

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday 7 August 1986

The **PRESIDENT (Hon. Anne Levy)** took the Chair at 2.15 p.m. and read prayers.

PETITIONS: PROSTITUTION

Petitions signed by 1114 residents of South Australia praying that the Council uphold the present laws against the exploitation of women by prostitution, and not decriminalise the trade in any way, were presented by the Hons M.B. Cameron, L.H. Davis, M.J. Elliott, and M.S. Feleppa. Petitions received.

PETITION: PETROL PRICING

A petition signed by 52 residents of South Australia praying that the Council urge the Government to make all possible efforts to remove the iniquitous position in relation to petrol pricing and asking it to strongly consider intervention to achieve realistic wholesale prices as a means of achieving equity for the country petrol consumer was presented by the Hon. Peter Dunn.

Petition received.

PETITION: TIME ZONES

A petition signed by 182 residents of South Australia praying that the Council support the retention of Central Standard Time for the whole of South Australia and exempt areas on Eyre Peninsula west of 137° east and including the hundreds of Wilton, Warren, Charleston, and McGregor from daylight saving was presented by the Hon. Peter Dunn.

Petition received.

PAPER TABLED

The following paper was laid on the table:

By the Minister of Local Government (Hon. Barbara Wiese)—

Pursuant to Statute—
Parks Community Centre—General By-laws, 1986.

QUESTIONS

CONTRACEPTIVE DRUG

The Hon. M.B. CAMERON: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister of Health a question about the Oodnadatta Hospital.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M.B. CAMERON: The Minister of Health announced on 7 December 1984 that a six-person review group would examine allegations reported in the *Advertiser* concerning the contraceptive drug Depo-Provera. The allegations, made by Oodnadatta's community health nurse at the time, Sister Jeanette Kelly, were that injections of the drug had been given to schoolgirls against their wishes by a former community health nurse during 1978 and 1981. The Minister is reported in the *Advertiser* of 8 December 1984 as saying that the review group would report on its

findings, with appropriate recommendations, by 31 January. I understand that the inquiry, which led to severe trauma for some of those accused of administering the drug, is finished. Will the Minister now table the results of that inquiry into the use of the contraceptive drug Depo-Provera on Aboriginal women and girls at Oodnadatta and Port Augusta?

The Hon. J.R. CORNWALL: That review was completed some months ago. To my recollection it was headed by the Director of Nursing from Port Augusta. Quite frankly, the findings of the review were inconclusive. It was my judgment that there was little to be gained by releasing it, either by the party or parties who might have been alleged to have used Depo-Provera without informed consent or by the young Aboriginal women on whom the Depo-Provera was alleged to have been used. For that reason, I did not make it public. I assure honourable members that there is nothing in the report that I would wish to suppress in any way whatever.

The Hon. M.B. Cameron: Will you table it?

The Hon. J.R. CORNWALL: It would not be my intention to table it for preference. I believe that it can do no good to table it. I discussed this matter with the Chairperson of the Oodnadatta Progress Association when I was there only a couple of weeks ago. I told her exactly what I have told this Council: that the findings were inconclusive, and that I did not believe that anything was to be gained by raking over all the coals again and stirring up an old debate when, at the end of the day, we would be no further advanced. For that reason, I do not intend at this time to table it. That is not because I want to suppress information in any way. I would be perfectly happy for the Hon. Mr Cameron or anybody else to have a look at it but I would prefer not to table it, simply because it will do no good.

It would be like the sort of story that Dr Ritson peddled in this Council yesterday, about which we may well hear more next week. He told half the story here yesterday, and nothing constructive—

The Hon. C.J. Sumner: It's wrong.

The Hon. J.R. CORNWALL: It is wrong, in fact. I may well have more to say about that next week. That has done nothing but distress the relatives. I do not intend that this Parliament be used as a forum to in any way cause distress to people unnecessarily. As I have said, at this time I do not intend to table an inconclusive report which simply rakes over old coals. I repeat that I would make it available for the Hon. Mr Cameron's perusal, if he wishes.

FAMILY COURT

The Hon. K.T. GRIFFIN: I seek leave to make a brief explanation prior to directing a question to the Minister of Health representing the Minister of Community Welfare on the subject of conflict between the Family Court and the Department for Community Welfare.

Leave granted.

The Hon. K.T. GRIFFIN: In April this year, the Director-General of the Department for Community Welfare and the Chief Judge of the Family Court announced the establishment of a joint working party to look into problems relating to the granting of access to children where child abuse has been alleged. The announcement of the working party was a consequence of an inaccurate report which claimed that the department had foiled an access order made by the Family Court giving a father access to his children. On that occasion, the State Attorney-General and the Minister (Dr Cornwall) were at loggerheads over the

issue, Dr Cornwall claiming that there was overwhelming evidence of the court granting access to parents suspected of sexually abusing their children, and the Attorney-General saying that he did not believe that the judges of the Family Court were making such orders. The Director-General of the Department for Community Welfare eventually issued a public apology and retracted any statement that could be interpreted as being a slur on the Family Court.

At the time I took the opportunity to consult with lawyers who were practising in the Family Court jurisdiction, as well as social workers, about the allegations. They were all of the view that there was no substance to those allegations. However, they said that those who prepared reports for the Family Court on allegations of child sexual abuse had to recognise that their reports went to a court and that the reports had to be factual. They were of the view that the Department for Community Welfare officers had in fact taken a low-key role when giving evidence. A difficulty that was identified was that, in disputes in the Family Court over access and custody claims, the Department for Community Welfare would not allow any of its officers to discuss a matter with lawyers for either party before the matter came on for hearing.

The lawyers and social workers to whom I spoke believed that some departmental social workers did not recognise that there was a major distinction between the Family Court (which was bound by the rules of evidence) and the Children's Court (which was not bound by those rules of evidence). A view was expressed that reports to the Family Court needed to be improved and that a greater emphasis on evidence needed to be achieved.

I recognise, Madam President, that this whole area of establishing whether or not allegations of sexual abuse are true is a difficult one and that it is in the interests of the whole community that the difficulties in proving allegations be resolved as soon as possible, particularly where there are obvious tensions between mother and father who have separated or divorced. My questions to the Minister are as follows:

1. Has the joint working party yet reported?
2. If it has, what are its recommendations?
3. If it has not reported, has it made any progress, and when is its work likely to be concluded?

The Hon. J.R. CORNWALL: At this stage, that joint working party certainly has not reported to me and, therefore, obviously, I am unaware of any recommendations that it may have made. It is important that it reports before the Task Force on Child Sexual Abuse completes its deliberations and writes its report. As members would be aware, as Minister of Health, some 18 months ago I established a task force headed by Ms Liz Furler to look at all of the very vexed aspects of child abuse. Cabinet received an interim report from that task force in May. It is due to report to me and, through me, to the Human Services Committee of Cabinet, I hope, by 15 September. I hope also that, following that report and subject to allowing a reasonable time to consider the implications of implementing the report's recommendations, it will become a public document by the middle of October. In the meantime, I do not intend to speculate on its possible findings.

The task force is looking at three areas. The first is education, both protective and preventive, in the areas of child sexual abuse. The second area concerns the welfare and health aspects of child sexual abuse. The third area, of course, and the one that perhaps is the most vexed of all, concerns the law as it relates to child sexual abuse. I do not take the narrow, lawyer's view of child protection as the Hon. Mr Griffin appears to do.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I haven't said anything about my view of it.

The Hon. J.R. CORNWALL: I would have thought that there was a very clear inference in the explanation given by the Hon. Mr Griffin that he tended to take a narrow, lawyer's view.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: Rubbish!

The Hon. J.R. CORNWALL: If that is not the case, then I am very happy. But we have to be very, very careful in this area, indeed. The interests of the child must be paramount: let there be no doubt about that at all. If child sexual abusers are using the law—as they currently do—to avoid prosecution, then of course the law must be changed. On the other hand, of course, we must be very careful not to change it in such a way that there is any reasonable chance that innocent parties are wrongly accused or convicted. The law, as it stands, however, is manifestly inadequate. It is extraordinarily difficult even to get a case into court, let alone get a successful prosecution. The incidence of reporting of child sexual abuse is increasing exponentially; it is increasingly taking more and more resources within the Department for Community Welfare.

It has become necessary to increase funding to the sexual assault referral centre at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital by 300 per cent over the past two years. That funding is still not adequate and I hope, despite the very tight constraints of the budget in 1986-87, that we will find some savings in some other areas in order to increase that funding further.

The Hon. L.H. Davis interjecting:

The Hon. J.R. CORNWALL: This is really not a funny matter, Mr Davis, and those half smart interjections do nothing for your image in this place. It is also my intention, Ms President, notwithstanding the tight financial situation in which we currently find ourselves, to ensure that we make savings in other areas of my portfolio which will make money available for additional funding for the unit at the Adelaide Children's Hospital where child counselling is done for child sexual abuse cases. It is also my intention that, somehow or another, we will find additional funds for more workers in child protection in the Department for Community Welfare. With regard to the Family Law Court, that is a federal jurisdiction. It was the opinion of several people—indeed, I might say many people—involved with the protection and treatment of child sexual abuse, that some children were being placed in jeopardy by actions and decisions of the Family Court. I make no judgment on that at all.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: That is not happening.

The Hon. J.R. CORNWALL: Unlike the Hon. Mr Griffin, I am unable to say that it is not happening.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: Your own department said it.

The Hon. J.R. CORNWALL: There are people who believe that it has happened in the past and who wish to ensure that it does not happen in the future. I support them very strongly. They are not only community welfare workers, but include senior experienced staff at the sexual assault referral centre and particularly, of course, they include senior experienced medical and other staff at the unit at the Adelaide Children's Hospital.

This is a very serious matter indeed. It will require many resources and a multi-discipline approach. I hope that it will involve a bipartisan political approach. It is far too important a matter for the Hon. Mr Griffin or anyone else to try to play politics with in this Chamber or anywhere else.

The Hon. K.T. GRIFFIN: By way of a supplementary question: in the light of the Minister's answer, do I take it that he expects the joint working party to report before 15

September, when he has indicated that his own task force is expected to report?

The Hon. J.R. CORNWALL: As I said at the beginning of my answer, I hope that it will report prior to the task force completing its report. I would not only hope but certainly urge that that will happen.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT: THEBARTON COUNCIL

The Hon. BARBARA WIESE: I seek leave to make a statement regarding the Thebarton council.

Leave granted.

The Hon. BARBARA WIESE: On Tuesday I was asked a series of questions by the Hon. Mr Gilfillan relating to the termination by the Thebarton corporation of the contract of employment of its Chief Executive Officer, Mr John Hanson. The Mayor of Thebarton, Mr John Lindner, has provided me with a copy of a confidential report prepared by J.E.G. Raggatt and Associates Pty Ltd, management consultants, on 'Matters Relative to the Role and Performance of Senior Council Officers', which I have had examined by officers of my department.

The report was commissioned by the corporation in March of this year. The brief given to the consultants was to inquire into complaints concerning the Municipal Engineer. The brief was subsequently expanded on 22 April 1986 to incorporate comment on all senior council officers. The consultants investigated, and have commented in detail in the report on, some 21 matters involving irregularities in the manner in which the Town Clerk, the Deputy Town Clerk, the Municipal Engineer, and the Administration Manager have carried out their duties.

The council, on the basis of the report, instituted procedures to terminate the appointment of the Town Clerk and reprimanded the Deputy Town Clerk, the Municipal Engineer and the Administration Manager. The matter of the reprimands was reported in the *Advertiser* of 26 July 1986. The contract of employment of the Town Clerk was terminated as at midnight on Tuesday 5 August. There is no action which I may take in relation to the termination of the contract of employment of the Town Clerk; that was a decision which the council by law was empowered to take and the officer concerned has avenues of appeal at law against that decision open to him. The responsibility for the proper management of the affairs of the council, under the Local Government Act, is vested in the elected members of the council.

As Minister of Local Government I am empowered to cause an investigation to be made where I have reason to believe the council, that is the elected body, has failed to discharge a statutory responsibility or an irregularity has occurred in the conduct of the council's affairs. The existence of divisions among the elected members of the council or the taking of action against an officer of the council, with which one may or may not agree, are not in themselves grounds for the Minister to authorise an investigation into the affairs of the council, while it is still able to function as a decision making body.

With respect to the matters raised by the honourable member relating to the Deputy Town Clerk, I am advised that this officer was appointed on the recommendation of J.E.G. Raggatt and Associates Pty Ltd and at this time he does not hold a certificate of registration as a chief executive officer. A council may appoint a person who does not have the necessary qualifications to act in the office of chief executive officer for a period of up to three months; beyond that time the consent of the Minister must be obtained.

Yesterday I received a letter from the Mayor of Thebarton, asking whether I could provide him with a list of retired town clerks, who may be interested in acting in that position which he might place before the council. I will be happy to provide that information. With respect to the allegations of fraud on the part of the Deputy Town Clerk, I will ask the council to take legal advice on these allegations and to act on that advice. I consider that no further action is warranted at this time.

AUSTRALIA CARD

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I seek leave to make a short explanation prior to addressing a question to the Attorney-General on the Australia Card.

Leave granted.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: On 13 January this year the Attorney wrote on behalf of the Government to the Chairman of the Joint Select Committee on the Australia Card, outlining 14 major privacy and civil liberty concerns and issues that the Government wanted specifically addressed. As the Attorney-General will recall, the letter concluded as follows:

The Government of South Australia would want all these concerns adequately met before it proceeded to determine its ultimate position on the proposals to introduce a national identification card.

On 8 May this year the joint select committee tabled its report with five of the eight members recording their opposition to the card, not only on the basis of cost and revenue estimates but also because no adequate privacy and civil liberty protection measures could be assured. In view of the Federal Government's recent insistence that it will proceed with the introduction of the Australia Card, notwithstanding the majority report of the joint select committee, I ask the Attorney-General:

1. Can he confirm without qualification that the State Government is satisfied that all the 14 privacy and civil liberty concerns outlined in his letter of 13 January can be adequately met by a national identification system that is cost effective to introduce?

2. Because the cooperation of the States is vital in the introduction of the Federal Government's proposal, can the Attorney advise whether the State Government has yet received a request for access to records held by the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages and, if so, whether the State Government is prepared to cooperate with such access?

The Hon. C.J. SUMNER: The Federal Government has indicated its determination to proceed with the proposal for the Australia Card, and legislation would need to be introduced into the Federal Parliament and passed by it to enable that card to be set up. I do not know what the Federal Government's plans are in respect of its legislative program. I should say, however, that following the report of the Federal Parliament select committee the Federal Minister for Health, Dr Blewett, indicated that he was prepared to introduce, simultaneously with the Australia Card proposal, legislation dealing with data protection and establishing privacy principles that would govern the operation of the Australia Card and which would indeed, I understand, be applicable generally throughout the Commonwealth Government. That is the position at present.

The Commonwealth Government had earlier made a request to the State Government to discuss issues relating to the Australia Card, and those discussions have proceeded over recent months, including discussions about the computerisation of the births, deaths and marriages records in South Australia. I should say that at this stage the State

expenses. Those points were made by the Premier in the past, so it simply is not true to say that the Premier has refused to assist in representations to the Federal Government about the fringe benefits tax. He has done so in the past.

I understood him to say yesterday—and only from the reports that I saw of it—that he was not going to be involved at this stage in an unprepared move to lobby the Federal Government, in the knowledge that he has already done that to no avail. As he said yesterday, if a position is to be put to the Federal Government it will be one that will be carefully considered and designed to achieve its effect, not just to be a grandstanding effort.

That is the position of the Premier, and I support it. I am sure that, if it becomes necessary to place a case before the Federal Government again on the fringe benefits tax, the Premier will do that at the appropriate time, backed up by the appropriate facts. All I can say is that the Premier, contrary to the honourable member's assertion, has in the past made representations to the Federal Government on a number of aspects of the fringe benefits tax.

TOURISM PROSPECTS

The Hon. CAROLYN PICKLES: I seek leave to make a brief statement prior to asking a question of the Minister of Tourism relating to tourism prospects.

Leave granted.

The Hon. CAROLYN PICKLES: In the past week I have noticed reports in the media that South Australia has experienced a growth in the accommodation statistics in the first quarter of this year. I notice that the reason for this was not only the biennial Festival of Arts bookings but related more to Jubilee 150 events, the casino, our convention business, and, of course, publicity from the Grand Prix. Does the Minister have further data relating to South Australia's tourism prospects over all and, if so, what steps are being taken to plan for the future?

The Hon. BARBARA WIESE: It is true that some very good statistics were released during the past week or so, from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, relating to accommodation figures in South Australia. In the March quarter of this year there was a growth rate in occupancy rates of hotels and motels of an unprecedented 20 per cent. That was accompanied by the highest ever occupancy rate in the Adelaide area itself of 72.2 per cent.

Statewide the rooms sold increased by 14 per cent, and that is also very good news for regional tourism in this State. Also, I am happy to say that a recent survey was conducted by Colliers International, a firm of consultants here, which has confirmed that that improvement in accommodation statistics in South Australia has been maintained for the June quarter.

So for this year, things are looking very good. It is very heartening for prospects for tourism in this State, but we should not get too carried away with that because it will be a very difficult job to sustain those sorts of growth rates in South Australia. In recent years tourism has become very much the flavour of the month, and for that reason there is now enormous competition between States for the tourist dollar. Certainly, Governments are becoming more aware of the advantages of tourism. Representatives of industry are also very aware of the advantages of tourism, and that all helps to make our job in South Australia that much more difficult in competing in that sort of marketplace.

In fact, I saw an article just last weekend in the property section which reported another firm of leisure and tourism

consultants, Haworth and Haworth, suggesting that in the past few years competition has been getting tougher and tougher. In South Australia, prior to the middle of 1985, while our own visitation numbers were remaining steady we were experiencing a slight slip in our own market share. That heightens the need for us in South Australia to take heed of the sort of warnings that are abroad about those questions of competition.

Of course, I must say that those figures predate the success we have had and the increased exposure that we have enjoyed since the staging of last year's Grand Prix and the opening of our casino. We must be very concerned that any sort of tourism development we undertake in South Australia must be of an excellent standard for us to be able to compete in Australia for our share of the tourist dollar. I do not believe that will be an easy task.

As for the future, it has now become time for us to review the State's tourism development plan, which has been operating for the past five years. A number of changes have occurred in this State during that time, and it is time to update the tourism plan. With a view to doing that, there will be a seminar here for about 100 industry representatives in Adelaide next weekend, and there have already been some discussion papers circulated to representatives of industry that will form the basis of discussion at that seminar.

It will be important for representatives of industry and the Government to get together at that seminar to review the current tourism development plan and to put in place a new plan which will then go forward to the State tourism conference in September, to be discussed and endorsed by representatives of industry there. I must stress that it will be incredibly important for members of the industry and the Government to work cooperatively in the months and years ahead in the promotion of tourism in this State. Little can be achieved by either the Government or industry working alone, and it is important for each of us to play our part in making sure that South Australia gets its fair share.

RUNNING LIGHTS

The Hon. M.J. ELLIOTT: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking questions of the Minister of Health, representing the Minister of Transport, on matters of road safety.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M.J. ELLIOTT: For a number of years, Volvo cars have had running lights which operate whenever the ignition is turned on. I believe that in Sweden legislation has been in force for some years to make it obligatory to have such running lights, and that Canada has recently introduced similar legislation. I understand that studies in the United States have shown that vehicles using daytime running lights are 25 per cent less likely to have frontal crashes. My questions are as follows:

1. Is the Minister aware of the Swedish and Canadian legislation?
2. What studies have been done in South Australia about the advisability of compulsory running lights?
3. Will the Minister consider introducing legislation in South Australia for compulsory running lights for newly manufactured vehicles?

The Hon. J.R. CORNWALL: I will refer those questions to my colleague in another place and bring back a reply.

Government has not yet determined its final view on the Australia Card. However, we are cooperating with the Federal Government in discussions about the use of births, deaths and marriages records and their computerisation, and we are obtaining information from State Government departments about the effect of the introduction of the card on their operations. So, at this stage I cannot say whether the Government is finally satisfied with the protections that have been outlined to be included in the Australia Card legislation.

I do not imagine that we will be in a position to do that until the legislation has been introduced in the Federal Parliament. The State has received a request to discuss the Australia Card with the Federal Government and, as I said, we have participated in those discussions. If the Federal Government wishes to proceed with the Australia Card, I do not believe it would be responsible for the State Government to refuse to participate in any way in any discussions that the Federal Government may wish to have about this matter, so we have certainly participated in those discussions. We have set up a small officers group within the State Government comprising representatives of (if my recollection serves me correctly) the Attorney-General's Department, Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Division, the Treasury and possibly one other department. Those officers have been responsible for discussions with Federal Government officers. I believe that that was announced when I gave details of the submission that the South Australian Government put to the federal select committee.

So, first, the State Government has been having discussion through officers with Federal Government officials regarding the Australia Card and particularly in relation to the use of births, deaths and marriages records and their computerisation. Secondly, the State Government has not yet determined a final position on the Australia Card and would not be in a position to do that until full details were known, but we are certainly continuing to discuss the matter with the Federal Government.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I wish to ask a supplementary question. Will the Attorney advise whether the Government has considered the possibility that it may not agree with the privacy protections in the Bill? If that was the case, would the Government be prepared at that time not to cooperate with the Federal Government, as the Queensland Government has already indicated or, alternatively, seek the assistance of South Australian senators to defeat the measure?

The Hon. R.I. Lucas: You could speak to Senator Hill.

The Hon. C.J. SUMNER: I suspect that the Hon. Miss Laidlaw should speak to Senator Hill, because I understand that the federal Liberal Party is not as one in its attitude on the Australia Card. I understand there is a substantial difference of opinion within the federal Liberal Party about whether or not the Australia Card should proceed.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: You have incorrect information.

The Hon. C.J. SUMNER: I think my information on that point is reasonably accurate.

The Hon. R.I. Lucas: Do you believe all that John Cornwall tells you?

The Hon. C.J. SUMNER: I do not get all my information from John Cornwall, even though he sits next to me in the Chamber.

The Hon. J.R. Cornwall: A useful source of information from time to time.

The Hon. C.J. SUMNER: There is no question about that.

The Hon. L.H. Davis: Has he talked to you about taxation matters of late?

The Hon. C.J. SUMNER: No.

The Hon. L.H. Davis: Count yourself lucky.

The Hon. C.J. SUMNER: He has, but not the one that the honourable member is thinking of. There is a difference of opinion in the federal Liberal Party on this topic. I do not know what the final result in the federal Senate will be. I understand that the Australian Democrats have expressed a view on the matter and it may be that the federal legislation will fail in the Senate. At this stage I do not intend to discuss hypothetical situations that depend on whether the Australia Card legislation is passed. The State Government will continue to review the matter and we will certainly examine the legislation when it is introduced. I understand that Senator Blewett has certain propositions—

The Hon. R.I. Lucas: He has been promoted?

The Hon. C.J. SUMNER: I mean Dr Blewett.

The Hon. M.B. Cameron: He was Chairman of the Council of Civil Liberties.

The Hon. C.J. SUMNER: Yes, that is right; he was.

The Hon. R.I. Lucas: They would not have him back now.

The Hon. C.J. SUMNER: I do not know about that. He indicated that privacy provisions will be introduced simultaneously with the Australia Card, and I understand that they meet the concerns outlined by the State Government to the select committee. We will have to see the final results of Federal Government deliberations and discussions. At that stage the State Government will be in a position to determine its attitude.

FRINGE BENEFITS TAX

The Hon. PETER DUNN: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Leader of the Government in the Council a question about the fringe benefits tax.

Leave granted.

The Hon. PETER DUNN: Yesterday the Premier refused to help people in the State who were affected by the fringe benefits tax. He refused to follow the lead of the Premier of Western Australia, Mr Burke, with a delegation to Canberra to lobby Treasurer Keating for a change to the fringe benefits tax.

The fringe benefits tax, as has been stated by members of this Government and commentators around the nation, has confused the public, caused unnecessary impediment and added costs to small business and PAYE employees. Does the Minister really agree with his Leader's sentiments, as given yesterday? Would he help the affected in this State to lobby the Federal Government for changes to the fringe benefits tax? If now is not the correct time to lobby the Federal Government, as the Premier said yesterday, when will the right time occur?

The Hon. C.J. SUMNER: The honourable member's question is based on a wrong premise, namely, that the Premier has refused to assist in representations on the fringe benefits tax. I think all members will recall that the Premier has, over the past 12 months or so, made representations to the Federal Government about the fringe benefits tax. In particular, he has made representations or assisted in representations on behalf of the car industry in relation to the potential effect that the fringe benefits tax will have on that industry. That is on the record. I believe that the Premier has also pointed out in the past to the Federal Government some other potentially adverse effects of the fringe benefits tax and the removal of tax deductibility for entertainment

DOLLAR DEVALUATION

The Hon. L.H. DAVIS: I seek leave to make a brief explanation prior to asking a question of the Minister Assisting the Minister for the Arts on the impact of the devaluation of the dollar on the arts in South Australia.

Leave granted.

The Hon. L.H. DAVIS: The Minister Assisting the Minister for the Arts would, no doubt, be well aware of the dramatic depreciation in the value of the Australian dollar. For example, since the beginning of 1985 the dollar has plunged 55 per cent against the Japanese yen, 55 per cent against the Swiss franc, 43 per cent against the pound Sterling, and 25 per cent against the US dollar. The Minister is also no doubt aware of the savage impact of this devaluation on cultural life in South Australia. Libraries will be faced with a massive blow-out in the cost of importing books and journals, the performing arts will suffer as the cost of overseas artists and theatrical equipment soars, and visual art and museum exhibitions from overseas will suffer a similar fate.

In the visual arts, the Federal Government, in association with the International Cultural Corporation and the Australian National Gallery and State galleries, supports touring prestigious overseas exhibitions. There is necessarily a long lead time involved in negotiating for these exhibitions. Transport and insurance costs and, in some cases, fees have to be paid. There has been an explosion in those costs following the devaluation. In the performing arts, some overseas artists in recent months have had their pockets lightened by the fact that their contracts, negotiated well ahead, were in Australian dollars.

Not surprisingly, the word has got round and performing artists now negotiating contracts are insisting on contracts which specify payment in a foreign currency. The cost of transporting large overseas theatrical or orchestral groups has soared, along with the cost of insurance and artists' fees. Much of the lighting and some sound equipment in theatres is also imported from overseas. The net effect of the devaluation of the Australian dollar will be to dramatically slash library purchases and produce a severe curtailment of overseas performing artists and visual art and museum exhibitions, unless proper provision is made for the devaluation.

On my calculations, Madam President, the devaluation of the dollar will cost the State Library and performing and visual arts in South Australia well over \$1 million in a full year if existing commitments are to be maintained. The implications for the bicentennial Festival of Arts are horrendous, with a blow-out in the budget of at least several hundreds of thousands of dollars. No doubt the Minister is aware that there have been some cutbacks in both the visual and performing arts because of the impact of the falling dollar. This is a matter of great concern to arts administrators and to me, as shadow Minister for the Arts. My questions are as follows:

1. Can the Minister Assisting the Minister for the Arts advise what steps the Government has taken to date to limit the savage impact of the falling dollar on the cultural life in South Australia?

2. Will the Government in the State budget that is to be brought down later this month make specific provision for devaluation in arts and library funding, where appropriate?

The Hon. BARBARA WIESE: The honourable member knows very well that no Minister in this place is likely to talk in advance about what may or may not be in the forthcoming budget and I am not about to do that.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. BARBARA WIESE: As Minister of Local Government responsible for libraries and, also, as Minister Assisting the Minister for the Arts, I am well aware of the increasing difficulties that will occur as a result of the fall in the value of the Australian dollar. This, of course, is not a new problem: during the past 12 months it has been a problem in those areas. I must say also that we live in tough times and, as has already been forecast, the coming State budget will be a very difficult one. We all have to tighten our belts and the arts industry and every other industry in South Australia will be subjected to those same constraints.

Without in any way forecasting what might be in the forthcoming arts budget, all I can say is that we are all suffering the same problem. The State Government will do its best to provide funding for those organisations for which it is responsible. At this stage I can say no more than that.

SAPSASA PROGRAM

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister of Health, representing the Minister of Education, questions about the SAPSASA school sports program.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: I was about to ask my good friend John Cornwall to be godfather to our new baby daughter, but I will leave that question until next week. In the past few weeks I have been inundated with letters and telephone calls about the Government's planned cuts in the SAPSASA program for 1987. There is widespread dismay about the Minister's plans to slash the number of temporary relieving teacher days (which are essential to administer the program) from 1 500 to 750. I have been reliably informed also that there will be similar massive cuts in the funding of the South Australian Secondary Schools Sports Association program. It is estimated that 130 000 young South Australians participate in these sports programs and drastic cuts in funding mean that many of them will miss out on participating in local, State and interstate carnivals. Anyone who has had any experience with the SAPSASA program will know how successful it has been and will know also how sought after are the positions on State netball, football and cricket teams. I regret very much that I missed out on such a position. It was reported last week that the Minister of Education had called for an urgent report on the situation. However, I understand that, as of today, the Minister has not brought back that urgent report to Parliament. My questions are as follows:

1. When will the Minister release a copy of his urgent report?

2. Does the Minister accept the estimates prepared by the SAPSASA unit in the Department of Education of the number of TRT days used by the SAPSASA program in each of the past three years? If not, what estimate does the Minister accept, and what are the reasons for the differences?

3. Does the Minister accept that a significant cut in available TRT days would do significant damage to the SAPSASA program and would severely disadvantage upper primary age children in South Australia?

4. Will the Minister reverse any decision to cut significantly the number of available TRT days for these programs?

The Hon. J.R. CORNWALL: I am pleased to refer those questions to my colleague in another place and bring back a reply.

ART GALLERY

The Hon. C.M. HILL: I direct a question to the Minister representing the Minister for the Arts. In view of the theft of the Picasso painting from the Melbourne Art Gallery, is the Minister satisfied with the security and insurance arrangements applying at the Art Gallery of South Australia?

The Hon. BARBARA WIESE: I have to confess that I am not sure what the arrangements are about security and insurance at the Art Gallery, but I will refer the honourable member's question to the Minister for the Arts and bring back a reply.

AMALGAMATION OF COUNCILS

The Hon. J.C. IRWIN: I seek leave to make a brief explanation prior to asking the Minister of Local Government questions about the amalgamation of councils.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.C. IRWIN: I have been approached by a council that has expressed concern that it has to face the Local Government Commission following an amalgamation bid by two of its neighbours. This council has written to all councils in South Australia asking for their support in resisting this bid. The Minister probably is not aware that, out of 93 responses from 126 letters written, to both metropolitan and rural councils, 71 are opposed to amalgamation; six are in favour; and 16 have expressed a neutral position. I am quite happy to show the Minister the bulk of correspondence that I have on the matter. The Minister would be very much aware of the election backlash to amalgamations that have shown up in Victoria over the last weekend from electors in that State. On behalf of the council that is concerned, I ask the Minister the following questions:

1. Is the Minister aware of the provisions in the Local Government Act regarding amalgamations of councils and, in particular, the provision by which a completely viable council, having the almost total support of its electors, can be subjected to a predatory takeover bid?

2. Will the Minister undertake to review the Local Government Act so that this undemocratic situation can be remedied?

The Hon. BARBARA WIESE: There is not much time left, but the answer to the first question is, yes, I am aware of the provisions of the Act. Secondly, I am not prepared to amend those sections of the Act. The reason that I say that is that I think the provisions in the Act are perfectly adequate for the situation that exists in South Australia. The policy of the State Government is that we have not forced councils to amalgamate. We have asked that, where amalgamation takes place, it should come through the efforts of people in local areas and, with all of the proposals that have come to us from the Mid North region of the State (which is the region to which the honourable member is referring), they have come voluntarily from those councils.

The provisions of the Act are quite adequate to protect the interests of those councils which have been involved in certain proposals but which may not necessarily agree with the proposals being put forward because the Local Government Advisory Commission, in assessing those proposals, will call for submissions from interested people in those regions and will take evidence from all people who may care to put a point of view. In addition to that, it is possible for councils that do not agree with a particular proposal to put forward a counterproposal of their own, so I think that the interests of all people involved in these matters are

adequately safeguarded by the provisions of the Act and that it is perfectly reasonable that they should proceed in that way.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Adjourned debate on motion for adoption.
(Continued from 6 August. Page 107.)

The Hon. M.J. ELLIOTT: I rise to speak in support of the adoption of the Governor's speech but in so doing express my reservations about the direction in which the Government is now taking us. At the beginning of the Governor's speech, the phrase 'our ability to adapt to difficult economic times' was used. While accepting that we are in difficult times, I am concerned that the concept of 'the economy' is not sufficiently thought out. The economy is the means by which goods and services are created and distributed. I see current economic thinking as being way off the track; its premises are completely wrong.

Nowhere are we asking what people want and need, or what is possible due to resource and environmental constraints. The tendency now is to simply leave it to market forces. What is a healthy economy? An economist will tell us the growth in gross national product would be an indication. However, the growth model has a number of serious flaws.

First, costs of growth are counted as benefits. As an example, the production of cigarettes is a component of G.N.P. The resultant medical treatments and funeral expenses are also additions to G.N.P. As Adelaide grows we face increasing difficulty in providing a potable and palatable water supply. The costs of water to the consumer have been increasing sharply in recent years, and will continue to rise faster than inflation as more population and human activities press on the water catchments. But the increased expense of water supply will be an addition to G.N.P.

As we use up more accessible mineral resources and mine deeper and/or lower grade deposits, the increased effort is reflected in an increasing G.N.P. As our farmers struggle to get more out of their land, the increasing use of fertilisers and pesticides and increasing cost of fuel all contribute to the G.N.P. I hope that it is obvious that an increase in G.N.P. does not necessarily reflect an increase in 'useful' production. Conventional economics really does not face the reality that costs are not benefits.

It does not recognise that, as the population increases as we put ever greater pressure on our resources, striving for growth, less of our production is 'useful'. Surely what our society should be attempting is the production of 'useful' things. There is still of course the philosophical question as to what is useful. A second major flaw of the growth model is that it seeks to maximise throughput rather than optimising the stock of goods. We are now facing major economic downturn in South Australia. One classic example is the car industry. The reduced demand for cars is disastrous in a conventional economic sense.

However, there is another way of looking at the situation. So what if everybody's car isn't brand new, mine is 14 years old and still safely and reliably gets me from point A to point B, and isn't that what cars are for? Not for some people, unfortunately. For them the cars are extensions of their own personality.

The only importance of continued high production rates of cars is the employment that it offers, and in particular

the money paid to the workers so that they can feed and shelter their families. It is true of so much of our production; our economy depends on high production and high consumption, that is, high throughput. The consequences are an accelerating waste of finite resources and accelerating destruction of the earth's biosphere. It quite simply cannot be maintained.

There is an alternative. If goods were made to last and were kept longer, we could still be just as 'well off'. Amazingly enough, the working week could be reduced immediately across the board.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is already.

The Hon. M.J. ELLIOTT: And so it should be. But this will not happen easily. It will not happen for two reasons—one is because of economists themselves. They wish to believe, first, that economics is an exact science and, secondly, that they have got it right. Current economic thought is wrong because it does not understand the idea of limited resources, it does not differentiate between costs and benefits, it takes no account of people, nor of the planet upon which we must live.

The second reason why it will probably fail is human greed. While one quarter of Australia lives in poverty, a very small section is becoming ever wealthier. Company profits are at an all-time high percentage of G.N.P. Sales of luxury cars, French champagne and other luxury goods are at an all-time high. The current cry against capital gains taxes, fringe benefits taxes, among others, is absolutely shameful. By the time the total tax package is in place, which also lowers the marginal tax rate among other things, most Australians will be at worst marginally worse off and many will be better off. But the tax rorts of the super rich will be stopped. Who are the Liberals looking after? It is an absolute farce.

Australia's 'best' business brains, using the word 'best' advisedly, do nothing constructive for our economy. They are off on their company raids with borrowed foreign money and, as the interest pours out of our country, they claim it against their tax. One of the biggest company raiders manages to pay 1c in the dollar taxation. Is that money for initiative? The old conservatives had some saving graces but the new Right, 'the drys', are greedy; philanthropy for them is having an America's Cup yacht 'to amuse the people'. Not likely! There is money in that too!

There is ample wealth in this country for all. The question is how do we ensure that all can get a fair share? It cannot be through socialism; in fact, the socialists of Russia are heading down the same ludicrous growth path of the West. I believe that it can be achieved through a mixed economy.

But it is imperative that the Government has a firm control of the reins and that it has a clear idea of where it wants to go, of what it wants to achieve. Our present Governments are bankrupt of ideas—casinos, Grand Prix and the like are the best they can come up with. They simply do not know what to do, except to try to appear responsible. Deregulation is a dereliction of duty, and that is what Governments are doing at the moment. As an example, Thatcherism is destroying England. The official unemployment rate is 13.5 per cent; next year it is predicted to be 18 per cent—the wonders of deregulation. The unofficial real employment rate is horrifying to contemplate. I do not believe that that is the path that we should be following.

I will look now at one particular section of our economy that is suffering more than most; that is, the agricultural sector. It is time that we began to face up to realities. We are continuing to expect farmers to produce more and more for less. Farmers are becoming increasingly hostile, and so

they should be, but while Governments have done many wrong things it is what they have not done that we should be looking at.

There are a number of areas that need examination, first, grower returns. It is my contention that prices paid to farmers for their produce are simply, in many cases, too low. Let me take a case in point. The wine industry in Australia is dominated by four major wholesalers. Through their monopoly they can dictate wine prices to the wineries. The wineries simply pass that pressure down the line; even if there is a small surplus of grapes the growers can be played off against each other, and down go the prices. The supposed minimum price for grapes is \$160 per tonne. If growers were to receive an extra \$30 per tonne it would cost only 10c per bottle of wine, or about 50c a cask but would make a difference in income of about \$15 000 a year. A small gain for the consumer is a tragic loss for the grape grower.

I contend that orderly marketing for all goods sold on the domestic market is imperative. The next aspect of grower returns is difficult. It is the question of returns for goods sold on the international markets. What happened with wheat was predictable and could be seen coming for some years. What the Americans and the EEC have done to us is deplorable.

However, the fact must be faced that the world has a 4.6 billion bushel surplus of grain. Even Saudi Arabia has a wheat surplus. About the only place without a surplus is Africa, and it simply could not afford to pay for grain, anyway. While the surplus will vary, and natural disasters and manmade ones, such as Chernobyl, will occur from time to time, I doubt that the 'good old days' will return, and we must face up to that fact. Nor will we see fuel and fertilisers decrease in cost to allow us to compete. In fact, both will continue their rapid escalation in cost. We may need to face up to the fact that the agricultural economy could require a drastic restructure. We should be spending as much money on funding alternative crops as we spend on developing new strains of present crops.

As an example, guayule, a crop that yields natural rubber and also oil suitable for use as fuel, would grow well in our marginal wheat country. While our export income might drop, equally the cost of imports of rubber and oil would drop. We would also be growing produce for a domestic market which would be far more predictable than the international market upon which we now depend. Grower costs are the next factor to be considered. While the Government can help by removing a number of taxes and tariffs, it will only produce a hiccup in what will be a generally upward trend in costs. Fuel, fertiliser and electricity will continue to become more expensive. Some of this will be unavoidable and the public will have to accept the increased cost of primary products. We can, however, find ways of alleviating these costs. For example, major users of electricity, such as irrigators, could install wind generators. They can use the electricity themselves off peak and sell it to ETSA on peak. This is being done in California now.

I turn now to the question of vegetation clearance, which is one of the hot State agricultural issues at the moment. I am a strong and unequivocal supporter of native vegetation retention. At the moment I am particularly concerned about one group of farmers, though. At the time when land clearance controls were brought in, a number of farmers were in the process of clearing their land. Among those were, I would estimate, 10 to 20 who had sufficient land so that when it was all cleared they would have been in a viable position. Many of them had their own clearance machinery, and all they needed was time, and at relatively little expense

they would have been all right. However, with the refusal to permit them to clear their properties many farmers were left with half cleared properties and in an unviable position. Many of these people had undergone much deprivation and hardship, often with both members of married couples taking second jobs. The Government has simply taken everything away from them. No compensation was offered for the first 12 1/2 per cent and then only the value of the scrub was offered for the rest, and that did not give farmers sufficient money to replace the land that they had lost and they were then left with an unviable property. Quite a different situation prevailed for farmers with very large properties with small amounts of scrub, with the amount of scrub that had been cleared making the property viable. I stress again that I support native vegetation retention, but I believe that the compensation formula does not cater at all well for that small group of farmers, and it needs rewriting.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Could not that small group be accommodated?

The Hon. M.J. ELLIOTT: I believe they could be now. There are special circumstances, but the Minister is petrified about setting an example which others may follow.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: They are a pretty identifiable small group, aren't they.

The Hon. M.J. ELLIOTT: Very much so. I have met just a couple of them, and when you talk to people around the countryside everyone knows someone, perhaps 20 kilometres away, with that sort of problem. There are not that many of them, but it is a very serious situation for those affected.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Well, you will find support over here for what you are saying.

The Hon. M.J. ELLIOTT: For other farmers I see the problem in a somewhat different light. The problems that I alluded to earlier, namely, increasing costs and decreasing returns, are what we really should be confronting. While there might be still some discussion of what is fair compensation—and I confess that my opinion on this is not definite—it is the other problems that must be addressed. Clearance may be the answer for an individual farmer, but it will give only a short breathing space before decreasing margins create pressure again. The real problem has not been solved. Another question, of course, is this: if we already have a surplus of wheat, do we need a larger one? It is absolutely imperative that the Government and farmers recognise major underlying problems. Some of the skirmishes that we are having at the moment have at their core real problems, but they are trifling compared to what we need to face up to. The real problems are simply not being talked about or addressed at this stage.

In the matter of Aboriginal affairs, the Hon. Mr Cameron, when he played ducks and drakes across northern South Australia, bouncing from one Aboriginal settlement to another, with a brief stop at each, discovered that there were problems. I am glad that he has been, in part, educated and that he has found out what many of us, and the Aboriginal people in particular, have known for a long time. What a great pity that it was so sensationalised in the press. What I looked for in the press and also in Mr Cameron's Address in Reply speech was an answer—but there simply was not one. There was, though, a rather oblique reference to throwing in lots of money to solve the problems. I want to offer at least some thoughts and suggestions. I see the Public Service as being the problem, although I point out that this is not a Public Service bashing exercise. First, there are too many different federal and State bodies involved, and the synchronisation of their efforts is poor. The various

agencies will often give conflicting advice and instructions to communities. Various projects come and go (for example yabby farms and petrol sniffing prevention programs) depending on whims and the availability of money. Successful programs are just as likely to lose funding as are the unsuccessful ones. Too much of the money is being spent on bureaucrats, be they European or Aboriginal, who then tell the Aborigines what to do. I believe that there should be only one State and one federal funding source. I believe that as far as practicable funding should go directly into the communities. While there may be X per cent earmarked for health and Y per cent earmarked for housing and so on, beyond that, all spending decisions should be made by the communities themselves. I believe that funding should be guaranteed and indexed.

If honourable members are sceptical about this, let me point out that we are doing the exact opposite at the moment and that it is failing abysmally. Another related matter that I will comment on concerns police/Aboriginal relations. I believe that police are making a very genuine effort in their relations with Aborigines. What many police do not understand is just how profoundly different the Aboriginal culture is from ours. Even a simple face to face discussion is carried out very differently in each of the two cultures. When speaking with a senior police officer about such problems he said to me, 'All cadets spend half a day studying Aborigines.' I replied that surely when a police officer was to work in area with many Aborigines that officer should do more training than that. With a very serious expression on his face he said, 'Yes, we give them an extra half a day.' I bit my tongue and changed the subject due to the company that I was in. I must hasten to add that I believe he was sincere but, quite clearly, police training in that area is totally inadequate.

I now move to the question of uranium. It was Hiroshima Day yesterday and, with five or six nuclear weapons being built every day, what has Hiroshima taught us? I wonder whether the bomb for Nurrungar or Smithfield Plains has been built yet, or if that is on next week's agenda? We must do all that we can to dissociate ourselves from this nuclear madness. Russia cannot even subdue Afghanistan, just as the United States could not subdue Vietnam. Any real potential threats come from conventionally armed nations that are closer to us and not from the Russians or the Chinese. The United States hates Russia so much that Russians buy American grain cheaper than the Americans can buy it. What wonderful allies we have.

I turn now to matters pertaining to the peaceful use of the atom—the sort of peace that Chernobyl can bring us. There are two reasons for nuclear power stations: one is to provide material for nuclear weapons and the other is to produce electricity. I believe that the very use of the term 'the peaceful atom' is an indication that humanity collectively has suffered a bad conscience since Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The peaceful application is an attempt to compensate, to salve, the conscience.

I further believe that many countries consider that they can prove their technological advance by the construction of nuclear power stations. This, however, is not the reason given. It is often claimed to be cheaper, but that is not the case, and the rapid slowdown of construction has been due as much to economic considerations as to public concern. Public concern has, however, recognised the need for increased safety, and this has upped costs.

Another major cost not as yet faced is the dismantling of nuclear power stations and the disposal of the highly radioactive inner parts of the building. The cost of this will be horrendous. Nuclear power will never be cheap. The Hon.

Brian Chatterton gave an excellent discussion of the Chernobyl situation on Tuesday. He pointed out that Russia is technically as advanced as is the west and that it is foolish to assume that Soviet stations are more dangerous than ours. While the fumbling, bureaucratic socialists may be prone to making mistakes, are not the capitalists, who may cut corners to save costs, just as prone? And what a mistake it would be! Areas would become uninhabitable for thousands of years.

Any calculations of safety always neglect the human factor. We are taking this risk to produce power that can be produced by other means. We should be pursuing renewable energy resources and decreasing demand for electricity. The ALP allowed the mining of uranium because it wanted to win government. It sold its soul. We must ask ourselves: do we really believe it is safe or, rather, is it that we want to believe it is safe? Would it not be nice if we could find cheap, safe power sources? But it is neither cheap nor safe. I see us as being no better than drug pushers, justifying our supplying the stuff by saying that someone else wants it or that, if we do not supply it, someone else will. That is the rationale used in Australia at present—and it is illogical. After all, it will not be on our conscience: many of us will be dead before the truth is undeniable. Let future generations worry about it—that seems to be the underlying attitude.

I refer now to education. As Australia approaches banana republic status, the South Australian Government will justify cuts in education spending by saying that our situation is better than that in all other States—might I add, the other States of a country that is being left behind. Australia once had the highest standard of education in the world. Contrary to what some will claim, I do not believe that standards have slipped. But we have been passed.

The greatest resource any country has is its human resource. The growth of Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong has been based not on natural resources but on people. While it was once true that Japan depended on low wages, wages there are now significantly higher than in Australia. While in Australia we go in for bouts of worker or union bashing, attacking wages and conditions, we do not seem to realise that Australia is failing at all levels. Senior public and private administration is equally, if not more, to blame for our present demise.

Part of the solution lies in education. Our retention rates at the secondary level are poor and, at tertiary level, worse. Much greater expenditure is necessary. I am not suggesting, though, that education is simply about education for a job—it is also about education for living. I would like to see the development of separate junior and senior high schools, possibly with the addition of a year 13. I believe that, up until year 10 level, students should receive a general education. The senior years, while perhaps having a general component, can begin to specialise. Students may go into academic courses, technical courses (hopefully in liaison with TAFE colleges, as schools simply cannot afford the sort of equipment necessary for a genuine technical course) or courses which may terminate at the secondary level. Early childhood education is another area which is suffering badly from cuts, yet those years are so crucial for the future development of our children. I have touched on five major areas of public policy, indicating my concern and where we are going wrong in those areas.

The Hon. R.J. RITSON: I support the motion, and in doing so I reaffirm my loyalty to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Australia, and to her representative in South Australia, His Excellency Sir Donald Dunstan, the

Governor. I thank His Excellency for the speech with which he was pleased to open Parliament, and I note his reference to the death of former members. To the relatives of those members, I offer my sincere condolences.

The Address in Reply debate can be used for several purposes: first, to analyse the Governor's speech; secondly, to develop single issues in great depth; or, thirdly, to cast a broad net across matters of politics in the manner of a grievance debate. I propose to use this opportunity in the latter fashion. It is not possible to talk about politics in Australia today without talking about the appalling mess into which the Hawke Government has plunged Australia. The situation is worse than it was in 1975, because the Hawke Government has been in office a little longer than Mr Whitlam was in government. However, the phenomenon is the same. The trouble inevitably stems from the fact that Labor Governments are always committed to high welfare spending, high taxation and large deficit budgeting. It is no surprise, therefore, that we are in trouble again as the inevitable consequences of Labor philosophy recycle themselves.

One of the marked differences between the form by which we are governed today and the form by which we were governed when the Labor Government was in office federally on the previous occasion is that then these troubles were generated by members of Parliament. Elected members—the Cairns, Connor and Crean trio—acted out their left wing ideology. But at least they were elected. I draw attention to a new phenomenon that has occurred in the government of our nation, and that is government by oligarchy—an oligarchy of the unelected.

There is no doubt that the original package of tax and economic reform put up by Mr Keating was reasonable. In fact, it was said that he was an extremely good liberal Treasurer. But Mr Keating was not allowed to do that, not because Parliamentarians on the Government benches thought differently but because an oligarchy was formed outside the parliamentary Labor Party—a little group, made up essentially of Hawke, the ACTU and big businessmen (and I guess epitomised by people like Sir Peter Abeles). Between them they decided at a summit that they would plan the country's future. This bypassing of the democratic actions of the elected Party, this 'in club' oligarchy to run Australia, to my mind represents a very significant departure from the processes of democracy and a new phenomenon in this country—government by a small club.

It is not all that different from some of the juntas of a few generals who govern some countries in other parts of the world. So be it. There is light on the horizon, because last weekend in two by-elections in New South Wales we had indications that the people of Australia may be prepared to take back their democracy.

It is not possible for me, Madam President, to let this occasion pass without making some further remarks about the Australian Democrats. I have enormous liking and respect for the two Democrats I know, the two men in here. They are gentlemanly and sincere, but in my view they are wrong. The Australian Democrats began as the party of former Liberal Minister Don Chipp, and in this State former rather colourful Liberal Attorney-General and now Mr Justice Robin Millhouse. The fundamental philosophy of the Democrats at their moment of conception was essentially Liberal with a reaction against some of the conservatism of governments such as the McMahon Government but, certainly, economically and sociologically they were Liberal.

Since then, we have seen a steady trend towards the left. The Leader in this House, the Hon. I. Gilfillan, was elected on Communist Party preferences, a fact which was stated

and not denied in the Adelaide Town Hall at the declaration of the poll at which he was elected. We have just had a brilliant demonstration of the anti-Americanism of that Party in the speech we have just heard from the Hon. Mr Elliott. The Australian Democrats consistently in their package of social ideas identify with the further left part of the Labor Party. From that point of view, I guess, to have a Democrat vote would be the same as to have a left Labor vote.

It does not end there. A great deal of the work we do—machinery Bills, committee work, and so on—is not predetermined by ideology. When we depart from the ideology of politics to get down to the practical bits, I would rather have a Labor person than a Democrat, because at least the matter is dealt with on its practical merits and we do not have this unpredictable sort of lottery voting in an attempt to be everything to all men, as they often attempt to be.

So often we have seen that if one Party proposes that the effect of a Bill should last six months and the other Party proposes that it should be three months, we can bet it will be four and a half months if the Democrats have their say. I have often wondered whether we could just identify all the issues which were clearly either right or left ideologically and divide the Democrats on the left on those occasions, and on other occasions give them leave and install a random voting machine.

This unpredictability of Democrat voting patterns—in the Senate as well—in areas that are not predetermined ideologically is damaging to the process of government. I think that it leads to unpredictability in business and in industry and to instability. As I say, I dearly respect the two men in here. I have enormous liking for them socially as people, but, quite frankly, I think that Government in Australia will be more stable and more sensible the day they are gone from all levels of Government.

I want to make some general remarks now about the whole question of whether welfare should be discriminate or indiscriminate and make some references to the general principles of politics in some areas. I will begin with the politics of health. One of the sad things about the politics of health, which applies at all levels of government and, indeed, across Party boundaries—it applies to governments of all political persuasion—is that it is not the politics of treating the sick which determines health policies: it is the politics of pleasing the people who are well.

Most human beings do not expect to go to hospital, or to be told tomorrow that they have a chronic illness. Most people expect to keep as much of their pay packet as they can. With an exercise such as Medicare it is very clear that the most popular thing to do electorally is to make sure that people who are well pay as little as possible. They are the vast majority. People who are sick are a different matter.

As an example, I will deal with Aboriginal health. Aborigines are a very small minority, who largely vote Labor. There is very little electorally to get out of them. Successive budgets often show that budgetary increases represent a reduction in real terms. Often, a lot of the money does not go to the clinical coal face but goes to trendy areas, feasibility studies and that sort of thing, and they remain a small group of people desperately unhealthy.

There are enormous incidences of debilitating diseases, peri-natal mortality and alcohol abuse, and there is not really much being done about that by anyone. Certainly, it has not been much different whichever Party has been in office. On one occasion I raised this question across the floor with the Hon. Dr Cornwall, and his instant reaction was that it is a Federal matter. It is a Federal matter because the State chooses to leave it that way. There is no consti-

tutional requirement preventing us from increasing funding to Aboriginal health, but, as long as the Commonwealth has substantial funding of it, I guess we are relieved of that obligation.

The other side of the coin would be the politics of benefits to the non-sick indiscriminately, where large numbers of people are involved. A typical example of that sort of benefit, which has nothing to do with being sick and which is indiscriminate and enormously expensive, would be the pharmaceutical benefits listing for contraception. That is a benefit that would cause electoral harm to any Government which tried to take it away, but it is a subsidy to the contraceptive and sex practices of the wealthy socialite as well as the bereft supporting mother.

There are many other examples where quite inexpensive medications are made hundreds or thousands of times more expensive by putting them through the procedure of making them apparently free at their source. I offer one very small and grudging congratulation to the Federal Government for being in the process of removing some of these items from the pensioner medical benefits schedule.

There must be a better way than taking a medication which costs 90c to produce, perhaps \$1.50 with a retail mark-up, and turning it into a \$20 expense by requiring a person to go to the doctor to get a prescription on the pharmaceutical benefits scheme and then taking it to the chemist and adding a dispensing fee, in order to make something like some of the common analgesics, which are also available on the supermarket shelves, apparently free, yet they end up costing \$20 instead of about \$1, it does require a certain amount of courage to take such items off the list, but it is crazy to leave them on.

Medicare itself, of course, is at first sight an indiscriminate form of welfare. Admittedly, the levy is exponential and, as such, is a little different from an exponential tax impost like income tax, but the benefits are available equally to all, and that would appear to be indiscriminate. In fact, it does discriminate: it discriminates against the needy. The pensioners never needed Medicare, because they always had free care. The unemployed also had free care and the lower income earners had free private health insurance, which was called the subsidised health benefit scheme. That scheme was very efficient, because the Federal Government did not have a massive administrative structure to deal with it. Basically, the doctors and social workers administered it. There were bad debts, because some recipients of that benefit were, I suppose, basically incapable of handling the administration of making their own claim, and the doctors waived those bad debts for those people. It ticked on very well.

The Hon. T.G. Roberts: We didn't have entrepreneurial medicine, either.

The Hon. R.J. RITSON: No, and I do not like entrepreneurial medicine, but I will come back to that topic in a moment. That former simple system had a means test level that worked very well. Thus the lower income earners who were employed had a subsidised health benefit system and the pensioners and unemployed had free treatment. The Whitlam Government did something that destroyed the subsidised health benefits scheme: it froze the means test level in a year of hyper-inflation of its own making. Of course, by the end of 1974 nobody qualified for the subsidised health benefit system, because their incomes had been inflated beyond the level of the means test, thereby creating the need for the holy grail of socialist governments, that is, the quasi nationalised health system. The system that we have now has not given the lower income earner, the pensioner or the unemployed any more than they had before,

because they previously had free treatment, but it has been taken from them.

The system has recruited a band of people who formerly provided for themselves and put private dollars into the system. It has legislated them into the public welfare system where they compete, as newcomers into the system (and they compete very successfully), against the pensioner, the unemployed and the disadvantaged. These newcomers are very able to compete; they are aggressive, because they are achievers; they can make demands on the system which perhaps the meek do not; and they know the system and the doctors (they probably have doctors living in their street). This new breed of middle class affluent people who make use as public patients of the public system very successfully out-compete the frail, the not-so-bright, the not-so-happy and the poor, who all get pushed to the back.

I would like to see an analysis of the present waiting lists for public hospitals on the basis of social class. That exercise would be very interesting. In fact, one day I will ask the Hon. Dr Cornwall whether he will do that for me as a matter of interest. While the sick and poor remain worse off, while the contraception of the socialite remains subsidised, and while the Aborigines remain syphilitic, we continue to hand out medical goodies to the middle class.

The Noarlunga drop-in centre is another example of this. The political stimulus for the original concept has its origins in the local demands for another public hospital in that region, the arguments for that being that, really, because of the time taken in travelling to the Flinders Medical Centre by car—something of the order of 20 minutes—emergencies might arise where people could die. The idea was floated that, if they could not have another public hospital, perhaps they could have a super-duper casualty with specialists, who could carry out emergency treatment, but there would be no hotel services and the patients, once stabilised, could be then transferred. In the event, what we got was another general practice. It is a funny general practice, because it competes directly with an existing general practice which maintains doctors and receptionists in the building all night.

It is an interesting general practice, since it is not equipped to handle any significant casualty work. As a matter of fact, the room that, in the original concept, was to be the emergency room does not have ambulance access. It opens on to a walled garden. There are still the vestigial signs of what it was to be. For example, it was to have X-ray facilities and a room was designed to receive the X-ray equipment, but the sign saying 'X-ray Department' was pulled off the door the day before the practice opened. In the event, an unnecessary duplication of an existing general practice has been provided but, again, it is an expenditure in this urban area where Labor supporters are located.

The Hon. T.G. Roberts: There are people down there, too.

The Hon. R.J. RITSON: Yes, but the interesting thing about it is that, in relation to an after-hours general practice, the people were (and still are) well served by an existing establishment less than a mile from this centre. The original call was, first, for a public hospital and, secondly, when that was not on, for an emergency casualty service. As I say, what they received was another general practice. It is very expensive.

I do not know why people do not learn from the past. In the early 1970s an experiment was conducted in Canberra and two identical practices were set up in two roughly equivalent suburbs, Scullin and Melba. The difference between the two practices was that one was conducted by leasing the building to a doctor to practise privately on a fee-for-service basis, and the other was run by the Govern-

ment with salaried staff and salaried ancillary staff. It is easy to assess the total true cost of the fee-for-service practice, because the common fee per attendance is charged and that is what it costs. Out of that common fee the doctor pays for his staff, for the building and for power, and makes his own management decisions.

It is rather more difficult to assess the cost of the other practice, because you do not simply divide the salaries by the number of patients seen. You have to amortise the cost of the buildings, and a large number of other variations are involved. In that experiment the salaried service turned out to be much more expensive per unit attendance than the common fee practice. That problem is already occurring at the Noarlunga drop-in centre. In fact, I understand that the Minister of Health is so concerned about this problem that he has asked Dr Bob Douglas to conduct an inquiry into it. I hope that, during the course of the Estimates Committees, we can obtain more information about the results of that inquiry in terms of the cost effectiveness of this alternative salaried general practice, which does not do house calls at night.

I think that Australia is very much at the cross-roads and there is nothing more urgent than for Australians to dismiss the Hawke Government, because not only is it bringing Australia to its economic knees—

The Hon. C.J. Sumner interjecting:

The Hon. R.J. RITSON: I know that there is the problem of the commodity prices. That is an external factor.

The Hon. C.J. Sumner: It's a major factor, and you haven't mentioned it.

The Hon. R.J. RITSON: It is an external factor that is involved, but the way in which the Labor Government can deal with these problems and the flexibility it has to handle them is very strictly limited by what the oligarchy will let it do. There is the Ritson solution to this problem, which came to me in a dream one night.

The Hon. Carolyn Pickles: I hope it's not too Freudian.

The Hon. R.J. RITSON: It may be Freudian. I am as Freudian as anyone else. I freely admit to obeying all the rules of complex human behaviour, but sometimes I have insight, which we do not all have. In my dream I imagined that a man from Mars came and looked at us objectively. He saw all these people sitting down when there was all this work to do and he could not work out why. He heard them arguing about 38 hour weeks and 35 hour weeks, yet there was so much to do and all they wanted to do was work less. He thought to himself, 'Well, I guess if they don't want to achieve all of these things, they can work less.' Then he was amazed because he heard them talking and found that what they wanted was to have more; he decided that we were crazy, got back into his spaceship and left.

I do not see how we can have this sit down mentality as a nation. I do not see how a Government can easily withdraw existing benefits to a community and survive, but it would be possible for us to work our way out of this. Instead of looking for the 35 hour week, if we looked for the 41 hour week at the same wage level we might indeed be able to produce more at lower prices and recapture lost markets. But you know, there is no consensus amongst Australians that they ought to do this, or that they are even working for the good of the economy.

Mr Hawke achieved great kudos for talking about consensus, but all he did was state the problem. Australians suddenly said, 'How marvellous: that is the problem, consensus, consensus, consensus', but consensus was never achieved. We have on both sides, management and labour—and I do not excuse management from this—still have class conflict and no real consensus that we should all be working

together for Australia. Until we get that consensus, a consensus that Hawke wrongly got the kudos for achieving when he did not achieve it at all, but said what everyone else was worried about, until we get that, the Ritson solution of working harder instead of less will never even be tried.

I will make a few remarks in conclusion about a quite specific matter, a complex matter with which I will not be able to deal in depth and a matter which alarms me a little bit; that is, the report of the working party to examine the adequacy of existing services for the termination of pregnancy. It is a thick document which is difficult to read and which contains a variety of conflicting propositions and a number of bold statements unsupported by evidence. The implication of the whole thing is difficult to assess, although Dr Cornwall did say in the Council, I think yesterday, that he looked on the report benignly and was rather moved to implement it at a cost of some \$3.3 million.

Essentially, it is a recommendation for the separation of abortion services from general gynaecological and obstetric services. A thread runs through it, leaving me with the feeling that it is attempting to increase the abortion rate significantly, if not make it compulsory. I just want to draw the Council's attention to a few little things which alarm me about the colour of the whole document. The first thing that surprises me is that it quotes the abortion law in the main text, but quotes only one small part of section 82 (a), the relative risk part. That is a provision that, if it is more dangerous to continue the pregnancy than to be aborted, then one may be aborted regardless of the fact that the danger, in either case, may be trivial or may in fact not exist at all. A case may simply rely on an overall statistical proposition that a healthy person up to a certain stage of gestation is statistically safer not to bear the baby than to bear it. Therefore, all people with no complications are entitled to an abortion up to that point. That is, indeed, abortion on demand.

The difficult thing for many members of the medical profession is that the Act has a good deal more in it, and very few abortions, in fact, rely on the relative risk clause. I am told that well over 90 per cent of abortions are based on the psychiatric provision. The Act does refer to 'grave risk to life or health or mental health'—grave risk. At the time this law was enacted the community political situation centred upon the debate on this grave risk. The former member for Mitcham argued volubly that the real reason for introducing this law was to codify the Bourn rules, which were rules derived from an English case *King v Bourn* in which the effect was to say that in England an abortion may be permitted if, otherwise, there would be grave risk to the mother's life.

The then member for Mitcham pointed to that and pointed to a Victorian case in which the matter was extended slightly to psychological effects and said that, because these cases are only persuasive and not binding on the Australian courts, it is right that we codify those rules in our Statutes to make it clear that abortions may be carried out for these grave reasons. But, somehow or other, the relative risk clause snuck in, giving us, in effect, in the case of early pregnancy, abortion on demand. I know that the question of abortion on demand is one which is favoured by a number of members in this Council and, *de facto*, it is what we have. Well, why do we go through the dishonest distortion of pretending that the 4 000 abortions done each year are for psychiatric reasons? They are usually done on the psychiatric opinion of the signing gynaecologist who is unqualified to assess the psychiatric status of a patient and who has not, in fact, assessed the psychiatric status of the patient but just had the patient served up to him by a social worker. Why should

we go through the farce of these people signing those forms on psychiatric grounds when the person signing them is not qualified to make the assessment and when, in fact, South Australia has *de facto* abortion on demand for early pregnancies? This paper proposes, amongst other things, free-standing abortion clinics because, it says, some public institutions are not pulling their weight; what is this? Is it some sort of competition with a prize if you are not pulling your weight?

The fact is that most of them are done at the Queen Victoria Hospital and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and that both Flinders Medical Centre and Modbury Hospital do very few. One of the reasons for this, particularly in the case of Flinders Medical Centre, is that it does not tie the position of abortionists to the training programs to become a gynaecologist. It has separated a little group there and has advertised for an abortionist for about a year, but is having great difficulty in getting a full time abortionist: apparently, it is not a very rewarding occupation.

At the Queen Elizabeth Hospital the abortions are done in the general gynaecological wards. Although the law of our State says quite clearly that no one can be legally compelled to perform these procedures—and no-one is legally compelled to do them. It is a fact of life that, if one wants a gynaecological training, if one wants to enter training in that field to become a registered specialist, one is much more likely to get a job as a registrar if one is prepared to carry out these procedures than if one is not prepared to do so. It is not stated, but since those pressures are on those units, either consciously or unconsciously, a person prepared to carry them out has a much better chance of being selected into a gynaecological training program.

So, one of the reasons why those hospitals pull their weight in terms of numbers of abortions done—as if that was some sort of proud contest to win—is that they do not have free standing abortion units but incorporate them into the general wards. I can follow the reasons given in this report why they should not be in the general wards. It is very tough on a woman grieving because of a spontaneous miscarriage to be in a bed next to someone who perhaps uses termination of pregnancy as an alternative form of birth control. The arguments for the separation outlined in this document are understandable. But I suspect that if it is put into place—and I would not really grieve for this—and the two services are separated, the number of abortions in Australia will actually fall, because instead of taking advantage of the unspoken pressures upon gynaecological registrars to be abortionists, because it goes with the job, they will have to actually advertise for people to be a specialist full-time abortionist. The whole history of the response to the Flinders Medical Centre's attempt to attract such a person indicates that it would be very difficult to staff any significant number of free standing abortion clinics with full-time abortionists. So, I see difficulties in the implementation of that report.

I see some threads (since we were talking about Dr Freud. I will be charitable and add) of a subconscious bias and colour to the matter. My first comment was that, in stating the South Australian law in the main text, the report prints only the relative risk clause, thereby distracting the reader entirely from the colour of the rest of the Bill and from all the debate that surrounded its passage where words such as 'grave', 'serious', 'life' and 'health' were used. That is glossed over and the reader just automatically reads the abortion on demand bit, says 'ho hum', and that is accepted—one question it.

Further on in the report there is a section on unwanted pregnancy. This really does bother me, because it makes a bald assumption that is wrong. It says:

With the exception of spontaneous abortions and those performed on medical grounds—

almost none in South Australia—

all aborted pregnancies fall within the character of unwanted pregnancies.

If I used the proper phrase to describe that error, that erroneous statement, Mr Acting President, you might need to recall Madam President to the Chair to discipline me, because I would use a very derogatory phrase to describe the sense of that phrase that all aborted pregnancies fall within the category of unwanted pregnancies. The text goes on to take that for granted, without producing any evidence for it. But the other side is not true. All apparently wanted pregnancies are not necessarily wanted. Then it goes into detail in several clauses to explain that people who appear to want the pregnancy may not. The implication there is that you have got to get out and teach them that they do not want the pregnancy and make sure that they have an abortion, when they say they do not want to. But the other side of the coin is glossed over by the statement that all aborted pregnancies fall within the character of unwanted pregnancies.

That is completely untrue. I speak with the experience of sitting at the consulting desk for more than 20 years. I have seen women turn up three, four, or five years after an abortion, which is documented as an uncomplicated abortion, with a six month psychological follow-up normal, with the most enormous emotional difficulties, the most severe depressive illnesses, and the most tremendous unresolved grief, with sexes and birthdays assigned to the aborted embryos, and anniversary depressions, because the child was wanted and at the time there were some other factors that made the person present it as an unwanted pregnancy. For example, the threat of withdrawal of love on the part of a parent is a very common reason for a pregnancy to be

presented as being unwanted when in fact it is wanted, and there are many other reasons.

With great respect to the people who have not sat behind the consulting desk for 20 years and who have not followed up these cases four or five years later and seen the psychiatric mess that occurs when an apparently unwanted pregnancy is really wanted, I do not think that they really know about these matters because they have not seen sufficient cases and they have not seen the later complications that turn up in the GPs consulting rooms years later.

So, I am anxious about this document because it seems to have a little thread of bias through it. There is a group of people wanting to promote abortion vigorously as if it were some sort of salvation for our society, when in fact it is a terrible tragedy in society.

Again, if the man from Mars came to look at this he would say, 'You are spending four thousand times however many hundreds or thousands of dollars are involved in dealing with each case of abortion. Your State is stagnant because of a static population growth, among other things; it is a saturated society. Then you are spending the same amount of money at the other end of the scale on *in vitro* fertilisation.' With his overview of the situation that man from Mars would get back into his spaceship and go away thinking that we were crazy. Having said that, and having made those other remarks, I have great pleasure in supporting the motion that the Address in Reply as read be adopted.

The Hon. K.T. GRIFFIN secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT

At 4.30 p.m. the Council adjourned until Tuesday 12 August at 2.15 p.m.