

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PETROL PRICES

Thursday 12 August 1982

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

ORROROO AND DISTRICTS HOSPITAL

The **PRESIDENT** laid on the table the following report by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, together with minutes of evidence:

Orroroo and Districts Hospital (Upgrading).

QUESTIONS

WINE GRAPES

The **Hon. B. A. CHATTERTON**: I seek leave to make a short explanation before asking the Minister of Consumer Affairs a question about wine grape prices.

Leave granted.

The **Hon. B. A. CHATTERTON**: Some weeks ago, I asked the Minister a question about the problems facing grapegrowers in this State with the deteriorating situation regarding minimum grape prices. It seems that the problems of the industry are such that it is becoming increasingly difficult for growers to get payment for their grapes under the terms of prices orders set down by the Prices Commissioner.

In the Minister's reply to my question he said it would help if grapegrowers who were affected could report their complaints to the Acting Prices Commissioner so that action could be taken against the wineries that had not obeyed the prices orders. Since then, I have been contacted by a number of grapegrowers who are in serious difficulties because no payments have been made on grapes that were delivered at the last vintage. When I have suggested that they put the matter before the Prices Commissioner, the reply that I received on each occasion has been that they are not game to do so because they feel their name will be used and that, therefore, they will in some way be penalised by the winery concerned.

While they are very concerned that they have not received payment, they are also concerned that they will not be able to deliver their grapes in future once the winery knows that they have made complaints to the Prices Commissioner. Can the Minister give an assurance that grapegrowers who have been affected are able to complain to the Prices Commissioner and that the Commissioner will treat their complaints as confidential information and will not reveal their names when he undertakes the investigation into that particular winery?

The **Hon. J. C. BURDETT**: I am pleased to give that assurance. Although the Prices Commissioner necessarily deals in this instance with growers and the wineries, there has long been a tradition of confidentiality in regard to the Commissioner and the whole of my department. Indeed, the Commissioner recognises that the information supplied by either party is supplied on a confidential basis. I can give the assurance that, if any grower complains to the Commissioner, his name will in no way be disclosed by the Commissioner to the winery.

The **Hon. C. J. SUMNER**: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before directing a question on petrol prices to the Minister of Consumer Affairs.

The **PRESIDENT**: Is leave granted?

The **Hon. N. K. Foster**: No.

The **PRESIDENT**: Leave is not granted.

The **Hon. C. J. SUMNER**: In view of the current problems that exist relating to petrol marketing in South Australia, will the Minister say what action the Government intends taking and, in particular, whether the Government will consider a proposal which the Labor Party put forward last year when this issue was one of public controversy, namely, that in addition to our proposal for a 2c per litre reduction in the Prices Justification Tribunal price there be an inquiry into an appropriate margin for resellers?

The **Hon. J. C. BURDETT**: In order to fix margins, as the Act stands one would have to set a maximum retail price. Such a price could be set by reference to a fixed figure, or in relation to the wholesale price. There are problems in controlling the retail price of petrol. Attempts to do this have not worked in New South Wales.

Because of different throughputs and other variables, it is difficult to fix a price which is enough for the needy without being too much for the greedy. For example, if a maximum retail price of 39.5c a litre is set it depends very much on throughput in individual service stations as to whether that price is appropriate. Some service stations with large throughputs would do very well at that price. However, there are other outlets in the metropolitan area, and more particularly outlets in country areas, with small throughputs for which that price would not be enough. As I said, retail price control has not worked in New South Wales. That State has recently set up a zoning system.

Even this is difficult because there are big variations between zones. Certainly, the Government will continue to monitor the situation. It has considered the proposition mentioned by the Hon. Mr Sumner regarding retail price control.

The **Hon. C. J. Sumner**: I said to set up an inquiry into an appropriate margin.

The **Hon. J. C. BURDETT**: The Government has made its own inquiries.

The **Hon. C. J. Sumner**: I didn't mention retail price control.

The **PRESIDENT**: Order! The Hon. Mr Sumner will have an opportunity to ask a question later.

The **Hon. J. C. BURDETT**: The Government has investigated any other steps that it thought could be taken. Obviously, there is no point in having an inquiry unless one has a remedy in mind. The only kind of remedy there could be would amount to retail price control on the basis of either a figure or a margin. The Government does not think that this would be an answer. This method is not used by any other State. The only State where it is used at all is New South Wales where it is used in the form of retail price control. At the present time motorists have the advantage of reasonably competitive prices for petrol in South Australia. If there was retail price control, the maximum would tend to become the minimum, as has happened at sites off major highways in metropolitan Sydney.

The Government is concerned with all sectors of the industry including the consumers (the motorists), the resellers and the oil companies. At the present time there is no danger of motorists not being able to purchase petrol at competitive prices.

A random survey was conducted earlier today between 11.30 a.m. and 12.30 p.m. and this survey indicates that petrol prices in the city are approximately 37.1c per litre;

at Hilton the price is 40.5c; on Marion Road and South Road the price is 36.9c to 37.8c, the most common price being 37.6c; at Ampol, Netley, the price is 41.4c, this being the highest price; Darlington petrol stations all sold petrol at 39.1c; at Pasadena and along Belair Road the price was 38.9c to 39.5c; and on Unley Road the price was 39.5c.

Officers of the Trade Practices Commission have reported to me that only about 10 per cent of sites have increased their prices as was called for at the meeting of the Automobile Chamber of Commerce. It is fair to say that South Australia is the only State where maximum wholesale price control is used to reduce the price to 3c below (or anywhere below), the P.P.P.A. justified price. New South Wales had that system, but departed from it. We are the only Government in Australia which is acting in this way to support both the motorist and the reseller. At the present time, there is no evidence to suggest that motorists are not going to be able to purchase petrol at competitive prices. Therefore, the Government does not intend to take further action at this time. When the call was made by the Leader of the Opposition, the Government investigated what the Leader was talking about and the Government could not see that any other form of intervention would be useful in the present circumstances.

The Hon. G. L. BRUCE: I have a supplementary question. In line with that reply, how does the Minister see the situation, with possibly a uniform wholesale price as a starting point for resellers to operate from? As I understand it, there are some service stations—

The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN: You should ask a question, not make a statement.

The Hon. G. L. BRUCE: How does the Minister see uniform wholesale price control as a starting point for resellers, so the petrol industry can get back to normal?

Members interjecting:

The Hon. Anne Levy: The Attorney-General should know that the proper way to achieve what he wants would be to take a point of order with the President.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister has the call. Is there anything further he wishes to say?

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: I understand the question asked by the honourable member. He is referring to the situation where the P.P.P.A. justified price is set in reference to each oil company and where the prices are different.

The South Australian system of fixing our maximum wholesale price is 3c below the P.P.P.A. justified price in respect of each company. Of course, our prices differ, also. I do not think that it would be just or proper to depart from that and set an across-the-board price. Different companies have different costs, and every system of price justification, be it Federal or State, takes into account the costs of the individual manufacturer concerned. As the costs vary, I do not see that as being a just solution.

The Hon. N. K. FOSTER: Will the Minister provide the Council with a breakdown of the interests of various oil companies that are operating in South Australia on the basis of who imports the fuel, which companies are involved in the fuel holding areas, which companies are involved in their own transport arrangements in relation to resellers, whether they provide a service to reselling outlets that are locked into their companies, and in relation to whether the same service is offered to companies that are not within the confines of their ownership or franchise? Further, will the Minister undertake to make available the result of the latest, and as yet unpublished, inquiry conducted by the Federal Government some years ago?

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: It is not for me to make available the report of a Federal Government inquiry. The other matters are not within the knowledge of my depart-

ment, and I can see no useful purpose being served in seeking and making that information available.

The Hon. N. K. FOSTER: As a final supplementary question, I ask whether the Minister is now adopting the same attitude that the company adopted in relation to the court or inquiry to which it was requested to give the information?

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: I do not clearly understand the honourable member's question. I am saying that I am not prepared to provide, and can see no good purpose being served in providing, the information requested by the honourable member. Whether it can be related to what a company has done to someone else has nothing to do with me.

OIL EXPLORATION

The Hon. K. L. MILNE: Has the Attorney-General, representing the Minister of Mines and Energy, a reply to the question that I asked on 10 August regarding the present situation in relation to the Pitjantjatjara people and the Hematite Oil Exploration consortium?

The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN: The Minister became involved as a result of the request of the lawyer acting for Anangu Pitjantjatjaraku that 'because negotiations with Hematite have lapsed' another company be permitted to enter into discussions with the Anangu Pitjantjatjaraku. Section 24 (3) (a) of the Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act leaves the designation of companies for this purpose to the discretion of the Minister. The Minister did not feel it appropriate to make a designation in this case without further attempts being made to resolve important questions of principle regarding compensation to be payable under the Act. This view was conveyed to Anangu Pitjantjatjaraku and announced publicly.

The Minister will appoint an arbitrator if such a request is made by Hematite. No such request has been made, and it is understood that such a request is unlikely because of the wide disparity of the claim by Anangu Pitjantjatjaraku and accepted industry practice in this regard.

The provision for an arbitrator in the Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act is to provide a 'last resort' mechanism for resolving disputes. There is nothing inappropriate in the Government's becoming involved with a view to resolving disputes without the need to go to arbitration. Both Anangu Pitjantjatjaraku and Hematite have responded positively to the Minister's offer to hold discussions with each of them individually with a view to progressing the matter.

As mentioned in answer to the first question, important questions of principle require to be resolved. The Government's information is that companies exploring for either minerals or petroleum would not accede to Anangu Pitjantjatjaraku's demands for compensation, as presently understood.

The Minister stated that it had been agreed that compensation, if any, for exploration would be minimal. What is at issue is the basis and amount of compensation claimed. Legal advice to the Government on these matters has been received and is to form the basis of the discussions between the Minister and Anangu Pitjantjatjaraku and Hematite referred to above. Details of the advice have been made known to those parties but, in accordance with established practice, it is not intended to disclose it publicly.

FUEL FOR NUCLEAR REACTORS

The Hon. R. J. RITSON: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Attorney-General, representing

the Minister of Mines and Energy, a question about fuel for nuclear reactors.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R. J. RITSON: As honourable members would be aware, Australia has been exporting uranium for about 30 years. Customer countries will continue to require such uranium well into the next century. The South Australian Government has made a number of statements indicating a policy of promoting further processing of uranium in South Australia, eventually to the stage of at least enrichment and possibly conversion.

My question relates to the possibility of South Australia manufacturing completed fuel elements. As honourable members are aware, the question of plutonium proliferation arises when a fuel element is dismembered and reprocessed to recover the unspent uranium. If South Australia were to manufacture completed fuel elements, and if such elements were sold at world market value through a statutory authority (such as the Australian Atomic Energy Commission), that authority could then lease the completed fuel elements to a customer country and could replace the spent elements on a one-for-one basis, provided the elements were returned intact.

In this way the Government would remain firmly in charge of the plutonium produced in those uranium elements. Lest it be thought that this is my own idea, I point out that it is not. It has been expounded by Professor Peter Ypma. It has a lot of merit. Will the Minister consider developing a long-term policy in relation to South Australia eventually becoming a manufacturer of completed fuel elements, for the obvious benefits that I have just mentioned?

The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN: I will refer that question to my colleague, the Minister of Mines and Energy, and bring down a reply.

COUNTRY BUS SERVICES

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: Has the Attorney-General a reply to the question I asked on 20 July about country bus services?

The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN: My colleague, the Minister of Transport, advises that the State Government meets two-thirds of the losses of bus services in country towns whilst the local council meets the other third of the losses. Such services are controlled by a board of three in each town, only one of which is a Government nominee. It is considered reasonable that if local government is to maintain a majority control over the services, it should contribute to losses which would be influenced by its decisions. In metropolitan Adelaide, councils have no influence in the provision of services conducted by the State Transport Authority. At the present time it is not proposed to alter the current method of funding country municipal bus services.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The Hon. ANNE LEVY: Has the Minister of Local Government a reply to a question I asked on 22 July about domestic violence?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: In the two months since section 39 of the Justices Act came into effect, 14 orders have been imposed—three instigated by police and 11 privately. However, no actions have been commenced to date for any breaches of these orders. Statistics relating to the number of calls for police attendance at the scenes of domestic violence, either since the enactment of the legislation or for the corresponding period last year, are not kept in a readily accessible form. To extract the data would entail a protracted

manual search of records. As the legislation has been in force for such a relatively short period of time, it is felt that no meaningful conclusions could be drawn from a comparison of the data for the respective periods. Consequently, it is not proposed to commit manpower to the task of extracting the information at this stage.

BUILDING SOCIETIES

The Hon. L. H. DAVIS: In view of the current high interest rates charged by building societies for home loans, is the Minister of Consumer Affairs in a position to detail the level of interest rates charged by building societies in each Australian State? Is the Minister also in a position to give the Council details of State Government controls which exist in each State in respect of interest rates for home loans, and whether or not these controls have been exercised by the respective State Governments?

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: I have some general information available but, if the honourable member seeks a document setting out statistical information suitable for insertion in *Hansard*, I will have to obtain that after I have answered the question in the best way I can, and I am prepared to bring it back and table it. In regard to the different States, the difficulty in stating what interest rates are is that they are on a sliding scale with different societies in different States and with varying rates at the lowest level. The lowest level varies, as do rates further up, so that the total is difficult to ascertain and I cannot give all that information, but I will do the best that I can. In Western Australia the rates at the bottom level of lending vary from 15 per cent to 16.75 per cent; there are not any controls, and any persuasive effect that the Government can have on the industry is such that no Government influence has been exercised to date.

In Queensland, using the rates at the bottom level (I emphasise that the different levels vary between societies), rates range from 14.5 per cent to 14.75 per cent, and in some cases 15.75 per cent. There are controls on borrowing and lending. To date, the Government has exercised persuasion only on lending rates. In New South Wales the rates vary again at the bottom level from 14.5 per cent, with an average rate of 15 per cent, and there are controls on borrowing and lending. To date, the Government has resisted applications for increases, pending any movement in bank lending rates.

The Australian Capital Territory has some loans at 16 per cent, but there are no controls and no Government action. Victoria has a ceiling fixed by the present Victorian Government of 15.65 per cent, which of course is much higher than the South Australian rates, but that is the ceiling which has been fixed, and that is permissible. Of course, the Victorian Government did promise to control interest rates in the interests of borrowers. In South Australia the bottom level is 14.3 per cent, 14.25, 14.25, 14.5, 14.5, 14.25, 14.5 and, in one case, 14.75. I hope this information has answered the honourable member's question without my having gone into the whole mass of figures but giving what I think is a fair selection and indicating the maximum and minimum in regard to the lower scale of loans. If the honourable member would like a statistical paper presented setting out all rates of interest, I will do that and bring it back at another time.

POLICE SHOOTING

The Hon. C. J. SUMNER: Can the Attorney-General advise the Council whether an inquiry has been carried out

into the incident last week when it was alleged that a Victorian policeman illegally entered South Australia and was involved in a shooting incident with the person he was pursuing? Secondly, can the Minister say whether the South Australian law prohibits such entry in hot pursuit of someone? Thirdly, can the Minister say whether the actions of the police officer were against the law of South Australia?

The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN: I understand that the Commissioner of Police directed that an inquiry be made into the events to which the Leader refers. I understand that a report is not yet available. Because I have not got all the facts which will be supplied to both the Chief Secretary and me in due course, I am not yet in a position to give answers to the second and third questions.

The Hon. C. J. SUMNER: I desire to ask a supplementary question. Will the Attorney-General provide the Council with those answers when they are available?

The Hon. K. T. GRIFFIN: In due course, when I receive a report, it is quite likely that there will be sufficient information available to bring a report to the Council and, if there is, I will do that.

HOUSING TRUST

The Hon. ANNE LEVY: Has the Minister of Housing a reply to my question of 27 July about the Housing Trust?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: The South Australian Housing Trust will undertake to amend any forms completed by the tenants and applicants to ensure that tenants and applicants are advised of the trust's obligation to provide information to the Department of Social Security.

ETHNIC AFFAIRS

The Hon. M. S. FELEPPA: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister Assisting the Premier in Ethnic Affairs a question about the Minister's reply to my contribution to the Address in Reply debate.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M. S. FELEPPA: As for the intervention of the Minister Assisting the Premier in Ethnic Affairs, I must say that I found his tired list of tired programmes quite pathetic. As my Leader kept interjecting during that day, most of the Government's programmes have been introduced by the former Labor Government. However, I was pleased to note that my statement of 10 lines in my maiden speech provoked a reply of nearly six pages from the Minister. It is a great pity that the Minister prefers not to understand that what I did say was in the form of a statement and nothing more than that. It was not an accusation against any individual member of the Ethnic Affairs Commission. The Minister stated:

The Hon. Mr Feleppa, when he spoke in this debate, criticised the South Australian Ethnic Affairs Commission and aspects of its role and its work.

My words on that day were as follows:

The commission seems to have failed in its main task of becoming the authoritative voice for the migrant, of providing a viable challenge to existing situations, and of developing a comprehensive policy statement which would indicate and detail the manner in which it perceives its role and how it is going to achieve it.

These words are spoken by many migrants in criticism of the Government which has created this body and then, with the greatest of cynicism, has ensured that it would become ineffectual through the appointments made, the limitations to its resources, and the lack of concern for its ineffectiveness.

The Minister continues by saying:

I refute the allegations and accusations embodied in that criticism and wish to defend the Ethnic Affairs Commission in my submission today.

I do not believe that the Minister is unable to understand my statement. Rather, I am convinced that he is conscious of the shortcomings pointed out but has no answer other than to deny them. The Minister is able, and indeed, very keen, to start a duel with words but I have no wish for that. Words are only noise, and facts are truth. The Minister has avoided the point of my statement, which I will prove with documentation shortly.

The PRESIDENT: I point out to the Hon. Mr Feleppa that his explanation should not be a statement.

The Hon. M. S. FELEPPA: I recall, Mr President, that you promised to assist me in whatever way you could. This subject is strange to honourable members in this place and I believe that, unless I emphasise my points, the matter will not be understood. Therefore, I seek your assistance in this matter.

The PRESIDENT: I will give the honourable member what assistance I can. I inform the Hon. Mr Feleppa, and members generally, that explanations in Question Time are beginning to stretch to a point that is hardly acceptable, although in this Chamber we have been as generous as possible in allowing explanations.

The Hon. C. J. Sumner: There are fewer explanations now than there were before.

The Hon. Anne Levy: One answer took 15 minutes.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I am not reflecting on any particular member. I am pointing out that questions should not be short speeches. Quite often honourable members raise as questions matters that would be better dealt with as personal explanations.

The Hon. M. S. FELEPPA: Mr President, I will observe your ruling. You force me to pass over the most important part of my explanation.

The PRESIDENT: I am not asking the honourable member to stop on this occasion.

The Hon. M. S. FELEPPA: Thank you, Mr President. I will do as you suggest in future. I must confess that, after reading the Minister's reply, I asked myself the following questions: Is the Minister misleading members in this Chamber? Is the Minister misled, or does he prefer pretty words instead of reality? I will now prove to this Council that what I said before was true and that what the Minister said was not really to the point. I will use one ethnic group as an example to prove my point. On 26 May 1980, Rev. A. Boudroeuco of the Slavic Baptist Church of Adelaide went with a delegation to see Mr Millhouse, and presented him with a copy of a petition signed by 500 people, those signatures being collected in one day. On 14 July 1980, the Minister of Ethnic Affairs, the Premier (Hon. D. O. Tonkin) replied:

... there have been no complaints recorded...

What about the petition of 500 people? How many names are needed for the complaint to be recorded? The Premier went on to say:

I can see no reason to make any change to the service presently being provided by the Government for the interpretation/translation of the Russian language.

That is it! No more! The Premier completely ignored the petition signed by 500 people—they do not exist! No wonder Mr Millhouse said in part in his letter:

... very uncompromising and disappointing.

On 16 August 1980, on page 3 of the *Advertiser*—

The Hon. R. J. RITSON: I rise on a point of order, Mr President. I do not wish to truncate the honourable member's leave in any way, but I wonder whether you might read the relevant Standing Order to the honourable member for his guidance.

The PRESIDENT: I intend to write to the Hon. Mr Feleppa later. I believe that he is entitled to some form of

warning because he may not have had drawn to his notice that explanations or questions should not, in effect, be short speeches. We will let the matter go at that.

The Hon. M. S. FELEPPA: I accept the point of order and, on your behalf, Sir, suspend what I was saying. However, I will make these letters available to any honourable member who wishes to read them.

Will the Minister say whether an officer of the Public Service Board recently carried out an internal investigation of the management and administration of the South Australian Ethnic Affairs Commission? Has the report of the Public Service Board officer been completed, and what recommendations does it contain? Will the Minister table this document in the Parliament? Does the Minister and/or the Public Service Board intend to act on its recommendations? Will funds for increased employment of interpreters and translators be made available.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: With regard to the introductory remarks made by the honourable member, I think it fair for me to place on record one sentence from the honourable member's speech in the Address in Reply debate, the speech on which I based my reply. He said:

The [Ethnic Affairs] Commission seems to have failed in its main task of becoming the authoritative voice for the migrant, of providing a viable challenge to existing situations, and of developing a comprehensive policy statement which would indicate and detail the manner in which it perceives its role and how it is going to achieve it.

I think any reasonable person would interpret those words as words of criticism.

The Hon. C. J. Sumner: Of the Government.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Never mind the Government. Given a statement such as that, I had a clear right to reply as I did.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: You're very sensitive.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: No, I am not sensitive at all. I want to be fair and reasonable about the matter because, as the honourable member who just interjected knows, the officers of a statutory body such as this cannot come down here and put their replies publicly, so it is quite unfair to have only one point of view on an issue of this kind.

The Hon. C. J. Sumner: The Government is responsible for the commission, and you know it.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: What is the point in that statement? I am not denying it; I never have denied it, and never will deny it.

The Hon. J. R. Cornwall: You understand the Westminster convention perfectly.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Yes. The honourable member asked five questions at the end of his address. The first question was about an investigation by the Public Service Board into the management and conduct of the Ethnic Affairs Commission. There has not been an investigation into the management of the Ethnic Affairs Commission. However, an officer from the Public Service Board has been engaged by the commission to look at the translation services offered by the commission in the areas of health and the courts. Together with a member from the Ethnic Affairs Commission (a commissioner) and an officer of the commission (a member of the staff), that appointee from the Public Service Board will be looking at how to rationalise the services from a cost management perspective and, hopefully, will suggest improvements—if he feels there is a need for such improvements—to the administrative procedure in the specific area of the Ethnic Affairs Commission's activities.

The honourable member also asked whether the report has been provided to the commission. That report has not been provided to the commission, because the inquiry has not as yet been completed. The honourable member then asked whether I would table the report in Parliament. I

point out that such an investigation is an internal administrative matter and, as such, a report of that kind is not tabled within the Parliament.

The Hon. J. R. Cornwall: If it's likely to be embarrassing.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Not at all. That is an inane interjection. The fourth question asked by the honourable member was whether I intended to act on the recommendations made. The report of the Public Service Board officer, when it is made, will be a matter on which the commission itself—because it is an internal matter—will act, if the commission—

The Hon. M. S. Feleppa: The commission is responsible to the Government; the Government is responsible to the people; when will the people get to know what is going on?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: I hasten to reply to that interjection by saying that directors of institutions and Ministers in charge of departments have internal inquiries and reports of this kind coming through their inward basket literally by the dozen every week. If those files were all brought to Parliament so that the people could know what was going on, as the honourable member has said—

The Hon. J. R. Cornwall: We'd then have open government.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: We would all have to move our offices and officers down here and there would not be much order in the system.

The Hon. J. C. Burdett: Is an annual report tabled?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Yes, the Ethnic Affairs Commission reports to Parliament annually through its annual report tabled in this Chamber. On any matter on which the honourable member wants information, I am willing and eager to assist him. I want to give the honourable member as much information as I can, but I do not think he really expects to know what is in every piece of paper that comes across a chairman's desk. It is a question of balance.

The last question that the honourable member asked was whether funds for the increased employment of interpreters or translators will be made available. The question of funding for increased employment of interpreters and translators is a Budget consideration and Parliament must wait until the Budget is shortly brought down before that information can be made available.

WALLAROO HOSPITAL

The Hon. N. K. FOSTER: Has the Minister of Community Welfare, representing the Minister of Health, an answer to a question I asked on 22 July about the Wallaroo Hospital.

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

1. The Wallaroo Hospital will continue to function until completion of the new Northern Yorke Peninsula Hospital.

2. Construction of the hospital cannot begin until the final plans and documentation for the project are approved by the Parliamentary Public Works Standing Committee. If the tentative timetable is adhered to, it is anticipated that construction could commence late in 1983, with completion expected in 1986.

3. A planning committee of the board of the Wallaroo Hospital, which includes residents of Moonta, Wallaroo and Kadina, together with officers of the South Australian Health Commission, has been formed to oversee planning for the new Northern Yorke Peninsula Hospital. As yet, planning is at a very early stage. A site has been selected that is well suited to the proposed development, but sketch plans for the hospital structure are not yet complete.

4. Consequently, it is not possible at this stage to advise the precise date upon which construction will commence or be completed, nor is it possible to predict a date upon which the function of the Wallaroo Hospital will be transferred to

the new hospital. Furthermore, until such time as detailed plans and drawings are prepared, it is not possible to give a reliable estimate of the total cost of construction.

5. Admission policy for the geriatric section of the Wallaroo Hospital has not been altered in any way. As has always been the case, admission is determined by the availability of accommodation and the need of patients for the care which can be provided.

6. It is emphasised that there has never been any intention to close the aged care facility at Wallaroo. In his statement of 29 July 1982 the Chairman of the South Australian Health Commission foreshadowed a further development to provide more adequately for the needs of aged members of the Yorke Peninsula community. Details of this are currently under investigation as part of a study of community health needs on Yorke Peninsula. There is no intention to demolish the Wallaroo Hospital and its future use is likely to be considered as part of this study.

PETROL PRICES

The Hon. G. L. BRUCE: I seek leave to make a short explanation before asking the Minister of Consumer Affairs a question about petrol prices.

Leave granted.

The Hon. G. L. BRUCE: I was fascinated by the reply the Minister gave to a question asked by an honourable member on this side of the Chamber when the Minister said that between 11.30 and 12.00 this morning his department had rushed around and obtained prices for petrol in the metropolitan area. That is unreal. If that is the way the Government of South Australia does a survey on petrol prices, in just half an hour from 11.30 to 12.00 in a car driving around Adelaide and then coming back—

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: I said that it was a random survey.

The Hon. G. L. BRUCE: I would say that it was very random. What concerns me is the Minister's answer in relation to the wholesale price of petrol. I understand that one major company has a different wholesale price from that of the other companies and that this wholesale price differs between outlets, depending on whether they are leased or not. I also understand that this results in a 2c a litre difference in the price of petrol to these outlets. This concerns me, as there should be uniformity in this industry. I also understand that at least 1 000 jobs are on the line because of the chaos in this industry.

Can the Minister provide information as to the major companies in South Australia which are retailing petrol? Where does this petrol come from and what is the wholesale price of petrol in South Australia that these companies charge?

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: I make no apology for that random survey. I wanted to be as well informed as I could be in the time available to me this morning before I came into this Chamber. As I said, it was a random survey. I wanted to know when the Chamber sat whether members of the Automobile Chamber of Commerce had put up their petrol price to 41.9 cents a litre, as called for at its meeting yesterday, and as reported in the media. On behalf of the motoring public of South Australia, I would have been very concerned had that been the case. I wanted the best information in the time available to me about whether or not that was so. Therefore, I instituted a random survey—the only thing I could do in that time.

The Hon. M. B. Cameron: If you hadn't done it, the Opposition would be criticising you for that.

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: Yes. Officers of the Trade Practices Commission reported to me that only about 10

per cent of resellers had adopted the maximum price recommended. Regarding the honourable member's questions about the companies, where the fuel comes from and what is the wholesale price, I can say that there are seven or eight companies, but I will have to obtain that information for him. It seems to me that he is suggesting that there ought to be a fixed and not a maximum wholesale price.

At present, there is a maximum wholesale price, and it is permissible for oil companies to sell below that price, or to offer price support to resellers, which is virtually the same thing. There is nothing necessarily wrong with this procedure, or with discounting, selling at a lower price, or price support (whatever one calls it), unless it becomes cut-throat and selective.

The ability to do this has been part of every market place in the world since marketing has existed. It is not necessarily wrong. I certainly do not intend that we should do anything else at present except to fix the maximum wholesale price. In regard to companies, where the product comes from and what the maximum wholesale price is (which is the only information that we have), I am prepared to provide the information.

UNSWEETENED DRINKS

The Hon. C. W. CREEDON: I seek leave to make a statement before asking the Minister of Consumer Affairs a question regarding unsweetened drinks.

Leave granted.

The Hon. C. W. CREEDON: Several weeks ago, I raised the question of unsweetened orange juice, and since then the Minister has replied to my question, which resulted in a number of telephone calls to me regarding unsweetened drinks and juices and, in particular, a drink called Ribena. This is a blackcurrant drink and, when it is advertised, the advertisements are usually directed at young families or the mothers of young children.

The label explains that it contains extra vitamin C, that it is a blackcurrant health drink, and that the product has no artificial colour, flavour or sweetener. The label explains that the colour is natural and that the flavour is that of the blackcurrant. However, it says nothing more about the sweetness of the drink, which leads the ordinary person to believe that the sweetness comes from the natural sugar of the fruit, which I believe is called fructose.

When one turns the bottle around and peruses the other side of the label, one finds that the ingredients consist of sucrose, blackcurrant juice, ascorbic acid, preservatives, colour (natural) and water added. I wonder how many people know what Sucrose is or where it comes from. Certainly, the people who have been deceived into feeding it to their children, even babies, would probably not know that sucrose comes from cane sugar and, like other brand names such as sorbital and lactose, which comes from milk, can be placed in the same category as ordinary brown or white sugar.

It is time that such deceitful practices were halted. All advertising and labelling should be done using plain, ordinary, every-day language and should be easily readable. I ask the Minister whether the law is sufficiently tight and explicit to cover these practices of wrong and misleading labelling. If it is not, will the Minister say why action is not taken to stop these practices? If the law does not cover these practices, will he examine the law with a view to ensuring that these practices cease?

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: When the honourable member asked his previous question about fruit juices, I said that most of the matter lay within the area of my colleague, the Minister of Health, as it is governed by the Food and Drugs

Act and regulations. Indeed, that was the case, and the majority of the matter in the reply that I gave came from the Minister of Health. In this case also I will have the matter investigated by my own department and that of my colleague and bring back a reply.

MENINGIE LAKES FISHING

The Hon. B. A. CHATTERTON: Has the Minister of Local Government, representing the Minister of Fisheries, a reply to the question that I asked on 28 July regarding fishing in the Meningie lakes?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: The answer to the question is 'No'.

QUESTION EXPLANATIONS

The PRESIDENT: Before calling on Orders of the Day, I should like to say that, in explaining questions, honourable members sometimes get a little further away from the matter under discussion than is necessary and, indeed, that the

explanations are longer than they are normally intended to be. It has been the object of this Council to make Question Time as flexible as possible, and that is why I should like to see it remain as such. Members realise that the control of the Council, including the asking of questions, is part of their own affair and that they always have the right to terminate the leave granted by calling 'Question'. The member speaking must then discontinue his explanation and ask his question.

I think that I should make this statement in case some honourable members do not bother to look at the matter themselves. The purpose of a question is to obtain information or press for action; it should not be limited to giving information, or framed so as to suggest its own answer or convey a particular point of view, and it should not be in effect a short speech. If honourable members were to adhere to this practice, I think that more questions would be asked and more information given.

ADJOURNMENT

At 3.17 p.m. the Council adjourned until Tuesday 17 August at 2.15 p.m.