients suffering from brain failure, following approval of the Parliamentary

Standing Committee on Public Works and Cabinet in 1976 to the conversion of Windana's former function as a custodial institution for delinquent boys. Agreement was subsequently reached with Southern Cross Homes to operate the new facility, as well as the associated day-care centre, which was established under Southern Cross Homes' administration in 1980.

The Council will also be aware of the Commonwealth Government's refusal to give approval to pay nursing home benefits in respect of these 90 beds. This was despite repeated submissions from the South Australian Health Commission and personal representations by the Minister of Health to the Commonwealth Minister for Health that Commonwealth approval should be forthcoming on the grounds that the needs of patients suffering from brain failure or senile dementia should be seen in a different context from psychiatric patients, for whom the Commonwealth is precluded from providing benefits under its legislation.

A request to recognise Windana as an ordinary nursing home was also refused by the Federal Government on the basis that there were sufficient nursing home beds in that area of Adelaide. Against this background, the State Government has persisted in its efforts to make optimum use of the nursing home beds at Windana.

At the same time as the Health Commission has been trying to open nursing home beds at Windana, the Department for Community Welfare, which operates a 72-bed nursing home at Magill Home, in association with hostel accommodation, has been trying to find a means of upgrading accommodation for the nursing home patients. Two of the buildings containing nursing home beds at Magill Home are significantly substandard and fail to meet the requirements of the State Health Act for nursing home accommodation. Accordingly, the Commonwealth Health Department has served notice that payment of nursing home benefits for patients located in the two substandard buildings (36 beds) will no longer be paid unless the accommodation is brought up to standard. The estimated cost of such a project is \$2 000 000.

Following negotiations between officers of the South Australian Health Commission and the Department for Community Welfare, the concept has been developed of closing the nursing home component of Magill and negotiating with the Commonwealth to open the beds at Windana in exchange for the closure of the beds at Magill. If achievable, this would result in an increase of 18 in the Government nursing home bedstock. It is obviously more logical for the Government to examine the possibility of transferring nursing home patients from substandard accommodation at Magill to the high quality accommodation at Windana, rather than to expend \$2 000 000 of taxpayers money to upgrade the substandard accommodation. It also appears that, all other avenues having been exhausted, transfer of beds may be the only way in which the high quality accommodation at Windana can be used for nursing home purposes.

All Windana requires is certain minor modifications and upgrading to meet the latest fire protection standards, and the cost for this has been estimated at \$220 000. If the Commonwealth agrees to the transfer of the funds, this work will be undertaken as a matter of urgency. The Government recognises the need to ensure that nursing home patients in its care are accommodated in the best possible facilities and that any transfers are undertaken with the least possible inconvenience and disruption to the patients and their families. Achievement of such transfer necessarily involves negotiations between the Health Commission and the Commonwealth Government and between the Health Commission and Southern Cross Homes, which were, as I

mentioned earlier, given Cabinet approval last year to operate Windana as a nursing home.

The Government has therefore given approval for the Health Commission to:

1. Negotiate with the Commonwealth Health Department in order to exchange the allocation of 72 State nursing home beds at Magill for 90 (general purpose) State nursing home beds at Windana.
2. Negotiate with Southern Cross Homes Inc. to assume conduct of Windana as a State nursing home.

Subject to the satisfactory outcome of these negotiations, discussions will be held with unions and employees affected by the transfer to keep them informed.

Both the Minister of Health and I are very conscious of the need to reassure patients and their families that their future care and accommodation are provided for in the best possible way. To this end, we intend to enlist the assistance of appropriate professional support from the Health Commission and Department for Community Welfare to assess the needs of each individual and to try to ensure that those needs are met in the most appropriate manner, whether it be by transfer to Windana or by relocation in some other facility best suited to them.

Hostel accommodation at Magill Home is of a high standard and the State Government has spent more than \$2 000 000 on the home in the past 4 years. Hostel residents will not be involved in the proposed transfer of the nursing home beds and the hostel will continue to provide high standard accommodation for its residents.

Subject to successful negotiations with the Commonwealth Health Department and with Southern Cross Homes Inc., I can assure residents, staff and unions involved that they will be kept fully informed. In fact, I have already made arrangements for both the secretaries of the A.G.W.A. and P.S.A. to be informed of my statement to the Council today, and the Department for Community Welfare's Director of Community and Social Planning is at this moment visiting Magill Home to discuss our proposals with the union representatives there.

The permanent staff at the home can be assured their employment will be guaranteed and no-one will lose his or her job as a consequence of any transfer arrangements. Each staff member involved will be offered a position in either the Health Commission or other Government departments.

As far as the infirmary residents at Magill Home are concerned, it is the Department for Community Welfare's intention to arrange for each resident to talk with social workers to help them adjust to the idea of transferring to Windana with as little discomfort as possible. Although we recognise and sympathise with the unsettlement a transfer may cause in the short term, we believe the proposal to transfer patients to a much better standard of accommodation is in the best interests of the health and welfare of these people. In considering these interests, we will also consult with relatives of the residents involved.

In regard to the geriatric assessment units under the Royal Adelaide Hospital administration, these will continue to be involved in the assessment of potential hostel residents for Magill. They will also arrange suitable placement of hostel residents when they require nursing home care. Indeed, it is the Government's intention in carrying out these negotiations to ensure that the welfare, health and interests of both staff and residents are carefully considered.

## QUESTIONS

### NURSING HOMES

**The Hon. J. R. CORNWALL:** I seek leave to make a short statement before asking the Minister of Community Welfare a question about the Magill Home for the Aged.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. J. R. CORNWALL:** The Ministerial statement that the Minister has just made to this Council has ensured that he has bought himself a dispute of enormous magnitude, and quite rightly so. The very vexed question of the 90 brand new beds still in their plastic coverings at Windana has been on the Government's plate for more than two years. There are 90 beds and a waiting list, so I am told, of more than 120 people requiring the specific attention which would be provided by the accommodation at Windana. Furthermore, some time ago the responsibility for the care and conduct of Windana was handed over to the Southern Cross organisation. The unions have not been consulted or informed at all at any stage as to what would happen: the whole matter has been conducted by rumour and innuendo.

Only this morning I received a deputation from the P.S.A. and the Miscellaneous Workers Union (the A.G.W.A.) to protest to me in the strongest possible terms about the way in which they have been disregarded by the Government in the negotiations which they thought were going on. They were only able to get wind of that because of some rather tortuous answers which I got from the Minister and which my colleagues were able to get from the Chairman of the Health Commission during the conduct of the Budget Estimates Committee. The unions have not been informed directly at all. Let me tell the Minister, and anyone else who is interested, that the union membership has no intention of moving any patients from these nursing home beds at Magill.

The situation is certainly worth recounting to the Council. At Magill there is a master plan which, under the previous Administration, had been proceeding very smoothly and at quite some considerable cost to substantially upgrade the hostel accommodation. In fact, the hostel accommodation is amongst the best in the State.

**The Hon. L. H. Davis:** What date was that?

**The Hon. C. M. Hill:** In 1972.

**The Hon. J. R. CORNWALL:** The plan was first approved in 1973. It was implemented in a series of moves over a period from 1976. It was stopped in its tracks by the advent of this Budget-slashing, cutting Government.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! I ask the honourable member to concentrate on his explanation.

**The Hon. J. R. CORNWALL:** Members opposite distracted me, Sir.

**The PRESIDENT:** The honourable member does not have to respond to interjections.

**The Hon. J. R. CORNWALL:** In November last year, the aged male patients, most of them victims of severe strokes and in some cases several very severe strokes, were transferred into what was described as temporary accommodation, awaiting the upgrading of Atkinson Ward. As the Minister himself said in reply to a question I asked last week, the estimated cost of that upgrading was about \$574 000. The latest proposition is some sort of whitewash; apparently it is intended to paint Atkinson Ward at a cost of some \$6 000.

What must be appreciated is that historically and traditionally the Magill Home for the Aged has provided for the indigent aged of the State of South Australia. It is an integrated complex. Residents walk in (that is essential) to the hostel accommodation and ultimately are transferred to

the nursing home beds. This is an area in which for years senior citizens, in the twilight of their life, have got accustomed to very pleasant surrounds, as the Magill Home sits on about 40 hectares of land. These people will certainly not cop a situation in which they are suddenly uprooted and transferred to Windana in an effort to get the Government off the hook because it cannot and will not open the beds that have been sitting vacant at Windana for more than three years. The patients will not cop that and the staff will most certainly not cop it. Arising out of that we will get the usual Liberal Party cry—

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! The honourable member should start thinking about his question. No doubt he knows a lot about the subject.

**The Hon. J. R. Cornwall:** And so should the public because what the Government proposes is quite disgraceful. It will take these people out of an integrated situation to which they have become accustomed for years and transfer them to Windana, which already has a waiting list of at least 120, in some sort of shoddy, shonky move to try to get it off a financial hook of its own making. I want to point out the tactics that will be used by the Government. When the staff protests, purely in the interests of the patients and not on the matter of industrial conditions, I know what the Ministers of Community Welfare and Health will say: that the staff is being irresponsible and does not have regard for the best interests of the patients. Let me assure those Ministers that, in its actions, the staff will have the good of the patients at heart.

Is the Minister aware that both the Public Service Association and the Miscellaneous Workers Union (the A.G.W.A.) will refuse to move patients from the Magill Home for the Aged, and is he further aware that they are planning to stage a demonstration against this move on Thursday on the steps of Parliament House, a demonstration which I am proud to say I helped to arrange?

**The Hon. J. C. BURDETT:** That is something of an admission. The honourable member, some time ago, went to Magill without informing me.

**The Hon. J. R. Cornwall:** At the invitation of the union.

**The Hon. J. C. BURDETT:** I think he should have informed me.

**The Hon. J. R. Cornwall:** You went into a terrible flap, didn't you?

**The Hon. J. C. BURDETT:** I did not go into a flap at all; I just had my secretary make a phone call to Parliament House (this was on a Monday) seeking to contact the honourable member.

**The Hon. J. R. Cornwall:** Rang the surgery, rang my home—

**The PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. J. C. BURDETT:** I have no knowledge of that. Because the honourable member had no right of entry to Magill Home, and because I wanted to clear him to enable him—

**The Hon. J. R. Cornwall:** I thought it was a public institution.

**The Hon. N. K. Foster:** I go there twice a month.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. J. C. BURDETT:** I tried to contact the honourable member. He left a message that he would be able to ring back at 3 o'clock. He would know very well that at 3 o'clock on a Monday I would be at a Cabinet meeting.

**The Hon. J. R. Cornwall:** I can go into an institution whenever I want to.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! The honourable member asked a question. I ask him to listen to the answer. If he wishes, he may ask a supplementary question later.

**The Hon. J. C. BURDETT:** With regard to the question of the utilisation of beds at Windana, this is most important

because it has not been possible for the State Government to utilise those beds.

**The Hon. J. R. Cornwall:** That's right, because you ran out of money.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. J. C. BURDETT:** There are 90 beds there. As I said in my Ministerial statement (and I do not intend to enlarge on that greatly), it has not been possible in negotiations with the Federal Government to obtain appropriate funds that would enable the use of those beds, so it has not been possible to use those beds. I ask honourable members to think. There are 90 first-grade nursing home beds in one place, namely Windana, which we cannot utilise. Nursing home beds are needed at Magill, which does not have beds of a sufficiently high standard. What do we do? Surely the sensible thing to do is not waste the taxpayers' \$2 000 000 in upgrading those beds but to utilise the beds at Windana. There is no effective waiting list at Windana, because the beds there cannot be used. The reasons I have given today have not been made available before (and the matter has certainly been thought about). Cabinet approval for the negotiations I mentioned in my Ministerial statement was given only yesterday. In relation to this matter, the Minister of Health and I have had considerable discussions and officers of the Health Commission and my department have had considerable discussions going back beyond that, but only yesterday did we obtain Cabinet approval to conduct the negotiations mentioned in my Ministerial statement.

With regard to what has happened recently with the unions and the residents, the Director of Community Services spent most of last week talking to the residents and explaining the situation to them. Her task was not made any easier by what the Opposition had said to the residents and the unions. Nevertheless, she sat down and told them as much as she could at that time. The unions did hold meetings and did pass a motion of no confidence in me, the Director-General, and the Director of Community Services—

**The Hon. N. K. Foster:** Great stuff.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. J. C. BURDETT:** —who had tried so hard to help them. I appreciate many of the talks that there have been between the union officials and officers of my department. Both of the major unions involved had talks with my department and the Director-General during last week. They were constructive and reasonable talks. I am not at all certain that the union executive itself is opposed to or does not understand what we are trying to do. The point is that the residents will be guaranteed infirmary care. It may not be in the same place, but they are guaranteed first-class infirmary care and they are guaranteed it immediately.

Even if the Government decided to spend the \$2 000 000 and upgrade the infirmary wards at Magill Home, those wards would not be immediately available; it would be some years before the residents received the benefit. This very sensible and reasonable proposal to use facilities which the Government already has would ensure immediate first-class infirmary care. At present, the beds at Windana are useless. The most sensible thing to do is just what the Government is proposing, if it can be successfully negotiated, and I have every reason to suppose that this can be done.

**The Hon. N. K. FOSTER:** I desire to ask a supplementary question. By what authority does the Minister's portfolio enable him to seriously state in this Council that an elected member of this place, having constituents in any area of the State, including any public institution in this State, has no right to visit an institution? I visit such an institution twice a month.

**The Hon. J. C. BURDETT:** On a visiting basis that is quite right. However, I would suggest that, at least as a

matter of courtesy, since there is no statutory right to enter the home, the Minister ought to be informed.

**The Hon. N. K. FOSTER:** I desire to ask a further supplementary question. I do not go there on a personal visiting basis. I go there because as an elected member of Parliament I have been associated with the home on and off since 1969. Will the Minister qualify in which areas there is no statutory right for an elected member of the South Australian Parliament to visit Magill Home for the Aged?

**The Hon. J. C. BURDETT:** I will not qualify that because, in fact, there is no such right. There is absolutely no area at all where there is any statutory right for any member of Parliament to visit Magill Home. There are some places where such a right exists; for example, there is a statutory right given to members of Parliament to visit, say, the South Australian Youth Training Centre and the South Australian Youth Remand and Assessment Centre.

**The Hon. N. K. Foster:** And gaols, too.

**The Hon. J. C. BURDETT:** Yes.

**The Hon. N. K. Foster:** But you tell me that I can't go to an old folks home. You're a nut.

**The Hon. J. C. BURDETT:** I am referring to statutory rights. There are certain places, including places under my control, such as SAYTC and SAYRAC, where statutory rights are given to members of Parliament. No such right is given in relation to Magill Home. Obviously, there is no objection whatever to any member of Parliament or anyone else visiting a patient, walking around the place, if that is permitted, and so on. The Hon. Dr Cornwall spoke to meetings of staff and carried out certain other political functions.

**The Hon. J. R. Cornwall:** I didn't conduct any meetings at all. I took the press with me; that's what upset you.

**The Hon. J. C. BURDETT:** Yes, he did. I suggest that he certainly had no right to do that and that at least, as a matter of courtesy, he should have informed me. He made no effort to do that. It was from members of my staff that I found out that he was going there with the press.

**The Hon. N. K. FOSTER:** I desire to ask a final supplementary question. Will the Minister of Community Welfare consult with the Attorney-General and the Crown Law Department and draw up a list of areas, whether they be gaols, hospitals, brothels, trade union premises, or any other premises in this State, in relation to which there is no statutory right for an elected member of the South Australian Parliament to attend or visit in any capacity?

**The Hon. J. C. BURDETT:** I cannot see that any good purpose would be served by that action.

## SQUATTING

**The Hon. K. L. MILNE:** Has the Attorney-General an answer to a question I asked on 23 September about squatting?

**The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN:** Legal advice is available from the Legal Services Commission on any matter provided the eligibility criteria are satisfied. Those persons seeking advice in the past have included both the owners of property and squatters.

The reference to a Legal Services Commission lawyer in the squatters manual referred to in your statement was produced without the consent of the officer concerned. It was presumably inserted because the lawyer, prior to her commencement with the commission, did give advice to the Unemployed Workers Union on matters including civil trespass. The commission is not aiding in the business of squatting.

## PEER REVIEW

**The Hon. J. R. CORNWALL:** I seek leave to make an explanation before asking the Attorney-General, representing the Premier, a question about peer review.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. J. R. CORNWALL:** I refer to that very vexed area of the Minister of Health's administration, the surveillance of the professional, ethical and competent conduct of the medical profession.

Two of the areas of greatest concern to me are the delineation of clinical privileges for physicians and surgeons accredited to hospitals and the overservicing of patients. These are areas in which patients have virtually no control. Understandably it is rarely within the competence of a patient to assess the quality or quantity of care which he or she receives. The only deliberate decision which the patient or the relatives of a patient takes is to seek primary medical care. From that point on the patient is almost completely dependent on the ethics, morals and competence of the medical profession.

On the other hand, the State has clear constitutional powers and a manifest duty, acting in concert with the profession, to enforce patients' rights and ensure patients' protection. Recently, I have raised both problems in the South Australian Parliament. I have been extremely gratified by the overwhelming response which I have received in private from ethical and responsible members of the medical profession, ranging from senior surgeons and physicians to numerous suburban general practitioners. I have been given a great deal of information in confidence. I have never breached a confidence in my political career, and I do not intend to start now. However, several very important matters have been raised during these discussions that I can raise publicly without revealing the doctors' names.

It is tragically clear that the South Australian division of the Australian Medical Association is a deeply divided organisation, which has lost the confidence of many members of the profession. On the one hand, there are those highly dedicated to the ethical pursuit of excellence in medicine and to the well-being of their patients. On the other hand, there are those for whom the over-riding preoccupations are self-interest and income maintenance. Sadly, the politics of self-interest seem to prevail at present. Self-regulation by the profession can no longer be expected to provide an adequate system of control.

There is also abundant evidence that the South Australian Medical Board is very frustrated and unhappy with the present legislation under which it has to perform its duties. Requests to successive State Administrations for major amendments to the Act have been ignored or put in the too hard basket. Because of the medico-legal nature of most of the complaints that the board handles, the South Australian Supreme Court hangs like a Sword of Damocles over its deliberations and decision making.

Currently, the board comprises some of the most senior and respected members of the profession who give their very valuable time to meet on a regular basis. Yet if they act effectively and efficiently in the discharge of their duties they are very likely to be forced to give up a great deal more of their time to respond to Supreme Court litigation. They can take little or no action, except of the most superficial kind, without the advice of the Crown Law Office. Even worse, within the restrictions of their present Act, that advice is usually to do nothing. That legislation must be amended as a matter of urgency. Furthermore it is essential that a competent legal practitioner and an intelligent consumer representative join the present members of the board.

The third area which requires urgent attention is that of accreditation and reaccreditation, delineation of clinical privileges, surgical audits and monitoring of medical performance—the area of so-called peer review. Faced with increasing pressures and the inevitability of some form of peer review being introduced, the profession generally has moved, albeit reluctantly, to impose a measure of limited voluntary assessment. That is nowhere near enough.

The situation persists in South Australia, as I have dramatically illustrated to this Council recently, where a doctor who has been known to be negligent, incompetent and an alcoholic for more than 10 years can continue to be accredited and be given operating time in our South Australian hospitals. I can sympathise with him for his disease, but I can feel a great deal more sorrow for his patients. The present system is so rotten that the combined efforts of his senior colleagues, the South Australian Medical Board and hospital administrators merely see him lurch from one hospital to the next.

On the other hand, the extent to which other senior colleagues will go to cover for his incompetence was dramatically and sadly illustrated by a letter to the *Advertiser* today. Contrary to any impression which Dr Scales and Dr Whitford tried to convey in that letter, I researched my facts very carefully before raising the subject to which they referred.

Again, I have no doubt that the vast majority of ophthalmologists in this State are both competent and ethical. But for the chairman and secretary of the Royal Australian College of Ophthalmologists to attempt to cover up for a colleague who has been widely known for his incompetence, negligence and alcoholism for more than a decade reflects disgracefully on the college. It is their actions in this matter, not mine, which are not only inappropriate but reprehensible. Their letter illustrates dramatically just how serious the twin problems of lack of surveillance and covering for incompetent colleagues have become in this State.

Dr Scales and Dr Whitford have made the mistake of their lives if they believe I can be deflected by their inappropriate defence of an incompetent colleague. I have not only the right but the duty to responsibly raise such matters in public. Their actions have ensured that I will continue to press for guaranteed patient protection.

Far fewer patients who must undergo eye operations or any other surgery would be suffering anxiety and concern if they knew the competence of surgeons was being continuously monitored by their peers in the profession. The position also continues in this State where physicians can over-serve patients, particularly hospital in-patients, at will provided they are physically present for five minutes and make a brief note on their patients' records. The health insurance funds have no option but to pay these over-served claims, thrusting an additional burden on the community. The unethical physicians are small in number, but they are a blight on the entire profession.

I give notice now that should I be the next Minister of Health these leeches will be pursued and their unethical practices eliminated. Nor should accreditation be for life. It is well within the competence of health administrators and the profession to devise a scheme for the periodic reaccreditation of doctors, based on demonstrated clinical or surgical competence.

The present State Government and particularly the Minister of Health stand condemned by their complete failure to act in all of these important areas. Will the Premier take action in this case as a matter of urgency?

**The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN:** Last week the honourable member asked questions about these same sorts of matters. I indicated then that these questions would be referred to

the Premier, and I will do the same with the question he has asked today.

#### DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

**The Hon. B. A. CHATTERTON:** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister of Community Welfare, representing the Minister of Agriculture, a question about staff cuts in the Department of Agriculture. Leave granted.

**The Hon. B. A. CHATTERTON:** Shortly after the Premier introduced the Budget into the House of Assembly, the Minister of Agriculture made a statement, which was reported in the rural press, that the Department of Agriculture would lose seven Public Service positions during the 1981-82 financial year. However, the Programme Estimates that were distributed to members of Parliament show that the Department of Agriculture's Public Service positions will, in fact, remain the same and that the Minister's staff will increase by one. Will the Minister say what is the true position: is it the situation as he announced in the press, or the situation as announced in the Programme Estimates?

The Minister also said that the number of people who would be employed by the department in regional offices and regions would increase while those in Grenfell Street headquarters would decline. Does the Government intend to move people compulsorily to the regional positions, or only when positions are vacant?

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

#### PUBLIC TRANSPORT

**The Hon. G. L. BRUCE:** Has the Attorney-General, representing the Minister of Transport, a reply to the question that I asked on 29 September regarding public transport?

**The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN:** The Minister of Transport reports that, based on the number of seats and available standing space, the passenger capacity of articulated buses varies between 130 and 158, depending on the type of bus. The corresponding capacity of a standard rigid bus is in the order of 80. During the recent petrol shortage the maximum number of passengers counted at any one time on an articulated bus was 104 and, on a standard type bus, 86.

The maximum number of passengers to be carried on a bus during the recent petrol shortage was left to the discretion of the operator, and if the above loading standards had been exceeded it would have been at the expense of the passengers' comfort, not safety. It is most unlikely that operators would have permitted, or that passengers would have tolerated, loadings that could have prejudiced the safe operation of the buses.

The maximum number of passengers to be carried on each type of bus in normal circumstances is determined by industrial agreement. This number is in all cases less than the capacity of the bus. When a bus driver considers that this number of passengers has been reached he may display the 'full' sign and pick up no further passengers.

#### EMERSON CROSSING

**The Hon. N. K. FOSTER:** I seek leave to make a statement before asking the Attorney-General, representing the Minister of Transport, a question.

**The PRESIDENT:** On which subject?

**The Hon. N. K. FOSTER:** On transport.

**The Hon. K. T. Griffin:** That's a bit wide. What sort of transport?

**The Hon. N. K. FOSTER:** On this occasion, it happens to involve rail transport, road and bus transport—all sorts of transport.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. N. K. FOSTER:** I remind the honourable gentleman—

**The Hon. L. H. Davis:** Get off your high horse!

**The Hon. N. K. FOSTER:** I do not have to get off my arse. I am already standing.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. N. K. FOSTER:** I beg the Hon. Mr Davis's pardon. He has just returned from the Cook Islands and, if that is the way in which they behave, he should go back there.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! If the Hon. Mr Davis did say that, I will have to take action against him, also.

**The Hon. D. H. Laidlaw:** He didn't say that. He said, 'Get off your high horse.'

**The PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. N. K. FOSTER:** I apologise to the Hon. Mr Davis. The honourable member should not drop his aitches. Leave having been granted so graciously to me, I remind the Attorney-General that I understand that a Bill is either before another place or is about to come before it, which Bill lumps together the matter of all aspects of transport. When referring to 'transport', I can understand your concern, Sir, when the Attorney rose on such a small matter. Broadly speaking, my question relates to railway transport, interference with bus transport, and pedestrians, who involve yet another form of transport.

As I do not have the relevant dates at my disposal, I cannot refer to them with any degree of accuracy. However, I ask this question in order to probe a situation that has been reported to me as having occurred two or three weeks ago. I refer to the Emerson railway crossing at the intersection of South and Cross Roads, which was the subject of planning by the former Government in relation to having an over-pass built there, which planning has subsequently been confirmed by the present Government.

On the day in question, the railway warning equipment malfunctioned, thereby creating long queues of traffic extending in all directions, namely, on South Road on the Edwardstown side, on the Black Forest side, on Cross Road on the Clarence Park side, as well as on the Plympton side. Indeed, mile after mile of traffic was banked up.

I understand from a person who is still concerned about this matter that, when the situation reached the stage to which I have referred and when the lights were still functioning and the barriers still down, the police intervened and pulled up the barriers. Traffic then proceeded across the intersection, when a train came across and stopped only three metres or less from two fully-packed buses.

Will the Minister have this matter investigated and ascertain whether or not such an incident occurred and, if it did, will he further investigate which authority (that is, whether it was the Police Department) tied the rails back and on what authority that could possibly have been done? Also, will the Attorney-General ensure that the Minister of Transport acquaints officers of his department and those of any other department under the control or administration of any Minister that, in the event of such an occurrence, in no circumstances will the traffic barriers be lifted until it is absolutely certain that no rail traffic, from either direction, is about to go over the crossing?

**The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN:** I will refer that question to the Minister of Transport.

## DR COULTER

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** Has the Attorney-General a reply to the question that I asked on 24 September regarding the Coulter case?

**The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN:** The alleged conduct of the magistrate in the Coulter case has been investigated. Although the magistrate did not concede that he had in fact been asleep at the time in question, he acceded, in the interests of justice manifestly being seen to be done, to a request made on 20 January 1981 that he disqualify himself from the case.

On 30 March 1981 the case was reassigned to another magistrate, whereupon it was adjourned, and there has been no request to relist the case for hearing. The President of the Industrial Court has spoken to the magistrate about the matter, and it is not considered that any further action need be taken at this stage.

## CORPORATE AFFAIRS COMMISSION INVESTIGATIONS

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** Has the Attorney-General a reply to the questions that I asked on 5 August, 17 September and 23 September regarding investigations by the Corporate Affairs Commission?

**The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN:** The reply is as follows:

(a) Elder Smith Goldsbrough Mort Limited. This matter is the subject of a special investigation, Mr J. von Doussa, Q.C., having been appointed by the Government to conduct the inquiry. Mr von Doussa has interviewed a number of persons with respect to this matter and is continuing inquiries here and interstate. It is my understanding that the inquiry by Mr von Doussa will continue over the next few weeks and that it is possible that he will be in a position to make a report in the new year.

(b) The Kallin Group of Companies. The Corporate Affairs Commission was appointed special investigator with respect to this matter in December 1979. This matter has required extensive investigations to be made regarding arrangements undertaken by the principals involved in Western Australia and in South Australia. I am advised by the commission that, because of the complexity of the matter, the report with respect to this matter could be expected to be presented to me in the second quarter of 1982.

(c) Mallards. The commission does not have any record on an inquiry with respect to a company by the name of Mallards. Nor does the commission have any record of a business by that name.

(d) The Swan Shepherd Group of Companies. In this matter the commission was appointed special investigator and, as the honourable member will be aware, extensive inquiries have been conducted both by the commission and the police. These inquiries are continuing.

(e) Vindana Pty Ltd (In Liquidation) (Receiver and Manager appointed). As I have indicated on previous occasions, the Corporate Affairs Commission is conducting an inquiry into the affairs of Vindana Pty Ltd (in liquidation and receiver and manager appointed). These inquiries are continuing, and I expect the commission to be making a report to me in the not too distant future on this matter.

(f) Johnson Group of Companies. The honourable member refers to the fact that the liquidator of the Johnson Group of Companies has not yet called a meeting of creditors. The liquidator is not obliged to call a meeting of creditors and would not as a matter of practice hold a meeting until such time as he has had an opportunity to settle the statement of affairs. This involves the liquidator

reviewing the financial status of the companies concerned and settling the position regarding the liabilities of the companies concerned and arrangements for the payment to the companies of moneys presently owing to them. The honourable member refers to the fact that there have been delays by the liquidator and the Corporate Affairs Commission. With respect to the position of the Corporate Affairs Commission it should be made clear that it does not have a role in relation to the time within which the liquidator calls a meeting of creditors in these circumstances, and the time within which any dividend is made payable to the creditors of the companies concerned.

With respect to the matter of the personal financial position of Mr B. A. Johnson, the Corporate Affairs Commission does not have any information regarding the matters mentioned. If it appears to the liquidator as a result of his review of the affairs of the companies concerned that there has been an improper payment made to any person he would be reporting on such matters to the Corporate Affairs Commission. The commission would then review the circumstances as detailed by the liquidator in his report, and if the evidence was such as to constitute a breach of the Companies Act or any other legislation administered by the commission, appropriate action would be taken.

(g) Ikos Constructions Ltd (In Liquidation)—Referred to by the Hon. C. J. Sumner as High Cos. Constructions. Ikos Constructions Pty Ltd, together with five other associated companies is in liquidation. The Corporate Affairs Commission is currently investigating the circumstances surrounding the reasons why the companies went into liquidation. I am advised that the commission's inquiries with respect to this matter are continuing.

(h) McLeay Bros. The circumstances surrounding the affairs of McLeay Bros Pty Ltd (receiver and manager appointed) and Clinton Credits Pty Ltd (in liquidation), are subject of an inquiry by the commission and I am advised that these inquiries are continuing.

The honourable member should recognise that corporate affairs inquiries such as those to which I have referred are always complex and time consuming. I am satisfied that these inquiries are proceeding as quickly as possible.

#### TIME SHARING

**The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS:** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Attorney-General a question about time sharing in real estate.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS:** In the United States of America time sharing in real estate has become a major multi-million dollar industry in recent years.

**The Hon. C. M. Hill:** In Europe, too.

**The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS:** Yes, that is quite true. Also, there has been a rather slow beginning in Australia to this particular concept but recently, in Queensland and New South Wales, a considerable amount of time sharing in real estate has been entered into. Time sharing in Australia in real estate can be likened a little to the beginning of the legal situation with strata titling of home unit ownership in this State. Is the Attorney-General aware of the move in the Eastern States towards time sharing of real estate? Is the Government making any inquiries in regard to this matter? Does the Government consider that special enabling legislation should be passed in the same way as it was passed in regard to strata titling of real estate?

**The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN:** Time sharing relates to the Securities Industry Act and the Companies Act. So far as the State Government is concerned, these matters are already covered and, if there is a proposal to sell time

sharing in South Australia, it would be covered by those two pieces of legislation. The Corporate Affairs Commission would generally have the oversight of the material circulated in relation to sales and operation of sales activity. Certainly, both the commission and I have been aware of the developing interest in time sharing in Queensland and New South Wales, in particular, and in Victoria. My recollection is that there is no specific time sharing interest which has developed in this State, other than the sale of interests in such developments occurring in other States but which are being offered for sale in this State.

There has been some consideration in the Ministerial Council on Companies and Securities as to whether the new national co-operative scheme should specifically deal with time sharing or whether it should be the subject of special legislation. It is an area that is being researched at the Ministerial council level, but no final decisions have been taken. I can assure the honourable member that, if it occurs in South Australia, it is already well covered by the Securities Industry Act and the Companies Act.

#### ROAD ACCIDENT PAYMENTS

**The Hon. C. W. CREEDON:** I seek leave to make a brief statement before asking the Attorney-General, representing the Minister of Transport, a question about road accident injury insurance payouts.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. C. W. CREEDON:** The matter that I wish to raise concerns the headlines 'New Third Party Plans for South Australia' and 'Instant Road Crash Payouts', which appeared in the *News* of September 1979. The report states:

Immediate compensation for road accident injuries is part of a revolutionary scheme planned for South Australia. And the scheme may lead to lower third party insurance premiums.

Under the scheme announced today by the Transport Minister, Mr Wilson, accident victims will receive instant payouts for injuries instead of facing lengthy legal battles.

Final details have not yet been determined, but it is expected the scheme will include immediate settlement of hospital bills and compensation payments based on a victim's average weekly earnings.

Mr Wilson said he hoped legislation to allow for the scheme would be introduced into State Parliament before Christmas.

**The Hon. C. J. Sumner:** This year?

**The Hon. C. W. CREEDON:** That is two years ago. The report continues:

The scheme, which does not nominate the area of fault in an accident was Liberal Party policy in the 1977 State election. It seems likely the scheme will provide payments for loss of income for a period of up to two years, with a maximum level which is yet to be determined.

Victims still unable to return to work after that period will be able to make a normal claim through the courts, as will those who do not consider the initial compensation sufficient.

The Liberal Party has promised this innovation in insurance since 1977 and the Minister of Transport (Hon. M. M. Wilson) indicated his intention in a public statement to have such a scheme in operation before Christmas 1979. Can the Minister say whether any legislation dealing with this subject will be introduced before Christmas 1981? If not, what progress is being made to bring forward such legislation?

**The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN:** Considerable research work has been undertaken by officers of the Government with respect to the scheme to which the honourable member refers. One of the major concerns of the Government has been to ensure that, if such a scheme or any modification of it is introduced, there is no increase in costs to the taxpayer and no increase in costs to the road user. At this stage I can give no indication about what legislation is being considered or when such legislation is likely to be

introduced. All that I can say is that the Government is conscientiously pursuing research on a scheme which will facilitate some early settlement of road accident claims. The experience of Victoria, Tasmania and the Northern Territory is such that any such scheme, if introduced without adequate research, can end up costing a substantial amount more to the motor vehicle owner, the road user and the public at large than one ever envisaged when the scheme was initially proposed. So, we are being very cautious about it but we are making progress on the research into the proposition.

### QUESTION TIME

**The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN (Attorney-General):** I move: That Standing Orders be so far suspended as to enable Question Time to continue to 3.25 p.m.

Motion carried.

### ADELAIDE LOCAL COURT

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** Has the Attorney-General an answer to the question I asked on 24 September relating to the Adelaide Local Court?

**The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN:** The matter in question was heard by Mr R. D. Brown, S.M. The plaintiff was a Magistrate's Clerk employed by the Courts Department. The Senior Magistrate, realising that the plaintiff in the matter was an employee of the Courts Department, specifically directed that the matter be heard by a magistrate with whom she had had least contact. Accordingly, the matter was allocated to Mr R. D. Brown, S.M., who is the resident magistrate in Whyalla and who was temporarily in Adelaide. Mr Brown refutes the suggestion that he ordered Mr Alexandrides from his chambers. He also refutes the suggestion that the plaintiff was in his chambers prior to the matter being called and, in particular, prior to the defendant entering those chambers. The Senior Magistrate has advised that it was not uncommon for small claims to be heard in chambers as in court.

The parties sat at the table fronting the magistrate's desk. The evidence in the matter was taken in the normal way after parties were sworn. There is no recollection that either the defendant or his companion (Mr Alexandrides) indicated that the defendant had any difficulty with the English language. If the defendant feels strongly that the case was incorrectly handled, he may seek leave to appeal pursuant to the Rules of Court, although he would need to obtain an extension of time to do so.

### EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

**The Hon. ANNE LEVY:** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Attorney-General, representing the Premier, a question on equal opportunities.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. ANNE LEVY:** A great deal is going on in other parts of Australia in regard to equal opportunities programmes, particularly in the Public Service of New South Wales and in the Commonwealth and other Public Services. I have mentioned some of the programmes which are occurring interstate. Could the Attorney-General obtain information as to what programmes our Public Service Board is undertaking, such as changes in recruitment procedures or special training schemes in relation to our own Public Service, both for women and other disadvantaged groups in the community which, of course, would include migrants,

Aborigines, and handicapped people? Could the Attorney-General tell us what provisions have been made to ensure that equal opportunities staff in the South Australian Public Service are kept abreast of developments in this field which are occurring so rapidly interstate?

**The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN:** I will refer the honourable member's question to my colleague the Premier and bring back a reply.

### STATUTORY BODIES

**The Hon. B. A. CHATTERTON:** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister of Community Welfare, representing the Minister of Agriculture, a question about statutory bodies under the Minister's control.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. B. A. CHATTERTON:** More than two years ago the previous Government was planning the amalgamation of the Pest Plants Commission and the Vertebrate Pests Authority. It was also looking at the possibility of winding up a number of other statutory organisations under the control of the Minister of Agriculture. In particular, it was looking at some of the organisations in the Riverland concerned with the control of red scale and San Jose scale. Has the Minister had the opportunity of looking at these organisations and does the present Government intend to continue with plans to rationalise those statutory organisations? If the Government does intend to do that, when will legislation be introduced into Parliament to carry out that intention?

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

### RIGHTS OF ENTRY

**The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS:** I ask the Attorney-General whether the fact that some statutory rights exist permitting M.P.s to enter certain public institutions means that there are no rights of entry by M.P.s to public institutions for which there is no statutory provision.

**The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN:** The law is fairly clear—

**The Hon. N. K. FOSTER:** Speak up please—us old servicemen are a bit deaf. If you had been to Vietnam, you'd be deaf, too.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! If all honourable members would listen they would all hear a bit better.

**The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN:** The law relating to access to private property is very clear: unless there is a statutory right of entry, it is within the competence of the proprietors of the property to require persons who are on the premises to leave. Those who come on to the premises may fall within a variety of categories: invitees, licensees or trespassers. The fact that there is no statutory right for members of Parliament to enter means that members of Parliament are in no different category from other members of the public when they seek access to such premises. That means that legally they have no right of entry in the general context of that question. Where a special statutory right is provided, as the Minister of Community Welfare has previously indicated exists in relation to SAYTC or SAYRAC—

**The Hon. Frank Blevins:** What are they?

**The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN:** Youth training centres. That gives to members of Parliament a right of entry which overrides the general law. If the honourable member is anxious to have a treatise on rights of entry, then I will endeavour to obtain further information from him to put it into an appropriate context.



### FAMILY IMPACT STATEMENTS

**The Hon. ANNE LEVY** (on notice) asked the Attorney-General:

1. In the 1980-81 financial year, how many family impact statements were submitted with proposals for consideration by Cabinet, and how many of these came from each of the 13 Ministers?

2. How many of these family impact statements showed adverse effects on the proposal for some or all types of family in South Australia?

3. How many people were responsible for preparing these family impact statements, and of these how many have formal qualifications in sociological or related fields?

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

1. Family impact statements are required for almost all proposals submitted to Cabinet and, in view of the very large number of proposals dealt with by Cabinet in a year, I consider the amount of work involved in reviewing all of these to be unwarranted. Indeed, it would not be possible to recall all files which had been to Cabinet in 1980-81.

2. Information is not ascertainable as such statistics are not kept. Both positive and negative impacts are canvassed in family impact statements and taken into account by Cabinet when making decisions.

3. Individual departments have the responsibility for preparing family impact statements and a wide range of personnel may be involved. Where a department considers additional advice may be required, officers of the Family Research Unit with sociological and social work qualifications are available to assist.

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### APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2)

Adjourned debate on second reading.  
(Continued from 22 October. Page 1526.)

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER (Leader of the Opposition):** Before embarking on a consideration of the Budget, there are some preliminary comments I wish to make. First, in each of the years 1979, 1980 and 1981 the Government has adopted the procedure in the Council of a motion to debate the Budget papers so that debate in this Council on the Budget can continue at the same time as the Budget debate is proceeding in the House of Assembly. This procedure was adopted by the Labor Government in 1977 because there was an election in that year which interfered with the normal presentation of the Budget. There was also an election in 1979 which caused this Government to use the same procedure. The Government has now, it appears, adopted in normal circumstances the procedure used in the special circumstances of 1977 and 1979, so that it appears to have become the practice.

Some Liberal members, when debating the Budget papers, expressed surprise that they were the ones who were speaking on that motion and not Opposition members. The basis of that, to clarify the matter to the Council, was that we had an option, in accordance with arrangements made with the Attorney-General. I wished to wait until the debate on the Budget concluded in the House of Assembly and in the Estimates Committees before debating the Budget. I have no objection to the procedure being used, but that, of course, is on condition that there is no adverse comment if honourable members wait for the actual Budget to be received in this Council before debating it, which of course is the correct procedure. The procedure which has been adopted is purely a convenience for the Government. As

such, I am prepared to co-operate with that procedure. However, I reserve my right to speak on the Budget proper and not on the motion to debate the Budget papers, if I see fit. This year that is what I have done.

**The Hon. R. C. DeGaris:** Do you not think that certain matters are discussed in the papers which are away from the Budget but will be dealt with by members?

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** There may have been. I have no objection to honourable members discussing the Budget papers, if they wish, but the understanding that the Government members had was that the Budget papers debate would in some way obviate the necessity to debate the Budget when it was actually brought in. All I am saying is that I prefer to leave open my option to debate the second reading explanation of the Budget itself. I merely wanted to make that position clear, that what we are doing is a convenience for the Government and should not be subjected to any adverse comment by members opposite.

**The Hon. K. T. Griffin:** No-one has made any adverse comment.

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** The Hon. Mr DeGaris expressed surprise that he was the first one to speak on the Budget papers. The Hon. Mr Davis, likewise, expressed surprise. I am trying to correct the impression or misunderstanding that they may have about the arrangement entered into.

The second preliminary point I wish to make is that there is a distinct lack of information in the Premier's statement this year about the Federal-State financial situation. The Premier admitted that and indicated that he intended to present this information a little later in a separate paper. I ask the Attorney-General whether there will be an opportunity to debate that paper when it is tabled in the Council. I do not intend to touch on the area of Commonwealth-State relations in this debate, but it is an important area, and we should be given an opportunity to debate that supplementary paper when it is presented by the Premier. I seek from the Attorney-General an assurance that we will be able to do that.

The third preliminary comment I wish to make relates to the programme performance budget system which has been introduced by this Government and the procedures in the Estimates Committees for scrutinising the Budget. In theory, the system of programme performance budgets should be desirable. It should be desirable in achieving the aims of seeing the total cost of the Government's programmes and not just the line budgets. The Estimates Committee system, which has been tied in with the programme performance budgeting, should ensure greater Parliamentary review of executive activity. At this stage, I wish to reserve judgment on the programme performance budget system. I was interested in the critique made of that system by the Hon. Mr DeGaris. Certainly, I think I can make the comment, and in this respect I think that the Government should be commended, that the information in the yellow books certainly provides more information to members than did the previous system of line budgeting, and it certainly provides a sound basis for questions. However, the question still remains whether the cost, which must be considerable, of programme performance budgeting procedures is effective in achieving the results which are claimed for it.

The Hon. Mr DeGaris thinks that they are not effective and believes that alternative methods should be looked at. The Premier, in his usual way, has claimed great things for programme performance budgeting and has said from time to time that there will be thousands of dollars saved as a result of this procedure. However, there is no doubt that an enormous number of Public Service man-hours must have gone into the production of the programme budgets

and at this stage they are only in their infancy. As I said, the information in the yellow books is certainly much more comprehensive than has previously been provided and for that the Government deserves credit. However, I wish to delay judgment on programme performance budgeting for the moment. I wish to examine what the Hon. Mr DeGaris said and certainly wish to check the Premier's claims of massive savings he says will occur with programme performance budgeting as against the actual result. I believe that the actual procedure in terms of Public Service man-hours is quite considerable. The Estimates Committees have been connected with programme performance budgeting and here, I think, there has been a difference of attitude adopted toward those Committees by the Government and the Opposition. The Government has continually tried to maintain that the Estimates Committees should provide an opportunity for a narrow financial view of the particular department under consideration. How many pencils does the Attorney-General's office use this year? Has there been any waste in rubbers or stationery? Questions such as those may be all very well, but procedures within the existing system through the Auditor-General and the Public Accounts Committee already ascertain whether or not there is any waste or misuse of Government resources in the bureaucracy. I believe the Government's attitude to Estimates Committees is far too narrow.

On the other hand, the Opposition apart from wanting to know what is happening with the funds also wants to question the policies that form the basis for the expenditure of those funds. I believe that that is a perfectly legitimate point of view to adopt. In other words, if the Estimates Committees were confined to a purely financial analysis—a sort of checking up on whether there is any waste in Government resources—it would be quite inadequate. I am not sure that the Estimates Committees procedure is appropriate for that, anyway. As I have said, the Public Accounts Committee and the Auditor-General have powers to question public servants and Ministers about that sort of waste. I think that the Opposition's approach to the Estimates Committees should be preferred. In other words, there should be questioning of the policy bases that underline the expenditure indicated in the Budget.

That procedure gives members of the House of Assembly an opportunity to question Ministers in this Council. That questioning should not be confined to a narrow cost-effective Budget accountability area, but should also include policy. I think one disadvantage in the Estimates Committees arises from the fact that shadow Ministers in this Council do not have an opportunity to question their counterparts in another place. I appreciate that the House of Assembly has paramourty in financial matters; nevertheless, the effectiveness of Estimates Committees is reduced by the fact that shadow Ministers in this Council do not have an opportunity to face their counterparts in another place. Certainly, shadow Ministers in this Council can question their counterparts in this place when the Budget comes before the Council. One alternative might be a system of rostering Ministers for Question Time in both Houses. I think that should be looked at.

Last year, after the Tonkin Government had been in power for 12 months, in my Address in Reply speech I went through a list of the promises that had been made by the Liberal Party when in Opposition and which within 12 months had not been honoured or had been positively repudiated. I pointed to the declining credibility of the Premier and the Government because they were unable to live up to their pre-election promises. I believe that in a small way what has happened in this State in the past two years is symptomatic of the problems that Western democracies face in dealing with the economic problems that I have

mentioned previously in this Chamber. Particularly is this so as it relates to the continuing lack of credibility in political leaders. In 1977, I referred to this during my Address in Reply speech, as follows:

Undoubtedly, during the 1930s and the depression years, politicians promised and failed to produce, but that problem seems to be even greater today, particularly as democratic Governments of the West flounder from one policy to another in an attempt to rise out of the economic recession. The gap between promise and performance widens. Rhetoric and reality rarely coincide. Political campaigns are conducted at the level of soap powder schmaltz or are based on creating fear and uncertainty. Little attempt is made at genuine education and enlightenment about the real and complex issues in society. Politicians go home contented if they have scored a good point for the day. The tailoring of policies to current electoral advantage often avoids the real underlying issues in the community.

And later, I said:

The continuing cynical simplification of promises and the failure to implement them places a great strain on people's respect for institutions and the political and economic systems.

I think what I said then is particularly apposite now when referring to the performances of this Government, particularly the Premier, because the promise was much and the performance has been very little.

There is no doubt that politicians as a class in the community are not held in particularly high regard. I believe that is because we have politicians who make promises without carefully considering the facts or the basis on which those promises are made, so that the promises cannot be kept when they get into Government. In our small neck of the woods in South Australia what has happened under this Government, particularly with the Premier, exemplifies the problems that Western democracies are having in general. The other factor is the complexity of national and international economic considerations. I have made the point in this Council before that what a State can do is somewhat limited. That does not mean that nothing can be done by a State, but what it can do should not be over-estimated, as indeed it was by the Premier when he was in Opposition.

It is interesting to note the change in the Premier's approach. In 1979, during debate on the Budget papers, shortly after the Tonkin Government was elected, I commented on the Premier's speech as follows:

There are no interstate comparisons, and that seems odd. There is no reference in the speech to details of Commonwealth or national economic factors. There is no reference to international factors and how they impinge on the economy. As during the election campaign, it has been a simplistic attempt to lay the whole of the blame at the feet of the Labor Government of the previous 10 years. My first prediction is that next year much more will be said about international factors, Federal Government policies, and how the State's ability to manage its economy depends much on external factors.

Sure enough, in this particular Budget the Premier commences with an analysis of the international economy. He then deals with matters which he rightly says are largely outside of his control as a State Premier. He provides them as an excuse for the difficulties in which he finds himself. The Premier refers to wage demands, high interest rates, and Commonwealth Government policies in relation to tariffs. In other words, the Premier, two years after his election, is doing exactly what I predicted, in October 1979, that he would do. In October 1979, it was all the fault of the Labor Government, which was the scapegoat. Now, of course, the Premier has had to find new scapegoats, because he realises that running the South Australian economy is not just a matter of making a lot of wild, unthought-out promises, as he believed before the last election. The Premier then discovered extraneous factors over which the State has no control and has tried to use them as an excuse for the state of the South Australian economy.

Further, he now emphasises the Commonwealth situation. Honourable members would recall that, when former Pre-

miers Dunstan and Corcoran complained about the deal they were getting from the Federal Government, Dr Tonkin and other Liberal members said, 'You can't continue to blame the Commonwealth.' Yet now that is just what the Premier is doing. In the Budget papers, the Premier stated:

I am sure that all members will see the obvious implications for the State Budget in that short-fall in funds from the Commonwealth Government.

So the blame is now on the Commonwealth Government and extraneous matters beyond the State's control. The Premier still tries, to some extent, to blame the Labor Government, but that is wearing thin. The position in South Australia is much more complex than the Premier believed it was. The capacity to manoeuvre the State economy within the State Budget is much more limited than the Premier had thought. Nevertheless, he made promises, and in terms of his own credibility, he must be called to account for those promises.

The next matter to which I refer is the Government's habit of saying that the Opposition is knocking South Australia and trying to downgrade the performance of South Australia whenever the Opposition produces any economic data or facts that the Government does not like. That is the Government's only response, but what it says is not true. The Opposition has and will continue to put before the people of South Australia its analysis of the South Australian economy. We are concerned about a Government whose only response to those figures is to say that we are knocking the State. We are concerned that this Government seems to have its head well and truly in the sand in regard to the major economic indicators for South Australia. I will produce some indicators later in my speech which should cause the Government some degree of concern and which will require a response other than the Government's reference to the Opposition as knocking the State.

The Opposition has tried carefully to put the situation before the people of South Australia. In the lead-up to the next election in 12 months or so, we will have concrete proposals to put to the people. They will not be extravagant, silly proposals such as those that were advocated by the present Government when it was in Opposition.

**The Hon. R. C. DeGaris:** Don't you think all Governments are prone to that sort of thing?

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** Indeed they are. As I said in my opening remarks, Governments are prone to do that sort of thing, but I do not see that that sort of action is any good for the State or, for that matter, the nation. I certainly reject totally the notion that the present Government seems to hold—that every time the Opposition raises a legitimate point about the South Australian economy it is being negative and knocking the State. If one compares what our present Premier said in this respect on previous occasions, one is really astounded at the hypocrisy of the man, because for several years before he won the election in 1979, the Premier went around bad-mouthing South Australia in quite a scurrilous way. On one occasion he referred to South Australia as a 'leper colony'. He said that South Australia was 'squarely on the list of high-risk places for capital investment, a list which includes such progressive centres as Haiti, Chad, San Salvador, Afghanistan and Iran'. South Australia 'was at rock bottom'.

**The Hon. L. H. Davis:** He said that in reference to your policies about Monarto.

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** That is what the Premier said in Opposition. If that is not knocking South Australia, I do not know what is. The present Opposition would certainly not make such ridiculous statements or try to downgrade the position in South Australia to the extent that the present Premier did when he was in Opposition, in quite inappropriate and intemperate language, which could only bring

discredit to South Australia. However, I make quite clear that the Opposition will continue to put forward the economic indicators. We believe that the solutions will not be found by this Government's continuing to keep its head in the sand about the economic indicators generally in South Australia and particularly about this Budget, to which I now refer.

**The Hon. R. C. DeGaris:** Have you been talking about the papers so far?

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** Yes. I have no hesitation in describing this Budget as the most disastrous in modern South Australian history. I will deal with it and illustrate what I say in relation to several matters. First, I refer to the complete miscalculation that has been made by the Government in the Budget. The forecast at the beginning of the 1980 financial year was for a combined deficit on both the recurrent and capital account of \$1 500 000. There was to be a balance on the current account and a deficit on the capital account of \$1 500 000 after a transfer (and this is important) of \$16 000 000 to the recurrent account from the capital account. The prediction was \$1 500 000. The actual result indicates that on the recurrent account there is a \$27 900 000 deficit; that is a \$27 900 000 bungle, a \$27 900 000 miscalculation.

If that sum is added to the \$16 000 000 that was to be transferred from Loan account, the capital account, there is a deficit on revenue account of \$43 900 000. I cannot find in my researches into modern South Australian history a Budget that has been bungled to that extent.

**The Hon. R. C. DeGaris:** Are you sure that those figures are right?

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** Yes, I am sure. They are from the papers.

**The Hon. R. C. DeGaris:** What amount of capital was transferred in total last year?

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** It was \$37 300 000, from the capital account to the revenue account.

**The Hon. R. C. DeGaris:** How do you account for the \$43 000 000?

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** It is in the Budget. I realise that we have been debating the Budget papers as opposed to the second reading of the Budget. It is in the Budget papers and I will repeat it. The proposal was for a balanced Budget on the recurrent account and a \$1 500 000 deficit on the capital account, after \$16 000 000 had been transferred from the capital account to the recurrent account.

**The Hon. L. H. Davis:** That was the Budget?

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** That was the Budget forecast. The result on the recurrent account was a \$27 900 000 deficit. The Government was \$27 900 000 out in its calculation.

**The Hon. L. H. Davis:** But you said that it was \$43 000 000.

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** I said that added to that \$27 900 000 was \$16 000 000 which was transferred.

**The Hon. L. H. Davis:** Was that budgeted for?

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** Yes.

**The Hon. L. H. Davis:** So, you cannot say that it was \$43 000 000?

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** The figure was \$43 900 000, if one approves of the procedure of using up capital funds to run the State. That is what happened. Admittedly, \$16 000 000 was budgeted for as the sum that would be transferred from capital account to the recurrent account in the past financial year. That was bad enough; that was budgeted for. However, in addition, the recurrent account found itself \$27 900 000 in the red. That is the biggest bungle that I can find in the State's financial history. I do not think that Government members can dispute that. The situation gets even worse when one recalls what the Premier

said in the Estimates Committee on 7 October last year, as follows:

I can give an assurance that there is a very good prospect that we can be much closer to a balance in Revenue Account at the end of this financial year than we thought, at the beginning of the financial year, would be the case . . . the indications are that it is being continued and that the Revenue Account will be in a relatively healthy position at the end of the financial year.

He further stated:

. . . the general Revenue Account is going to be in a very healthy position indeed and there is unlikely to be any great dependence on the overdraft account (that is, the Loan funds). Only time will tell, but I can assure the Leader that the trends at the present time are most encouraging.

By the end of June 1980, the Premier had to admit that on his recurrent account he had bungled by \$27 900 000. I do not know how anyone can take the Premier seriously when he makes that sort of statement in October, budgets for \$16 000 000 to be transferred from Loan Account to recurrent account, and then finds that the total amount to be transferred is \$37 300 000, leaving an overall deficit of \$6 600 000. I have gone back through the—

**The Hon. R. C. DeGaris:** How was the \$6 600 000 deficit funded?

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** It is not funded; it is a deficit. We are in the red.

**The Hon. L. H. Davis:** But how do you arrive at that figure?

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** By taking the \$27 900 000 bungle on Revenue Account and adding the \$16 000 000 that was to be transferred from capital account, one gets \$43 900 000, of which only \$37 300 000 was transferred from capital account to Revenue Account, leaving a combined deficit of \$6 600 000.

**The Hon. R. C. DeGaris:** That must be funded somehow.

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** It is a continuing deficit, for the moment. Obviously, it is a debt that presumably will be picked up later. It is not \$6 600 000 but is, in fact, \$9 000 000-odd, as \$3 300 000 was an accumulating deficit from the previous year. I have checked through the figures for the Dunstan decade, and in every year that I can find, except for 1975-76, the Budget result was better than or precisely on budget. In 1975-76, a combined balance was budgeted for, and there was a \$8 500 000 deficit. However, that money was used on the unemployment relief scheme. It was not of great significance because, at the end of the year, there was an accumulated surplus of \$18 700 000 as a result of money that had been paid following the railways transfer agreement.

**The Hon. R. C. DeGaris:** The railways fiddle.

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** We can go into that later. In every year, except that one year—

**The Hon. L. H. Davis:** That was a transfer of capital.

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** No, it was not. There was only one transfer of capital, with which I will deal in a moment.

**The Hon. L. H. Davis:** I am talking about the railways agreement. It was selling off the State's assets.

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** It was an asset that lost \$20 000 000 a year. That is a funny sort of asset, even for the Hon. Mr Davis, with his accountancy qualifications. Going through those figures, I could find only one year when the Budget miscued by going into the red, and that was in 1975-76. In 1977-78 a deficit was budgeted for, but it came in on budget. In 1976-77, on the combined accounts, there was supposed to be a balance, but there was a \$300 000 deficit. I have taken that as being near enough. Looking at the past 10 or 12 years, it is obvious that—

**The Hon. R. C. DeGaris:** Did you look at the position from 1965 to 1968?

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** No, I did not. This year is obviously by far the worst result in terms of miscalculation of a Budget that has occurred. The other matter that is of considerable concern is the practice, which is now in its second year, of transferring not small amounts but massive amounts of funds from capital account to Revenue Account. As I have said, in 1980-81, \$37 300 000, or over \$20 000 000 more than was anticipated, was transferred. This year, the Budget provides for \$44 000 000 to be transferred from capital account to Revenue Account. So, in two years, \$81 300 000 will have been transferred from capital account to Revenue Account. That means simply that \$81 300 000 worth of assets in this State which should have been created is not created.

The Premier has been his usual erratic self in relation to this matter. In July 1978, when \$5 600 000 was transferred from Loan Account to Revenue Account, the Premier almost went into apoplexy, complaining about the deficit and about the transfer of funds. However, according to my researches, that was the only transfer of funds from capital account to Revenue Account that was made during the Dunstan period.

**The Hon. R. C. DeGaris:** I think that you'd better look at 1965-68.

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** No. I have researched it back to 1949, and the only other time that I can find when this occurred was in 1958-59, when \$1 200 000 was transferred from capital account to Revenue Account. I seek leave to have the statistical table to which I am referring inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it. The table indicates the transfers from Revenue Account to Loan Account, and vice versa, in millions of dollars.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon. C. W. Crendon):** Is the table purely statistical?

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** Yes, Sir.

Leave granted.

TRANSFERS FROM REVENUE ACCOUNT—LAST 30 YEARS

	Transfer from Loan Account to Revenue Account (\$ million)	Transfer from Revenue Account to Loan Account (\$ million)
1981-82 (estimated) . . . . .	44.000	—
1980-81 . . . . .	37.268	—
1979-80 . . . . .	—	15.543
1978-79 . . . . .	5.662	—
1977-78 . . . . .	—	3.419
1976-77 . . . . .	—	24.054
1975-76 . . . . .	—	—
1974-75 . . . . .	—	—
1973-74 . . . . .	—	—
1972-73 . . . . .	—	—
1971-72 . . . . .	—	—
1970-71 . . . . .	—	—
1966-67 . . . . .	—	—
1965-66 . . . . .	—	—
1964-65 . . . . .	—	—
1963-64 . . . . .	—	—
1962-63 . . . . .	—	—
1961-62 . . . . .	—	—
1960-61 . . . . .	—	—
1959-60 . . . . .	—	—
1958-59 . . . . .	1.256	—
1949-50 . . . . .	—	—
1957-78 . . . . .	—	—

Sources: All data are from the appropriate annual Auditor-General's Report, item 'Statement of the Loan Account' and 'Loan Account—Summary of Operations' (Statement B).

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** The table indicates that in 1978-79 about \$5 600 000 was transferred by the Dunstan Government, and that in 1958-59 about \$1 200 000 was transferred. There is no other record of transfers from capital account expenditure to recurrent account. In 1980-81, a massive \$37 268 000 was transferred. This year the sum projected is \$44 000 000.

The table also indicates that transfers were made from Revenue Account to Loan Account in the Dunstan period but, of course, that is nothing that should be criticised because the money from Revenue Account going into Loan Account would be used for the construction of capital works. However, the reverse process cannot be kept up forever at a State level, and it has only started in any massive way under the present Government in its two years in office where \$81 300 000 of community assets have been lost.

**The Hon. R. C. DeGaris:** Should there be any restriction on the ability of a Government to use Loan funds for recurrent expenditure?

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** There needs to be a degree of flexibility. I would not say that there ought to be a restriction on it, but there ought to be a restriction at some point of time. I am not sure where that restriction will be with this Government. For instance, I am not sure what attitude the Commonwealth Government will adopt when, at Loan Council, it is revealed that South Australia has allocated or shifted \$81 300 000 in two years from capital account to Revenue Account. I would think that Loan Council and the Federal Government might ask why we want so much Loan money when we are not using it for the purposes for which it was designed. It seems that on 2 June 1981 the Premier recognised the difficulty, when he said:

We cannot afford to continue to finance our recurrent operations from capital funds indefinitely. To continue to do so for a long period would be detrimental to the economy, particularly to the building and construction industry and to employment.

He said that on 2 June when he realised that he was facing the transfer of \$37 300 000 and, in his Budget, he compounds it by estimating the transfer of another \$44 000 000 from capital to revenue.

The simple fact is, as the Hon. Mr DeGaris realises, and perhaps the Hon. Mr Davis does not realise, that \$81 300 000 of assets have not been created in this State. Members opposite have talked about the waste and extravagance of the Dunstan decade and they usually trot up the Land Commission, Monarto and the Frozen Food Factory and sometimes Samcor, although in the case of Samcor it is interesting to note that once again the Government became carried away with itself when, in a recent statement, the Minister of Agriculture claimed that Samcor was in the black for the first time in many years. Samcor was in the black only because the State Government had wiped off its debts. Apart from that simple accounting procedure, Samcor is chuffing along at about the same rate as under the previous Government. Again, I put that to the Council as an example of the quite stupid way that politicians behave—they think that they are going to fool people by the use of those sorts of figures. When they look at the other so-called miscalculations or financial errors of the Dunstan Government, Government members refer to the Land Commission, which to the present time I do not believe has cost the State money. Although Monarto has cost the State money, that is nothing compared with the \$81 300 000, and there is an asset existing; there is at least some land, and land is also held by the Land Commission.

The problem concerning the Frozen Food Factory is nothing like the bungle of \$81 300 000; if there is any loss to the State, it is about \$4 000 000 or \$5 000 000. I compare that to the \$81 300 000 worth of capital assets lost to South Australia, as a result of the two recent Budgets of the Tonkin Government. The financial difficulty that occurred in those instrumentalities is comparatively minor, and I challenge any Government member in this Council to come up with figures that indicate that that position is not true.

It cannot be over-emphasised, as I said, when considering the Budget, that this is the most disastrous Budget in modern South Australian history: \$81 300 000 of lost capital assets is a blunder of monumental proportions.

I said that I would refer to some general economic indicators. The first is a *Bulletin* poll of 27 October 1981 which indicates that 49 per cent of South Australians think that we are falling behind in terms of progress compared with the other States, and that 41 per cent think we are progressing faster than other States, or holding our own. That figure, when compared with other States (I think only Tasmania is worse in terms of expectation), hardly gives any joy to the Tonkin Government. I seek leave to have inserted in *Hansard*, without my reading it, a table of changes in key economic and demographic indicators at the national level and in this State over the two years since the election of the Tonkin Government in 1979. The table is purely statistical.

Leave granted.

#### SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND AUSTRALIA

Changes in key economic and demographic indicators at the national level and in this State over the two years since the election of the Tonkin Government in 1979. (All indicators are the latest available from A.B.S.)

	Australia Per cent	South Aus- tralia Per cent
Population (September 1979 to June 1981)	+2.7 p	+1.1 p
Labour force (September 1979 to September 1981)	+5.3 p	+2.4 p
Employment (September 1979 to September 1981)	+5.7 p	+2.3 p
Unemployment (September 1979 to September 1981)	-3.1 p	+4.1 p
Job vacancies (August 1979 to August 1981)	+5.2	-59.1*
C.P.I. (September 1979 to September 1981)	20.2	20.8
Registrations of new motor vehicles (3 months to September 1979 and September 1981)	+5.7 p	-9.3 p
Retail sales of goods (seasonally adjusted, September quarter 1979 and June quarter 1981)	+22.8 p	+20.2 p
Building approvals for new dwellings (3 months to August 1979 and August 1981)	+13.0	-28.4
Dwellings financed (3 months to August 1979 and August 1981)	-9.5	-13.2

\*Subject to large statistical sampling 'error'.

p=provisional

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** I do not wish to dwell on these indicators, but I provide them so that honourable members will have the opportunity to peruse them. The fact is that all the major economic and demographic indicators—population, labour force, employment, unemployment, job vacancies, registration of new motor vehicles, retail sales of goods, building approvals, and dwelling finances—show South Australia as appreciably worse off than the general position in Australia, and its position has worsened appreciably since 1979.

I will refer to two aspects. One is the unemployment situation. Honourable members cannot deny that this was the centre-piece of the Government's electoral strategy in Opposition. Specific promises included the creation of 7 000 jobs from pay-roll tax concessions; this figure was later increased to 10 000, and it was claimed that there would be a further 10 000 jobs from mining ventures, a total of either 17 000 or 20 000 jobs being promised. Now the Premier, in his Budget statement, says:

My Government does not believe, nor has it ever pretended, that this problem can be solved overnight.

Perhaps in Government it has not pretended that it could be solved overnight, but the Premier certainly did not give that impression in the period before 15 September 1979. People's expectations were clearly raised by the promises that the Premier made in 1979. The dismal and tragic fact is that those expectations have not been fulfilled.

In fact, the unemployment situation has worsened over the two-year period and the situation has worsened in relation to a number of other indicators. Honourable members opposite have tried to get out of their difficulties in relation to unemployment by quoting an increase in the number of people actually employed. That does not mean anything unless it is related to the number of people in the work force. The position is that the percentage of unemployed compared with the rest of Australia is still the worst.

The numbers of unemployed have, in real terms, increased. The Hon. Mr Davis tried to get over the difficulties of the unemployment position that this Government has by saying that there has been an increase in the number of people employed in South Australia since 1979 and that is true. As a statistic on its own it means very little unless it is compared to the situation in relation to the labour force as a whole. While the number of people employed may have increased, so has the number of unemployed, and the percentage of unemployed still indicates that South Australia is the worst State in Australia in that regard.

**The Hon. R. C. DeGaris:** Aren't there more people in employment?

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** Yes, but in relation to the total labour force it has not helped very much because there are more people unemployed in the last two years. The employed population in isolation could not be taken (that is, the increase in the number of jobs in the two years) as a measure of the Government's success or otherwise in the labour force area. In reality, employment must always be measured against labour force growth. When this is done, the Government's employment achievements can be seen in perspective. For example, from September 1979 to September 1981 we find that the size of the employed population has increased from 554 300 to 566 800—an increase of 12 500. However, during the same period the labour force, via ordinary population growth, has increased by 14 400. Thus the Government needs to increase employment levels by 14 400 just to keep pace with labour force growth. The fact that only 12 500 jobs were created means that unemployment has increased by 1 800 over the two years since September 1979. If we look at the numbers since September 1979 to September 1981 we can see those figures are borne out. The number of unemployed in September 1979 was 45 900 and in September 1981 it was 47 700. There is an increase in the number of jobs and positions but also an increase in unemployment and a position which is worse in September 1981 than in September 1979.

The next matter I wish to deal briefly with on the economic indicators in the table which I have inserted in *Hansard* is that the facts relating to the population outflow from South Australia (which were released by the A.B.S. today) for the June quarter 1981 indicates that South Australia has suffered a net loss of persons to other States totalling 1 185. That was a matter of which Dr Tonkin made much as Leader of the Opposition. He talked about the outgoing population along with a lot of other things and he promised that the population outflow would stop, just as he promised that the economy would pick up, and just as he promised that there would be an improvement in the unemployment position. As with the economy picking up, as with unemployment, so with population he has not been able to produce what he promised. The cumulative net loss for the first seven quarters or 21 months of the Tonkin

Government is 11 858 people. At 31 December 1980 the estimated populations of Port Lincoln and Murray Bridge were identical at 11 250 so we have lost more than either of those two cities in the 21 months of the Tonkin Government.

Over the past 12 months to June, South Australia had the lowest total population growth of any State—.69 per cent. The fact is that Western Australia is overtaking South Australia at a fast rate. When the Tonkin Government came to office we had 46 000 more people than Western Australia had. Now the difference is only 16 000 people. Soon we will be the least populous mainland State. I would commend the other figures that I have placed in *Hansard* to honourable members, particularly honourable members on the front bench who may have some influence on the Government. I make an appeal to honourable members on the back bench not to toady to their front bench colleagues and merely prattle the propaganda that the Premier puts out on behalf of his Government but to try to make a realistic analysis of what is happening in this State. Clearly the situation is difficult. There is no point in the Premier's making grandiose statements and promises about the future when the facts belie those promises and projections to the future. The Government obviously has to sit down and have a good think about where it is going. If it does not it will not be in power after the next election.

If the disastrous Budget position continues, I do not see how it can survive the next election. If its head-in-the-sand attitude towards the economic indicators continues, I am sure it will not survive the next election. The Hon. Dr Ritson, who is looking at me from his corner bench, should tell the Government to get its head out of the sand and should stop the Premier from carrying on in his bluff and blustering way and tell him to get down to a realistic analysis and some solid work on the South Australian economy and to do something about it within the limitations that exist at the State Government level.

**The Hon. G. L. BRUCE:** I support the motion. In doing so I add my comments and support to what other speakers have said in relation to the role this Council plays in dealing with the Budget papers and the subsequent Estimates Committees. At the moment we do not have any role and can not question any Minister on matters of interest in relation to the Budget, irrespective of the fact that this Council supplies three of those Ministers. I do not challenge the right and role of the other House to control and have the power when it comes to money Bills. However, I question and challenge the ignoring of this Council as an arm of Parliament to question or challenge the Government on its previous year's performance as indicated in the Budget papers.

**The Hon. R. J. Ritson:** You don't even think this Council should be here.

**The Hon. G. L. BRUCE:** That is right. It reinforces my belief that this Council is a farce in this time and age.

**The Hon. C. M. Hill:** Why don't you resign?

**The Hon. G. L. BRUCE:** Why don't we all resign? Unless we have some positive and beneficial effect on the role of the Government and legislation on our Statute Book we may as well not be here. I believe, and have stated before, that the role of this Council seems only to give effect to Government in duplicate. I further believe that the resources and ability that are available in this Council are being by-passed. More committees and more involvement in this Council in reviewing legislation could result in better legislation going on to the Statute Book.

From the comments I have heard in this debate and in earlier debates quite a few members are of the same belief. I concur with the remarks of the Hon. Mr Carnie when he

appealed to the Government to examine the committee system and this Council to see whether we can play a role in the Budget committee debates and questions. He also touched on education and its cost to the community. I cannot agree with what he said. I believe that the future of this country and this State will ultimately depend on the education of our community. The price we pay now to have a well-educated society could be small indeed if people can, through their skill and expertise in the future, give us a better and more democratic way of living—one with opportunities to do the job one wants and to use the skills one has learnt to the benefit of the society.

Unfortunately, it would appear that this is a long way off. I often wonder whether we will have that time available to us before the destructive seeds of unemployment and lack of satisfaction with our society by a vast number of people create an environment where society as we know it will disappear. I wish to quote from the *Australian* of 21 October a small article which conveys what I have been saying, which reinforces my belief and which states under the heading 'Bleak job prospects for school leavers', the following:

School leavers will continue to face a deteriorating job market throughout the 1980s, the former Chairman of the Australian Schools Commission, Dr Ken McKinnon, said in Perth yesterday.

'In the past 10 years the number of full-time jobs available for people aged 15 to 19 years contracted by 100 000, while the size of this group rose by 250 000,' he said.

Dr McKinnon, now Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wollongong, was addressing the annual conference of the Australian Council of State School Organisations.

We are likely to be faced with continuing problems of what to do to help young people in a contracting job situation.

Dr McKinnon said schools should be helping all students to become successful and confident adults by encouraging their varied talents and abilities. At present they were mainly geared to preparing students for tertiary education.

Approaches and structures in schools should be reformed to achieve this goal. According to Dr McKinnon, several practical steps can be taken.

An important beginning would be reconsideration of the content of curricula to ensure they related to the lives of students.

Another would be to give individual schools greater freedom to adapt to the needs of their students and ensure that everyone is helped to the maximum.

I support those views, which go to reinforce what I have been saying. I am concerned that, as a legislator in the State of South Australia, I do not as an individual (or collectively as a member of the Party I represent in this Parliament) seem to be able to alleviate the major problems I believe face us and the community. I do not believe that members on the other side of this Council of a different Party from my Party can claim to be any more effective in the solving of these problems.

I was born in the 1930s. When it came to schooling, working, getting married, raising a family and buying a house it all seemed so very hard, but at least I had no worries in getting a job and holding it. Even though it was a struggle, I managed to purchase a house. I was shored up in the belief that, while it was hard for me, at least it would be better for my children. We were living in an enlightened and greater technological age so things would be good for them, with greater job opportunities, better travel facilities, more conveniences, better education, better health facilities and a greater awareness politically of their needs.

Unfortunately, and to our great loss, none of this seems to be happening. We have the worst unemployment ever. The chances of a young married couple purchasing a home are fast receding. Health care is a nightmare for the young. Education is under attack at all levels, and, in fact, the Hon. Mr Carnie made mention of the fact that many parents are unhappy with the State education system, and that is one reason why enrolments are declining in State schools while enrolments increase in private schools. Surely

this should not be the case if education was overhauled to give the best to students. As Ken McKinnon said in the last two paragraphs of his statement:

An important beginning would be reconsideration of the content of curricula to ensure they related to the lives of students.

Another would be to give individual schools greater freedom to adapt to the needs of their students and ensure that everyone is helped to the maximum.

Those things I think should be happening in the State schools so that at least people can come out of school prepared and ready to adapt to our society.

**The Hon. R. J. Ritson:** Nearly everything you have just said is untrue.

**The Hon. G. L. BRUCE:** Why is it?

**The Hon. R. J. Ritson:** The employment situation is better than when you were born and health is better.

**The Hon. G. L. BRUCE:** When I went into the work force I could pick a job and hold it. That situation does not exist now. I said that I was born in the 1930s and was a child then, so that particular situation did not arise in my looking for a job. I believe that the increase in private school enrolments can be traced to the fact that parents see job opportunities for their children increasing if it can be shown that they attended a private school. I believe that that is the reason why attendances are up at private schools. All of these things which affected me and which I thought could be improved upon, and surely must be improved on with time, have simply not improved. I think that we will pay the price of the expectations of improvement we have created in people's lives and have failed to deliver. I believe in an educated society because causes such as the Year of the Disabled Person are more readily received and understood. In an educated society, changes in Statutes are more readily understood. The right of unemployed people to have a rewarding and fulfilling life is more readily understood by an educated society.

Education, to me, is the one part of our society that we cannot afford to skimp on. We all receive the benefits from a well educated society—better roads and engineers, better doctors, better politicians, scientists and better leisure activities. Directly and indirectly we are all affected by education. We must make the education system the centre to help to achieve all of those things we seek out of life. The very fact that education is the single biggest item in the State Budget shows how important it is.

The Hon. Mr Carnie said that an extra \$13 000 000 was granted due to a 4.3 per cent increase in wages just to maintain the *status quo*. I believe that we have to improve the position. I had an opportunity to visit the Parks Community Centre, where I understand there is a spending crisis. I wonder what education costs per person compared to keeping a person in a reformatory or a gaol. If education and community involvement such as at the Parks Centre has helped to keep somebody out of those institutions, then it must be a plus and cannot be measured in monetary terms. Unfortunately, these are the hidden aspects of education. If education can stop people being drug addicts or taking drugs, then that cannot be measured in dollars. If education stops vandalism, that cannot be measured in dollars. If education gives a person greater awareness of another person's needs, hopes and aspirations and enables him to do something that cannot be measured in dollars and cents.

If we look at the Third World countries, probably the greatest disadvantage they have to overcome is a lack of a well educated society. Education is the key to a prosperous society. It should also be the key to help solve some of the massive problems that are looming in our future. Without education I believe that we are without hope. When I say it would appear that my children and grandchildren do not

seem to have the opportunity and the improved lot that I expected for them, I do not say that lightly. I do not say it without having studied and watched what has happened. This is not said from an insular point of view. I have observed my own children's struggles to obtain jobs and to balance their budgets to ensure that they can meet their commitments. In fact, the reading of a newspaper on virtually any day gives some indication of, and reinforces my views about, what is happening, which is that I do not think that they are getting the same job opportunities that I had, or the same health set-up as I was getting. I thought that they should get better. My thoughts are reinforced by an article which appeared in yesterday's *Australian*. It does not matter what day one picks up the paper there is something in it similar to what appeared in yesterday's *Australian* under the heading 'New Health Scheme Leaves Over 1 000 000 Uncovered', as follows:

Between one and two million people have been left without health cover under the Federal Government's latest health insurance scheme, the Australian Council of Social Services said yesterday.

In a scathing attack on the scheme, still less than two months old, the council and a number of affiliates, including the Combined Pensioners Association, the Consumers Association and the Doctors Reform Society, have also labelled the system unwieldy, inadequate and a failure as well as unfair and wasteful.

**The Hon. R. J. Ritson:** That is a good collection of politically biased organisations.

**The Hon. G. L. BRUCE:** I cannot see how the honourable member can say that the scheme is working if it leaves over 1 000 000 people without cover. There are between 1 000 000 and 2 000 000 people in Australia who are currently without health benefits. The scheme is not working for them and their health. Because of that interruption I will read the whole of that article as I think it states what is happening to their health in today's society, as follows:

Campaigning for what they described as a simple, fair and universal public health system, the welfare groups say the present system is a labyrinth of misinformation and abuse in which pensioners and the underprivileged suffer most.

The groups claim that the 'user pays' system will not mean a consumer restraint on medical and hospital costs because it does not act as a brake on over-servicing by doctors.

Perhaps the Hon. Dr Ritson would care to comment about that. The article continues:

Mrs McClintock said the new system would produce no overall savings or cuts in health costs. 'The scheme is an administrative nightmare in which health dollars will be channelled away from improving public health services and into subsidies for private doctors, private hospitals and private health funds,' she said.

'The new system was enacted to stop over-use but what is not realised is that patients are not over-users of the system. Doctors are,' she said. 'We have innumerable cases of people with hospital-only cover attending hospitals then being sent to private specialists outside, where they have to pay an uncovered fee. Many others in a low-income category attend hospitals and end up paying for the service anyway because they do not understand the entitlements of their cover. The system has a terrible impact on low-income families, who often do not understand it and so it is not properly used. People are terribly confused.'

Besides being confusing and expensive, Mrs McClintock said the system was openly discriminating. 'The means tests are dotted with poverty traps,' she said. 'People just over the free health care cut-off will be worse off than people just below it since they will have to pay \$10-15 per week for health insurance or face huge hospital bills. These health insurance premiums will be outside the financial reach of many families. It has been estimated that more than one million people will not be covered by health insurance or the socially disadvantaged category.'

The organisations' campaign is also trying to point out differences between various States in hospital charges and eligibility for free hospital services.

I believe that that article and the present confusion over the existing health scheme indicates that the children of today are no better off. In fact, I believe they are worse off than when I first used the health scheme when I started to raise a family.

I now turn to employment. An article in yesterday's *Australian* headed, 'Contractors say boom could be cut by \$30 000 000 000', stated:

The nation's resources boom will be sharply hit by inflation and a shortage of manpower, resulting in the cancellation of construction projects worth as much as \$30 000 000 000, contractors warned yesterday.

A new report by the Australian Federation of Construction Contractors, the national body of large-scale construction companies, also raised serious doubts over the Government's ability to handle resources development.

The article then lists details about why that is happening. I believe that it is happening. That article reinforces the point that I have been making that things today are not as good as when I was coming up through the work force.

I now turn to education cuts, which have led to the fact that only 300 jobs will be available for teachers in South Australia next year. Unfortunately, 4 000 teachers will be applying for those jobs, which means 4 000 teachers have gone through the system and will be applying for only 300 jobs. Therefore, 3 700 teachers will be unemployed. I am well aware of that situation because someone very close to my family went through four years of college education and then had to work in a pizza place for 12 months. She is now a part-time teacher. The frustration she suffered, through no fault of her own, has to be lived through to be believed.

I believe that what is presently happening in society is just not right, and that we as legislators should be doing something about it. If we cannot provide jobs for those teachers we should channel them into some other useful resource area. They have been led to expect a job, but they cannot get one. Last night's *News* stated:

... 10 per cent of South Australian primary classes has more than 30 children.

I believe that is just not right. The Premier and Treasurer's Financial Statement constantly refers to wage escalation, and states:

The first is the emerging resurgence of excessive wage demands. While growth in prices moderated in 1980-81, the prospect of accelerating wage and price inflation in 1981-82 is of great concern ... However, members are aware also of the Government's determination to do all it can responsibly to encourage moderation in wage and salary demands ... The Budget I presented to Parliament last year included a round-sum allowance of \$79 000 000 for increases in wage and salary rates expected to occur in 1980-81.

The Premier then referred to what was happening with wage rates. The Financial Statement continues:

But let me say plainly and openly that, while costs, and particularly wages, continue to rise, fees and charges will need to be reviewed ... As to capital works, funds will be under considerable pressure in future years as the State attempts to make some contribution towards infrastructure for major developments as well as coping with normal demands. In 1981-82, capital funds will be under further pressure due to the need to provide up to \$44 000 000 to support recurrent operations, depending on the extent of wage increases during the year.

The Premier also refers to wage increases on the next page. In fact, his whole speech deals with wage increases and what they are doing to the community, and he says that we are suffering because of those wage increases. The Premier deals with every Government department and refers to their operating costs. In relation to the Premier's Department, he says:

After allowing for wage and salary award increases of \$331 000, expenditure by the Premier's Department exceeded estimates by \$121 000.

In relation to the Deputy Premier, he said:

Wage and salary awards, which amounted to \$311 000 ...

Expenditure in the Mines Department was above estimate by \$714 000. The Premier then lists each department separately and blames the increase in expenditure on wage increases—Attorney-General's Department, wage increases;



Minister of Industrial Affairs, wage increases; Minister of Public Works, wage increases; Minister of Education, wage increases; Chief Secretary, wage increases; Minister of Marine, wage increases; Minister of Local Government, wage increases; Minister of Arts, wage increases; Minister of Agriculture, wage increases; Minister of Environment and Planning, wage increases; and Minister of Transport, wage increases. The Premier has listed them all and referred to wage increases in each one.

After reading the Premier's Financial Statement one could be led to believe that wage increases are something new and that they are destroying Australia. I have obtained two tables from the Library dealing with consumer price index wage increases and two others dealing with the minimum wage. I seek leave to have those four statistical tables incorporated in *Hansard*, without my reading them.

Leave granted.

TABLE 1. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX—ALL GROUPS—WEIGHTED AVERAGE, SIX STATE CAPITAL CITIES

	Index Number	Change from Previous year	Change since 1975-76
		Per cent	Per cent
1974-75	171.1	n.a.	—
1975-76	193.3	13.0	13.0
1976-77	220.0	13.8	28.6
1977-78	241.0	9.5	40.9
1978-79	260.7	8.2	52.4
1979-80	287.2	10.2	67.9
1980-81	314.2	9.4	83.6

Source: A.B.S. *Time series data* (microfiche), table PC.

TABLE 2. AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS PER EMPLOYED MALE UNIT

	\$-c	Australia Change from Previous Year	Change since 1975-76	\$-c	South Australia Change from Previous Year	Change since 1975-76
		Per cent	Per cent		Per cent	Per cent
1974-75	148.30	n.a.	—	138.60	n.a.	—
1975-76	169.60	14.4	14.4	158.50	14.4	14.4
1976-77	190.70	12.4	28.6	179.50	13.2	29.5
1977-78	209.50	9.9	41.3	197.40	10.0	42.4
1978-79	225.60	7.7	52.1	210.30	6.5	51.7
1979-80	247.90	9.9	67.2	230.30	9.5	66.2
1980-81	281.40	13.5	89.8	262.10	13.8	89.1

Source: A.B.S. Publication *Average weekly earnings, Australia, June quarter 1981* (Cat. No. 6302.0, latest issue), table 2.

TABLE 3. WEIGHTED AVERAGE MINIMUM WEEKLY AWARD, ETC., WAGES—ALL INDUSTRY GROUPS—ADULT MALES

	\$-c	Australia Change from Previous Year	Change since July 1975	\$-c	South Australia Change from Previous Year	Change since July 1975
		Per cent	Per cent		Per cent	Per cent
July 1975	113.00	n.a.	—	111.08	n.a.	—
July 1976	129.76	14.8	14.8	126.78	14.1	14.1
July 1977	143.97	11.0	27.4	140.67	11.0	26.6
July 1978	153.54	6.6	35.9	150.20	6.8	35.2
July 1979	166.87	8.7	47.7	164.16	9.3	47.8
July 1980	185.52	11.2	64.2	182.95	11.4	64.7
July 1981	200.81	8.2	77.7	199.07	8.8	79.2

Source: A.B.S. publication *Wage rates, Australia* (Cat. No. 6312.0, monthly: various issues, latest July 1981), tables 1 and 5 (or corresponding tables in earlier issues).

Note: The A.B.S. wage figures are revised from time to time, so that various issues of the source publication show slightly different figures: last (revised) figures are shown.

TABLE 4. MINIMUM WAGE: ADULT MALES, WEEKLY RATE UNDER AWARDS, ETC.

	\$-c	Commonwealth Awards—'Six State Capital Cities' Change from Previous Year	Change since July 1975	\$-c	South Australia State Awards Change from Previous Year	Change since July 1975
		Per cent	Per cent		Per cent	Per cent
July 1975	80.10	n.a.	—	79.60	n.a.	—
July 1976	96.00	19.9	19.9	95.50	20.0	20.0
July 1977	108.40	12.9	35.3	107.90	13.0	35.6
July 1978	115.50	6.5	44.2	115.00	6.6	44.5
July 1979	123.90	7.3	54.7	123.40	7.3	55.0
July 1980	134.90*	8.9	68.4	134.40*	8.9	68.8
July 1981	144.90	7.4	80.9	145.70**	8.4	83.0

\* Effective 14 July 1980

\*\* Effective 3 July 1981

Source: Tables 17 and 18 (or corresponding tables of earlier issues) of the publications from which table 3 is drawn.

**The Hon. G. L. BRUCE:** According to the table dealing with the consumer price index, in 1975-76, which is the year that indexation commenced, there was a 13 per cent increase for all groups; in 1976-77, there was a 13.8 per cent increase; in 1977-78, there was a 9.5 per cent increase; in 1978-79, there was an 8.2 per cent increase; in 1979-80, there was a 10.2 per cent increase; and in 1980-81 there was a 9.4 per cent increase. Since 1975-76 there has been a total increase of 83.6 per cent in the consumer price index.

I now turn to the table dealing with the average weekly earnings per employed male, which are also broken down into percentage rates. The figures include overtime and other things in the wages area. Whilst the consumer price index has risen 83.6 per cent, the total average earnings increased 89.1 per cent for the same period. In South Australia in 1975-76 the increase was 14.4 per cent; in 1976-77 it was 13.2 per cent; in 1977-78 it was 10 per cent; in 1978-79 it was 6.5 per cent; in 1979-80 it was 9.5 per cent; and in 1980-81 it was 13.8 per cent. That is a total of 89.1 per cent, an increase of 5.5 per cent over the c.p.i. It would appear that the worker is better off, but I am not happy with those figures, because I do not believe that they apply to the average working man. Another scale of figures applies to the weighted average minimum weekly award, which includes all industry groups of adult males in South Australia. The change in average weekly earnings in July 1976 was 14.1 per cent; July 1977, 11 per cent; July 1978, 6.8 per cent; July 1979, 9.3 per cent; July 1980, 11.4 per cent; and July 1981, 8.8 per cent, with a total change of 79.2 per cent. That means that the average change in award of 79.2 per cent shows a decline of 4.4 per cent in relation to South Australia. What is actually happening in regard to the award rate is that a person is worse off. He has not kept up with the cost of living: he is behind.

To read the Premier's statement one would think that wages are destroying and setting back this State. The real spending power for the person on the award rate is just not as high now as it was in 1976. According to my calculations, the worker is 4.4 per cent worse off than he was in 1976. It is interesting to note the figures for the minimum wage for adult males in South Australia (the old minimum award rate), as follows: July 1976, a 20 per cent increase, which distorts the view; July 1977, 13 per cent; July 1978, 6.6 per cent; and July 1979, 7.3 per cent; July 1980, 8.9 per cent; July 1981, 8.4 per cent. There was an 83 per cent rise in regard to the minimum wage. Therefore, 83.6 per cent was the c.p.i. increase, 83 per cent was the minimum wage increase, so it would appear that the worker is only .6 per cent worse off. However, in 1976, he received a massive increase, which lifted his rate. For the five years since then, he has been behind the consumer price index, and in the same five years the c.p.i. increased by 51.1 per cent, whereas his rise was only 42.4 per cent. The worker is really well behind the c.p.i. If it had not been for that massive increase of 20 per cent in 1976, he would be nowhere near the c.p.i. In fact, for the last five years, he has been behind the c.p.i.

Those figures give the lie to the suggestion that wages are in front and the worker is doing better than he has ever done in regard to wage increases. All wage increases have done is maintain the *status quo* and keep the worker at his ordinary expectation. In fact, it gives him no hope of more spending money in the future. It can be seen that, during the past five years, the average worker has not significantly improved his income. The wage increases that he has received give him no more and, in many cases, give him less than the c.p.i. increase.

While the Premier may deplore wage increases, they do no more than maintain the *status quo* for the worker.

Wages must be a major and integral part of costs to the Government in running its departments and proper provision and allowance must be made for them, without all of the huffing and puffing and blaming wage increases and the workers as a drain on the Government.

**The Hon. R. J. Ritson:** I do not believe he is doing that: he is deploring the—

**The Hon. G. L. BRUCE:** The inference is that he would be going easy except for wage increases. The Premier says that he is the only one who is inflicted with these wage increases, but they have done nothing for the worker other than keep him up with the c.p.i., and in some cases he is worse off—he is not up with the c.p.i. Other factors which are not allowed for in the c.p.i. and which place a terrific burden on the average worker are high interest rates and taxation. Interest rates do not figure in c.p.i. increases and they place a terrific burden on the average worker and the house occupier. The hidden costs of finance, such as Bankcard costs, which I believe the worker is not aware of, should be given more prominence. The circular that has been distributed by the Australian Association of Permanent Building Societies puts the costs of borrowing money into proper perspective. The cost to the worker for a Bankcard or borrowing money should be put on the record.

**The Hon. R. C. DeGaris:** Is it only the workers who have Bankcards?

**The Hon. G. L. BRUCE:** No, but only the well-off can afford them. Under the heading 'Bankcard, personal loans—what do they really cost?', the article states:

Purchases on Bankcard can cost 19.265 per cent a year and finance company loans and instalment credit carry an effective cost of between 24 per cent and 33 per cent, while bank personal loans at 8.25 per cent flat incur an effective interest rate of up to 16.21 per cent annually. (Most banks are currently charging 9.25 per cent flat for unsecured personal loans and 9.0 per cent on secured loans). Credit union personal loans carry an effective rate of interest between 13.24 per cent and 19.56 per cent, with most being around 16 per cent.

According to a recent study undertaken for the Australian Financial System Inquiry by R. Anstie and I. Harper on the cost of consumer finance interest rates quoted on the various forms of consumer finance available today do not provide a sound basis for comparison and the effective interest rates can be considerably higher than the quoted rate. Interest rates can be quoted in a variety of ways—flat, reducible, over various periods etc. The effective rate is calculated as an annual percentage rate and can be used for comparison purposes. This rate does not, however, indicate the true cost of the finance since it excludes other costs in taking out a loan (e.g. establishment fee).

The extent of consumer credit in Australia can be gauged from the table. The four sources of finance discussed above, viz—banks, Bankcards, finance companies and credit unions, comprise the bulk of the balances outstanding.

A \$5 000 bank personal loan which is paid off over three years at a flat rate of 8.25 per cent has an effective rate of interest almost twice as high at 16.05 per cent a year. Any ancillary costs increase the true rate of interest significantly. With an establishment fee of say, \$40, the same bank personal loan would cost 16.7 per cent.

Bankcard quotes its interest rate at 1.5 per cent a month, or as an annual rate of 18 per cent. In fact, a purchase of \$1 000 on Bankcard paid off over twelve months incurs interest at the effective annual rate of 19.265 per cent. The Bankcard user may incur other costs such as stamp duty which is imposed by some States on Bankcard transactions.

Finance companies are by far the largest single source of consumer finance in Australia (see table). In addition to an effective rate ranging upwards from 24 per cent, certain ancillary costs have to be met by the borrower. Stamp duty imposes an extra cost in States where it applies and there are insurance costs involved with instalment credit.

Balances Outstanding on Instruments of  
Consumer Finance—June 1980

	\$M
Bank Personal Loans .....	2 236.0
Bankcard .....	798.3
Finance Companies—	
Instalment Credit for	
Retail Sales .....	2 872.9
Personal Loans .....	1 459.0

Balances Outstanding on Instruments of  
Consumer Finance—June 1980

	\$M
Other Instalment Credit for—	
Retail Sales .....	137.0
Life Insurance—	
Company Loans on Policies .....	312.1
Credit Union Personal Loans .....	1 508.6

From those figures one can see what the consumer is up for in regard to interest rates in considering the amount of the loan and the interest that is charged. The sad facts about today's economy mean that not too many families do not avail themselves of finance of some sort. Through no fault of their own, they are committed to these repayments and interest rates. I fully support any move that makes the role of this Chamber more relevant in this day and age. I do not go along with the Hon. Murray Hill when he says that my resignation from the Council could achieve that. If he was to dissolve the Council completely, all right, but one member should not be asked to resign. I am entitled to a view about what goes on in the debate and in the Council. I would like to see this Government formulate a policy to give people in South Australia a better way and standard of life.

**The Hon. BARBARA WIESE** secured the adjournment of the debate.

## PUBLIC SERVICE GUIDELINES

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

That the suggested guidelines regarding appearances of South Australian public servants as witnesses before Parliamentary committees, set out in Appendix II of the Report of the Committee on Guidelines for Public Servants Appearing before Parliamentary Committees, and laid on the table of this Council on 29 September 1981, be adopted.

(Continued from 21 October. Page 1456.)

**The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS:** The history of tabling the guidelines for public servants appearing as witnesses before Parliamentary committees is indeed interesting. Originally, the Government issued guidelines (as I believe is its right) to be followed by public servants appearing before Parliamentary committees.

The criticism of those guidelines from many sources, including those serving on Parliamentary committees, caused the Government to refer the proposed guidelines to a committee of inquiry comprising Mr Gordon Combe, the Attorney-General, the President of the Legislative Council, the Speaker of the House of Assembly, the Parliamentary Labor Party representative (Hon. Chris Sumner), the Public Service Association representative (Mr Connelly), the Public Service Board representative (Dr Corbett), and the Executive Officer of the Premier's Department (Mr R. I. Nichols).

That committee has reported, but accompanying its report is a minority report prepared by the Hon. Chris Sumner and Mr Connelly, which minority report denies the need for any such guidelines to be adopted by the Parliament. It is my view that it does not matter very much whether or not the Parliament agrees to the adoption of the guidelines: the Government can still issue the guidelines to its public servants who appear before Parliamentary committees. I accept the view expressed by the Hon. Chris Sumner that there exists little hard evidence that there is any great difficulty in regard to public servants appearing before Parliamentary committees.

I also draw the Council's attention to other matters raised by the Hon. Mr Sumner in his minority report, which views,

I believe, the Council cannot ignore. I should like to refer to some of those views in the Hon. Mr Sumner's minority report. I do not want to go through them all, although one or two are very relevant to the adoption of guidelines for public servants appearing before Parliamentary committees. In Part II of his minority report, the Hon. Mr Sumner says:

Paragraph 5.2.14 of the majority report refers to broader questions such as freedom of information, the publication of Public Service advice to Ministers and to public comment by public servants having been raised but does not comment further on them.

One witness expressed his concern about the decline of the power of Parliament and the monopolisation of information by the Executive, in many instances because much of that information was technical. He believed that the increasing adversary nature of Australian politics hampered the obtaining of information. Politics became a point scoring exercise rather than seeking factual information which may produce a consensus. He believed there was a strong case for the general opening up of information and queried whether our system of government is benefited by gagging public servants. He compared Australia with the U.S.A., where public servants express opinions contrary to the Government. In the long term he believed the quality of advice to the Government would be enhanced by more openness.

That statement raised a number of most interesting questions, related particularly to the Westminster system, which we are supposed to be following. Paragraph 3 of the Hon. Mr Sumner's minority report states:

This evidence constituted a challenge to the traditional concepts of Ministerial responsibility and impartiality of public servants and was given as part of a plea for more openness and therefore a criticism particularly of the original guidelines which required the presence of an adviser and prohibited the expression of personal opinions by public servants. This witness made out a strong case for greater freedom of Government information and the development of mechanisms to ensure that Parliament has the tools to scrutinise Executive activity. The report of the majority does not enter into a discussion of these ideas.

Paragraph 4 thereof states:

Another issue not considered by the majority is the question of Ministers appearing before committees. When the original guidelines were tabled, I wrote to the Premier stating, 'Now that public servants will have strict controls over what they can say before committees, and as you quite rightly say are not responsible to the Parliament, I believe that Ministers should now make themselves available for appearance before committees.'

Although the original guidelines have now had their most obnoxious features restricting the flow of information removed, the question of Ministerial appearance before committees still deserves consideration. The concept of Ministerial responsibility today is such that it is now only personal culpability which compels a Minister to resign. Further, the traditional avenue of Question Time is most unsatisfactory in reviewing Government activities. Other means must be found for reviewing Government activities and calling the Executive to account. Accordingly, a strong case can be made out for Ministers to appear before committees when the committee requires comment on policy matters.

This touches on a very vital question in relation to these guidelines. I state once again that, whether the Council agrees with or rejects the proposed guidelines, the points raised by the Hon. Mr Sumner in that statement are still pertinent questions that deserve some answer.

I point out that, where a public servant declines to answer questions asked during a committee inquiry, the Council needs to examine the question of how the committee can obtain the answer to that question. It means that we would need to examine Standing Orders so that committees have a right to get answers from the relevant Minister or Ministers, as the case may be.

I said at the beginning of my few remarks on the guidelines that in my opinion it does not matter a great deal whether or not the guidelines are adopted. The Government, in publicising the guidelines originally and the criticisms thereof, has in my view taken the correct line in asking that the guidelines be examined and that a report be made on the matter. The Government is correct in tabling in the Council, and seeking the Council's approval thereon, the guidelines that it intends issuing to its public servants.

Therefore, I see no compelling reason to vote against the adoption of the guidelines. However, merely by voting for the adoption of the guidelines one does not cover the other important aspects to which I have referred and which were mentioned in the Hon. Mr Sumner's minority report on the overall question of information sought by any committee that is conducting an inquiry.

I intend to support the guidelines, although, as I have said, I do not think it matters very much whether or not they are adopted. I trust that the Attorney-General will in reply report to the Council on what actions if any he would endorse so that committees can receive answers to questions that may be avoided by public servants appearing before those committees. It may well be that it can be done in some way other than amending Standing Orders, although I do not think that that is possible. It means that we may well need to look at the whole question of Standing Orders in relation to a committee's being able to get information that it should have to make a decision on any matter that has been referred to it by the Council for investigation. Therefore, I raise that question with the Attorney-General. It is up to the Council to make its decision about how that information is obtained. I ask the Attorney-General whether there are any actions that he would endorse in this respect.

**The Hon. C. J. SUMNER:** Mr Acting President, I draw your attention to the state of the Council.

*A quorum having been formed:*

**The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS:** It is probably necessary that the Standing Orders Committee at least make an investi-

gation of this question and come down with some suggested changes to Standing Orders so that answers required by Select Committees can be achieved. In his speech in this Chamber a few minutes ago, the Hon. Mr Bruce referred to a matter that is close to my heart. The future of this Council must lie in its ability to conduct committee inquiries. There is a tremendous amount of talent on both sides of the Council on the back bench that could be utilised in examining matters of great urgency in this State.

I am certain that in committee inquiries of this type it is possible for us to achieve consensus opinions on a number of issues that it is not otherwise possible to achieve in the normal atmosphere of debate in either House. Therefore, if those committees are to achieve the end that I hope they will one day achieve, it is necessary that we examine the question of the opportunity of Ministers and members to appear before committees to give evidence on matters about which the committees require information. I support the adoption of the guidelines, but I ask that those matters to which I have referred in my speech be examined.

**The Hon. R. J. RITSON** secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### ADJOURNMENT

At 5.10 p.m. the Council adjourned until Wednesday 28 October at 2.15 p.m.