

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Tuesday 8 March 1994

The PRESIDENT (Hon. Peter Dunn) took the Chair at 2.15 p.m. and read prayers.

ACTS INTERPRETATION (COMMENCEMENT PROCLAMATIONS) AMENDMENT BILL

Her Excellency the Governor, by message, intimated her assent to the Bill.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The PRESIDENT: I direct that written answers to the following questions, as detailed in the schedule that I now table, be distributed and printed in *Hansard*: Nos. 17, 19, 20 and 21.

BETTER CITIES PROGRAM

17. The Hon. BARBARA WIESE:

1. Has the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations authorised a change in priorities for Building Better Cities funding from the Commonwealth Government?

2. If so, what changes have been recommended to the Commonwealth Government?

3. Do any of the new priorities recommended fall within the boundaries of the Minister's electorate?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: The replies are as follows:

1. Following the change of State Government in December 1993 the new Government sought discussions with the Commonwealth regarding the activities of the Better Cities Program in the North West and Western areas of metropolitan Adelaide. This approach was largely created by the need to review the multifunction polis and a refocussing of the new Government on matters of significant importance. The State Government has now drafted a revised agreement and is currently discussing this with the Commonwealth.

2. It would not be considered proper at this time to release details of the agreement until the discussions currently being undertaken with the Commonwealth are finalised.

3. It would not be considered proper at this time to release details of the agreement until the discussions currently being undertaken with the Commonwealth are finalised.

URBAN LANDS TRUST

19. The Hon. BARBARA WIESE:

1.(a) What are the salary and benefits, terms and conditions and tenure of the position of General manager of the South Australian Urban Lands Trust (SAULT)?

(b)(i) Was the position advertised within the Public Service or externally?

(ii) If not, why not?

2. What instructions has the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations given the board of the SAULT and the General Manager regarding—

a) The implementation of the Government's policies;

b) The future work of the SAULT;

c) The relationship of the SAULT with the South Australian Housing Trust, and with the Minister?

3. What understandings has the Government or the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations given to the Urban Development Institute of South Australia, the Housing Industry Association, the Master Builders Association or any other body or individual regarding the future functions of the SAULT and the disposal of Government property or other matters relating to the sale or development of Government owned property?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: The replies are as follows:

1.(a)&(b)(i)(ii) Appointment of Mark Henesey-Smith as General Manager, SAULT:

The salary and benefits of the General Manager are salary \$94 087 per annum plus superannuation and the use of a fully

maintained private plated motor vehicle subject to a personal contribution of \$758 per annum. The position was advertised within the SA Public Service. Six applications were received and Mr Henesey-Smith was selected from four who were interviewed.

Appointment of Barry Grear as Acting General Manager, SAULT:

The salary and benefits of the Acting General Manager are salary \$82 000 (i.e., EL3) with an allowance of \$8 000 per annum until 11 March 1994 and \$12 087 per annum from 14 March 1994 to 21 July 1994. The acting appointment was for the period from 17 January 1994 to 21 July 1994. Mr Grear was selected from a pool of senior executives redeployed following changes in the machinery of Government.

2. (a) SAULT have been advised to freeze any further broadacre land acquisitions and as part of its State debt reduction strategy to develop a program of release of existing stock. At this stage it is intended that broadacre land will be made available for purchase by tender or public auction, and developers may be required to provide a written commitment to implement a community planning function for the subdivision if SAULT does not have an interim involvement as a joint venture partner. Future Government land acquisition will only be made where Government considers it necessary to encourage urban consolidation and better use of infrastructure, and where the land in question cannot otherwise be acquired by the private sector.

(b)&(c) SAULT's future role, the relationship of SAULT with the South Australian Housing Trust and with the Minister is part of the ministerial review of the Housing and Urban Development portfolio which is due to commence in the near future. The review is to advise on:

· the adequacy of, and desirable changes to, the policy and management objectives, and the performance against those objectives;

· the appropriateness and effectiveness of the management arrangements within the portfolio with particular regard to the functions and staffing levels of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the South Australian Urban Land Trust and the South Australian Housing Trust and associated agencies.

3. No firm undertakings have been given to interested stakeholders regarding the future functions of SAULT and the disposal of Government property or other matters relating to the sale or development of Government-owned property until the review of the Housing and Urban Development portfolio has been completed.

GOVERNMENT ASSETS

20. The Hon. BARBARA WIESE:

1. Which properties within the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations portfolio does the Government propose to sell as part of its Asset Sale Strategy?

2. What is the value of each property?

3. What is the timetable for the sale of each property and in which financial years will the proceeds of the sale be paid into the State Treasury?

4. What is the estimated cost of consultant services, commissions and other fees for the sale of each of these properties referred to in Question 1 above?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: The replies are as follows:

1. SA Urban Land Trust: Over the next four years the SA Urban Land Trust plans to sell a number of broadacre residential properties in light of the Government's policy on land development. The extent and timing of these sales will be dependent upon market demand and dwelling commencement projections for each area.

SA Housing Trust: Many Housing Trust properties will be, in the ordinary course of business, sold in any one year including houses, vacant land, commercial and industrial properties. The only significant Housing Trust assets specifically earmarked by the Government for sale as part of an asset sale strategy are the freehold interests, Elizabeth City Centre and Noarlunga Centre.

2. SA Urban Land Trust

Due to the commercial sensitivity of property sales the Government is not in a position to release financial details prior to the proposed sale of each parcel of land. Nevertheless, following each sale the details will be on the public record.

SA Housing Trust

Total asset sales for 1993-94 are estimated at \$82.4 million (i.e. gross sales revenue).

Elizabeth City Centre and Noarlunga Centre are presently being valued and a strategy for disposal formulated.

3. SA Urban Land Trust

SAULT's residential land will be released in an orderly manner over the next few years to ensure that an adequate supply of developable residential land is available in the residential growth sectors of Adelaide.

Some properties may be sold during 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96 with the proceeds being transferred to Treasury in those years.

SA Housing Trust

The Government will decide on the form and timetable for sale of the Regional Centres at the end of March this year, when it expects to receive the Regional Centres Report from the Housing Trust.

Proceeds from the sale of Elizabeth City Centre and Noarlunga Centre are expected to be realised in the 1994-95 financial year.

4. SA Urban Land Trust

Over the next four years SAULT expects to expend funds on independent valuation fees, sale consultants and sales agencies in relation to the sale of its residential and non-residential broadacre properties. The exact level of costs has yet to be established in detail and will depend upon the overall program determined.

SA Housing Trust

Agents and consultants associated with these sales all tender the provision of their services.

Agents have not yet been appointed for the sale of Elizabeth City Centre or Noarlunga Centre.

HOUSING TRUST PROPERTIES

21. **The Hon. BARBARA WIESE:**

1. How many South Australian Housing Trust houses and how many other South Australian Housing Trust properties is it proposed will be sold in the following financial years—1993-94, 1994-95, 1995-96, 1996-97?

2. What is the estimated cost of the financial incentives to South Australian Housing Trust home buyers promised in the Opposition (now Government's) policy speech for each of the above financial years?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: The replies are as follows:

1. The South Australian Housing Trust has a target of 1 000 house sales for 1993-94 and 1994-95. The South Australian Housing Trust will endeavour to maintain house sales at this rate for future years, but is looking at ways of increasing the level of house sales activity.

2. The financial incentives to be offered to South Australian Housing Trust home buyers will be in the form of deposit assistance. Cabinet approval has not yet been obtained, but the proposed incentives will mean a minimum cost to the Government for each of the above financial years.

PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Minister for Education and Children's Services (Hon. R.I. Lucas)—

Friendly Societies Act 1919—General Laws of the Friendly Societies Medical Association Inc.
Murray-Darling Basin Agreement—Schedule D.

By the Attorney-General (The Hon. K.T. Griffin)—

Reports, 1992-93—
Commissioner for Equal Opportunity.
Meat Hygiene Authority.
Regulation under the following Act—
Workers' Liens Act 1893—Farms.

By the Minister for Transport (The Hon. D.V. Laidlaw)—

South Australian Health Commission Act 1976—By-laws—
Flinders Medical Centre.
Naracoorte Health Service Inc.
Corporation By-laws—
Port Lincoln—No. 11—Garbage Containers (Amendment).
District Council By-laws—
No. 1—Permits and Penalties.
No. 2—Moveable Signs.
No. 3—Streets and Public Places.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW (Minister for the Arts): I also lay on the table a version of the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust business plan that does not incorporate sensitive commercial information, the plan having been commissioned by the former Government and prepared by Leadenhall Australia Limited. A copy will be provided to the Opposition.

PUBLIC SECTOR SALARIES

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I seek leave to table a copy of a ministerial statement on public sector executive salaries made by the Premier in another place today.

Leave granted.

WATER QUALITY

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I seek leave to table a copy of a ministerial statement on blue-green algae research funding made by the Minister for Infrastructure in another place today.

Leave granted.

QUESTION TIME

MOTOR VEHICLE INSPECTIONS

The Hon. BARBARA WIESE: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Transport a question about compulsory motor vehicle inspections.

Leave granted.

The Hon. BARBARA WIESE: A spokesperson for the RAA has said that surveys conducted in New South Wales have shown that, despite regular testing of motor vehicles for defects, the rate of unroadworthiness of cars was about the same in that State as in other States. The spokesperson went on to say that the compulsory testing of motor vehicles had no real effect on road safety and penalised the majority of motorists for the sake of the minority.

The views expressed by the RAA are consistent with advice provided to me and to previous Transport Ministers by the Road Transport Agency. It was therefore with some surprise that I heard that the Minister was planning to investigate the introduction of a compulsory vehicle inspection scheme in South Australia. My questions to the Minister are:

1. Is the Minister's decision to investigate the introduction of compulsory vehicle testing in South Australia based on any body of evidence that this will result in improved road safety?

2. Did the Minister seek advice on this matter from the Road Transport Agency and, if so, what advice did she receive and, if not, why not?

3. Did the Minister consult with any organisations other than the Motor Trade Association before deciding on this course of action?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I am surprised that the honourable member was taken by surprise about this matter because I gave notice of it some 2½ weeks ago. The issue of compulsory motor vehicle checks can relate to a number of matters—road safety as well as theft. The honourable member may not be aware that the police in South Australia have called on the Government to introduce legislation for compulsory vehicle inspections for vehicle identification

purposes. That matter will be referred to the Environment, Resources and Development Committee of this Parliament if the motion that I have on the Notice Paper is carried.

I think the former Attorney established the Vehicle Theft Committee with representation from the police, the Road Transport Agency, the RAA, the Motor Trade Association and perhaps some other representation—possibly consumer representation. A number of pieces of legislation arising from the recommendations of that committee were introduced by the former Government and passed through this place.

As I indicated, there has been a further recommendation that there be compulsory motor vehicle checks for light vehicles because of the concern about vehicle identification and vehicle theft. The motion I have on the Notice Paper does not confine the issue of vehicle inspections to either road safety or vehicle identification purposes—I have left it totally open-ended, not wishing to prejudge the issue being considered by the committee. However, I would be very keen for the committee to look at this issue as recommended by the Vehicle Theft Committee.

The honourable member asked what had been done in terms of consultation. There was consultation with the Motor Trade Association, the RAA and the Vehicle Theft Committee before I introduced the motion.

The Hon. BARBARA WIESE: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a further question of the Minister about compulsory vehicle inspections.

Leave granted.

The Hon. BARBARA WIESE: Last year the member for Bragg in another place told Parliament that he met with the Motor Trade Association and discussed proposals for the introduction of compulsory motor vehicle testing. It was also said at the time that during these discussions the Liberal Party had requested a donation of \$100 000 for its election campaign.

Does the Minister's decision to investigate the introduction of compulsory motor vehicle inspections reflect the discussions held late last year between the association and her colleague the Minister for Tourism; was it agreed that traders would conduct these inspections for a fee; and did the Liberal Party receive a donation to its election campaign fund from the association?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: The answer to the first question is 'No'; the answer to the second question is 'No'; and the answer to the third question is that I have no idea because members of Parliament in the Liberal Party are not provided with such advice, although I understand that it will be revealed at a later stage because of declarations of donations. However, as I indicated, compulsory vehicle inspection has been requested by the Vehicle Theft Committee of which the RAA, the Motor Trades Association, the police, the Road Transport Association and others are members.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

The Hon. CAROLYN PICKLES: I seek leave to make an explanation before asking the Attorney-General a question about the Equal Opportunity Commission.

Leave granted.

The Hon. CAROLYN PICKLES: With deep concern I would like to outline the appalling dismantling of all effective equal opportunity mechanisms by the Victorian Liberal Government. In October 1993, the Victorian Government sacked the Equal Opportunity Commissioner (Ms Rayner) to

silence her. Her crime was to stand up for equal opportunity in the face of discriminating Government amendments to the system. The position of Equal Opportunity Commissioner is that of an independent officer responsible for ensuring that equal opportunity takes place. If Government policies protect those who discriminate, it is the responsibility of the Commissioner to speak out. Equally, if the Government acts in a discriminating manner—as in the case of the Victorian Government's treatment of women prisoners—the Commissioner also has a duty to act. For this, she was sacked by a morally corrupt Government, which even abolished the position to avoid any independent criticism in the future.

The amendments to the Equal Opportunity Act that have been proposed in Victoria are appalling to any fair minded person, the worst of those being that the loser in any case pays all costs. This includes undefined pecuniary losses incurred by the other party as a result of the action. People who are discriminated against on the basis of sex, race, age or physical or mental impairment are often the most economically and/or socially disadvantaged in our society. In Victoria, the Government intends to make equal opportunity the privilege of the rich. As a letter to the *Melbourne Age* put it:

First, the abolition of the Law Reform Commission, now the Kennett Government legislates to abolish the office of Equal Opportunity Commissioner. What next—legislation to abolish the right to criticise?

My questions to the Attorney are:

1. Does he support the actions of his Victorian counterparts in destroying equal opportunity in that State?
2. Will he guarantee that he and the Government will in no way fetter or censor the South Australian Equal Opportunity Commissioner in carrying out her duties and responsibilities?
3. Does he support the maintenance of the conciliation process in the South Australian Equal Opportunity Commission?
4. Does he have any intentions to change the operation of the Equal Opportunity Act or the commission; and, if so, what are they?

The Hon. K.T. GRIFFIN: As the Leader of the Opposition interjected, there is no such thing as the Equal Opportunity Commission; it is the Office of the Equal Opportunity Commissioner. It does go under the name of the Equal Opportunity Commission, I think, to enhance its status, but there is certainly no such commission in South Australia. I take the opportunity to remind members, and the Hon. Caroline Pickles in particular, that the Liberal Party has been very much at the forefront of the support of equal opportunity legislation. The Hon. David Tonkin, when he was a member of the House of Assembly back in about 1975, introduced the first sex discrimination Bill in Australia. A select committee inquired into that Bill and the need for it and, as a result, legislation was enacted by the South Australian Parliament.

In 1981, during the International Year of the Disabled Person, I introduced—and it was passed in this Parliament—the Handicapped Persons Equal Opportunity Act, and I remind members that the Hon. Diana Laidlaw introduced the first AIDS discrimination Bill as a private member's Bill and from that followed the AIDS discrimination legislation in this State. So the Liberal Party has been very supportive of the whole concept of equal opportunity in respect of its legislative process and in respect of its administration.

The Hon. Carolyn Pickles interjecting:

The Hon. K.T. GRIFFIN: The Hon. Carolyn Pickles talks about what happened in Victoria. I am not altogether

familiar with what has happened in Victoria, because my responsibilities stop at the State border. One may read what is happening in the newspaper. I do know that at least the Melbourne *Age* is very critical and is taking a very biased view of what is happening in Victoria about a wide range of issues, particularly in relation to the legislative decisions sponsored by the Victorian Attorney-General. But apart from that I am not familiar with all the detail. I do not intend to embark upon some criticism or indication of support or otherwise comment upon what happens in Victoria.

In her explanation, though, the honourable member did refer to criticism in Victoria about the abolition of the Law Reform Commission in that State. Let me remind members that it was the former Attorney-General and the Bannon Labor Government that abolished the Law Reform Committee in South Australia. We were critical of that at the time, and we periodically raised questions about it—in fact, I do not think he abolished it, he just suspended it, which was tantamount to the same thing. So, if you are looking to criticise Victoria for abolishing the Law Reform Commission, you ought to look also to criticise the former Attorney-General—

The Hon. Carolyn Pickles interjecting:

The Hon. K.T. GRIFFIN: Well, you drew the analogy with the abolition of the Law Reform Commission in Victoria with the subsequent decision, apparently, to make some changes in relation to equal opportunity in that State, and all that I am saying—

The Hon. Carolyn Pickles interjecting:

The Hon. K.T. GRIFFIN: You've drawn the parallel between the two. All that I am suggesting is that, if you are going to criticise anybody for the abolition of the Law Reform Commission in Victoria, then what ought to happen is that the Hon. Carolyn Pickles ought to be critical of the Government of which she was a part and which put on hold and effectively abolished the Law Reform Committee in South Australia.

So far as the situation with the Equal Opportunity Commissioner in South Australia is concerned, I indicated a week ago that her term of office, which was renewed for a period of three years and which was due to expire at the end of February or early March, was going to continue for another two years. So, we have indicated support for that. We have indicated that there is to be a review of the role and function of the Equal Opportunities Tribunal, and there is nothing sinister about that. In fact, the review of tribunals was something which we started back in 1980-81. It was continued by the previous Labor Government and will be continued under the present Liberal Government, because there ought to be a rationalisation of tribunals.

The Hon. C.J. Sumner: I don't remember you starting it.

The Hon. K.T. GRIFFIN: I did. We brought the Planning Appeals Tribunal under the jurisdiction of the District Court. There were a whole range of things that we were doing to rationalise—

The Hon. C.J. Sumner interjecting:

The Hon. K.T. GRIFFIN: We did. We started it; you continued it. Anyway, so far as the other areas of the equal opportunity legislation are concerned, I have also indicated that we will be reviewing that in the context of examining discrimination on the ground of family responsibilities. We will be looking at it also in the context of amendments to the Federal Sex Discrimination Act in so far as it relates to sexual harassment. With regard to the conciliation process, I expect

there will be some discussions with the Commissioner in due course about the way in which conciliation operates in South Australia to determine whether or not that process within the Equal Opportunity Commissioner's office can be improved.

The Hon. CAROLYN PICKLES: As a supplementary question, will the Attorney-General indicate when he envisages that this review will be completed?

The Hon. K.T. GRIFFIN: It has not yet been set up. I have just announced a general indication of intention to undertake some examination of those. I hope that it will be within a few months, but it has not yet been set up. It will be done in consultation with the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity as well as with a range of other people who have an interest in that area. What I did not answer was a question in relation to conciliation, and I must put on the record that I do support conciliation. In fact, we have been very supportive of conciliation when it has been examined in various pieces of legislation which have come up as changes to the Equal Opportunity Act have been proposed. Conciliation is an integral part of the resolution of disputes, whether it be in the equal opportunity area or in other areas of dispute.

ST STEPHEN'S HOUSE

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister representing the Minister of Health a question about the closure of St Stephen's House.

Leave granted.

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK: As the Minister may be aware, St Stephen's House, a shelter for psychologically and emotionally disturbed young people, was earmarked for closure by the previous Government in 1993 and was officially closed by the Minister on Monday 28 February. The main goal of St Stephen's House was to assist homeless young people with challenging behaviour and/or mental health problems to overcome their difficulties and gain the skills they need to live independently in the community. St Stephen's thus catered for a target group which had previously fallen through State and Federal Government safety nets and which was praised by Human Rights Commissioner Brian Burdekin.

I was alarmed to read in the *Payneham Messenger* of 23 February 1993, more than a week prior to the closure, that an application by the centre manager to meet with the Minister (Hon. Dr Michael Armitage) regarding the future of St Stephen's House was refused on the basis that the Minister was too busy. The article said:

A spokesperson for Mr Armitage said the Government was not ready for a meeting with St Stephen's supporters. . . there are too many things to do before a meeting.

The Health Minister was reported in the *Advertiser* of 21 February 1994 as describing St Stephen's House as 'unsustainable'. My questions to the Minister are:

1. Given that the preamble to the Liberal Party's mental health policy as released during the election says:

Mental health has caused considerable public controversy and turmoil during the past three years because Labor has refused to recognise the dangers of proceeding too rapidly with major changes. . .

why has the Minister created further controversy by hypocritically rushing into the closure of St Stephen's House so soon after his Government's election?

2. Given that Liberal Party policy also expressly promises to 'undertake an immediate and complete assessment of

community infrastructure available to support deinstitutionalisation of patients with mental health illness', can the Minister inform the Council whether he has indeed carried out this assessment? If not, why not, and why has the Minister acted to close St Stephen's House in the absence of such an assessment? If the Minister has carried out this assessment, will he give a commitment to table a written copy in Parliament? If not, why not?

3. Given that in the list of its specific commitments on mental health the Liberal Party expressly promises to 'initiate an immediate program of consultation with groups involved in mental health to assist the achievement of their goals', how can the Minister possibly justify not meeting with the management of St Stephen's House prior to its closure?

4. Given that St Stephen's House was recognised by Human Rights Commissioner Brian Burdekin in his report on mental health care as providing an excellent service to young mentally ill people for the past nine and a half years, and given the Government's purported support for mental health, why did St Stephen's House suddenly become 'unsustainable'?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I will refer the honourable member's question to the Minister of Health and bring back a reply.

FRUIT-FLY

The Hon. R.R. ROBERTS: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister representing the Minister for Primary Industries a question about fruit-fly detection.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R.R. ROBERTS: Last week I was at Peterborough in the Mid North of South Australia and a matter concerning the Oodlawirra fruit-fly detection station was brought to my attention. I am advised that the Oodlawirra station is open for 16 hours a day for only 9 months of the year. I understand that it is closed in June, July and August. I am told that this is because the fruit-fly does not survive in cold weather. There are four such stations in South Australia: at Yamba, Pinnaroo, Ceduna and Oodlawirra. Last year there were 68 interceptions of fruit coming into South Australia, and 32 of those were at Oodlawirra. Most of the fruit coming through Oodlawirra comes from northern New South Wales or from Queensland, and I understand that in every case bar one the fruit-fly detected was the Queensland strain. There was one suspected example of the Mediterranean strain.

My investigations have also revealed that there have been in excess of 80 outbreaks in Broken Hill this year. I am also led to believe there have been two in South Australia. I understand that the Oodlawirra station closes down in June because of the assumption that fruit-fly will not survive in cold weather. However, I have also been advised that there is an 'honesty bin' system that applies when the station is closed and in late June there were fruit-fly detected in those bins. There may be an argument for closures during winter; however, given that approximately 13 000 vehicles were not checked from September to February this year (there were 20 interceptions at Oodlawirra in that period), I believe that there is a need for a review of operations at Oodlawirra to make the coverage 24-hours a day.

The cost of the extra coverage compared to the millions of potential direct financial losses in the event of a fruit-fly outbreak and the major loss of the fruit-fly free status of South Australia would be fairly minimal. Will the Minister

review immediately the inspection service at Oodlawirra in particular to ensure that the best protection possible to South Australian horticultural industries is provided.

The Hon. K.T. GRIFFIN: I will refer that question to my colleague the Minister for Primary Industries and bring back a reply.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The Hon. ANNE LEVY: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister representing the Minister for Industry, Manufacturing, Small Business and Regional Development and Minister for Infrastructure a question about affirmative action.

Leave granted.

The Hon. ANNE LEVY: A question on affirmative action seems particularly appropriate on International Women's Day and, incidentally, through you, Mr President, I should like to thank the Minister for the Status of Women for enabling a number of members of this Council to display the suffrage centenary colours so prominently on this international day of importance. Some time ago, the previous Government adopted as policy that it would only grant contracts or award tenders to firms in the private sector which had not been named in the Federal Parliament as not having complied with the affirmative action requirements of the Federal affirmative action legislation. As members know, there is affirmative action legislation at the Commonwealth level under which firms of a particular size have to prepare reports and indicate what action they are taking with regard to redressing the bias against women which has so long applied in both private and public sectors.

Firms which do not fulfil this requirement are named in Federal Parliament—that is the only penalty which is applied to them—but being named in Federal Parliament is, I am sure, something which many firms would avoid if they possibly could. To reinforce the pressure applied by the affirmative action legislation, the former South Australian Government decided that any firm which had been named in Federal Parliament as not complying with affirmative action legislation would not be granted tenders or any orders from the South Australian Government. A similar policy was adopted by the previous Victorian Government and by the Federal Government.

My question to the Minister is whether the current South Australian Government is maintaining this policy of not having any commercial dealings with firms named in the Federal Parliament under this Act, or whether it has reversed the previous Government's policy on this matter and will now deal with firms that are not complying with the Federal legislation on affirmative action.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: I will refer the member's question to the Minister and bring back a reply.

BUS COLLISION

The Hon. J.F. STEFANI: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Transport a question about a two bus collision which occurred in October 1989.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.F. STEFANI: I have received an inquiry from a constituent seeking some details of the costs incurred by the Government as a result of a two bus accident which occurred on 2 October 1989. I therefore ask the Minister

whether she is in a position to provide some details of the accident and the total cost incurred to date by the Government on behalf of the South Australian taxpayers.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: The honourable member referred this matter to me a couple of weeks ago following an inquiry from a constituent (a relative, I understand). I am able to advise the honourable member and his constituent that there were 87 people—the drivers of the buses and 85 passengers—on the buses involved in the collision. Of the 85 passengers, four did not receive any injuries; therefore, no payments of medical or other expenses have been made and no claims for compensation have been received. Forty-seven claims have been finalised for a total of \$864 160.69, which includes medical and other expenses and settlement moneys. Ten passengers have had their medical and other expenses paid. However, it is considered that they do not qualify for compensation. The total amount paid to or on behalf of these people for medical and other expenses totalled \$1 861.50. All 10 of these passengers were adults.

Pursuant to the Limitations of Actions Act 1936-1975, claims must be commenced within three years of the incident. These people are now prohibited from making any further claims and as such the STA considers that these matters are finalised. The bus operator driving the front bus received minor injuries only and was absent from work, fortunately, for only one day. However, a further bus operator in the rear bus is still in receipt of payments of workers compensation.

Following the collision, discussions were held with the Crown Solicitor. It was agreed that the Crown Solicitor's office would provide all legal costs for claims arising from the collision for the once only payment of \$20 000. The repair costs of the two buses involved in the incident was \$186 941. The total moneys paid to date (compensation, medical and other expenses, plus repairs of the buses) amount to \$1 262 000 approximately.

MACEDONIA

The Hon. T. CROTHERS: I seek leave to make an explanation before asking the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs (Hon. Mr Stefani) a series of questions in relation to comments he has made about the Australian Government's decision to recognise the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.F. STEFANI: I rise on a point of order. Mr President, I understand that Parliamentary Secretaries are not obliged to answer any questions whatsoever. I have received some legal advice on the matter and I am certain that I do not have to answer any questions whatsoever.

The PRESIDENT: The honourable member's point of order is correct: he does not have to answer the question. However, the question can still be asked.

The Hon. T. CROTHERS: Thank you, Mr President, for your indulgence and your kindness.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. T. CROTHERS: Mr President, it appears that the honourable members on the Government bench indulge in situations of volatility all the time.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Hon. Trevor Crothers.

The Hon. T. CROTHERS: Thank you, Sir. In a media release published in the *Greek News Weekly* on 24 February of this year the Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs, the Hon. Mr Stefani, described as 'premature

and ill considered' the Australian Government's decision to recognise as an independent State the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In this media release, Mr Stefani goes on to say:

... the Federal Labor Government has jumped into a huge hole and, in the process, it has betrayed the whole Greek-Australian community.

In another report published in the *Advertiser* on Monday 28 February the Hon. Mr Stefani continued his attack on the Australian Government's decision. In the article the Hon. Mr Stefani is quoted as saying:

... we'll see young Australian Greeks going over there to get killed...

and the article continues:

Greek Australians feel completely betrayed and will now feel all the more obliged to help Greece, if the need arises, just to show the motherland they haven't forgotten it.

This rather violent language seems at odds with the views expressed by the Federal Liberal spokesperson for foreign affairs, Mr Andrew Peacock, who publicly acknowledged some time ago that Australian recognition of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was inevitable considering that it had been admitted to the United Nations last year under that temporary name.

The Hon. Lynn Arnold has released statements setting out the South Australian Labor Party's position on the whole of this matter—a position that I fully support—in which he says that Macedonia is Greek, and he completely supports that position. So do I.

The Hon. R.I. Lucas interjecting:

The Hon. T. CROTHERS: Yes, he does. He has also said that the Australian Prime Minister must urgently consult with the Greek community. It is a fact, however, that some 58 countries have currently recognised the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia under that name.

The Hon. L.H. Davis: Are you speaking against Mike Rann?

The Hon. T. CROTHERS: Mr President, as usual the Hon. Mr Davis is as ill-informed now as he ever was. These countries include the United States of America, Russia, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the Netherlands, to name just a few. In fact, six European Union countries announced in December that they would go as far as establishing full diplomatic relations with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Australia's decision should therefore be seen in the context of this situation.

However, there is no doubt that the relationship between Greece and its neighbour, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, is tense. There is no doubt that these tensions have led to some unfortunate acts by individuals in Australia. These include incidents in Victoria, where churches have been fire bombed and where a small-scale riot erupted at a soccer game last Sunday. These acts should be condemned by all of us who cherish the nature of Australia's multicultural society.

I believe all Australians have a right to hold their beliefs and that all Australians have the right to express those beliefs in a peaceful manner. It is therefore disturbing to see politicians in Victoria and South Australia adding fuel to what is already a volatile situation.

It has now got to the point where community leaders from both the Greek and Macedonian communities in Australia are calling for calm and reasoned debate instead of some of the

more emotional and inflammatory diatribes that have been forthcoming from the Victorian Premier and the Hon. Mr Stefani.

Therefore, my questions to the Parliamentary Secretary, should he care to answer, or, in the absence of an answer from him, to the Minister of Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs are as follows:

1. Before making his comment was the Parliamentary Secretary aware of the views of the Liberal spokesperson for foreign affairs, Mr Andrew Peacock, and, if he was, why did he ignore them?

2. Does the Parliamentary Secretary consider that Australia's multicultural stability could be threatened by inflammatory remarks by politicians entering into inter-ethnic disputes for personal political gain?

3. Does the Parliamentary Secretary now feel that it may have been wiser of him to allow people of Greek descent and Macedonian descent living in Australia to express their views in a peaceful manner without adding fuel to an already volatile situation again, I stress—and this has been alleged to me—for purely personal political gain?

4. Does the Parliamentary Secretary believe that the future and best interests of multiculturalism in Australia are best served by encouraging reasoned debate and fostering trust between Australia's many and varied ethnic communities? If he does, can he explain to this Council why he made statements that many people believe do nothing but destroy that trust?

The PRESIDENT: Before the question is answered, I suggest to the honourable member that there was a lot of opinion in the question. If that is the case it will always attract debate from the other side. So, I suggest that in future questions be kept to the point, without opinion and maybe they will be heard in silence.

The Hon. R.D. LAWSON: I rise on a point of order, Mr President. I submit that the honourable member's question is out of order and does not comply with Standing Order 107, which permits questions to be asked only of 'ordinary members other than those who are Ministers on matters relating to any Bill, motion or other public matter connected with the business of the Council'.

The Hon. Anne Levy: 'In which such members may be specially concerned'.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. R.D. LAWSON: Mr President, I can read as well as those opposite. The words they seek to read have no bearing on the question that I now put to the Chair.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. R.D. LAWSON: The rule provides that questions may be put to a Minister of the Crown relating to public affairs generally—and the rule is in no way limited—and to other members relating any Bill, motion or other public matter connected with the business of the Council in which such members may be specially concerned'. The matters that are the subject of the question asked by the honourable member are in no way connected with public matters associated with the business of the Council but relate to the foreign affairs of the country.

The PRESIDENT: I take the honourable member's point, but there is no point of order; otherwise the place would be very sterile. There is no point of order.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.F. STEFANI: I don't have to do it if I don't want to.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. C.J. SUMNER: I seek leave to ask a supplementary question.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. C.J. SUMNER: What is he going to do? He said he is not going to answer. Is he going to answer or not?

The PRESIDENT: The honourable member has not answered.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. C.J. SUMNER: Of course I can. It can arise out of a question.

The Hon. J.F. STEFANI: As I said earlier, I do not have to answer questions and I know that that is my right. You, Mr President, agree with me, do you not? We have that straight for a start. We then go on to the honourable member's question. I would very much like to have challenged him to be on the steps of Parliament House last Saturday—I did not see him there.

The Hon. T. Crothers: I was behind the scenes.

The Hon. J.F. STEFANI: Yes, I bet you were. With questions like the one you asked today you would want to be behind the scenes, because—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. J.F. STEFANI: With questions like the one the honourable member asked today, he would want to have been behind the scenes, because the Greek community would have dealt with him in a very appropriate manner. Those at the rally were really primed up with their own Senator, who tried to defend the indefensible position that the Federal Government took on this issue. He was booed away from the microphone; he could not speak; they did not want to hear him or to see a traitor from the Federal Government. The Federal Government betrayed this community in terms of the position laid down in March 1992. Senator Bolkus could not speak; he was booed away from the microphone. Had anyone else tried to defend the indefensible the same thing would have happened.

Obviously unbeknown to the honourable member, Mr Rann was there defending the Opposition's position and putting the position that, yes, Macedonia is Greek. That is what we all believe—those of us who understand the issue, that is. Of course, we do not incite community friction, but we put a position that is quite clearly understood by those of us who have some knowledge of the issue and who have travelled to Greece twice, as did the former Premier and now the Leader of the Opposition, and we know how passionately the Greek community feels about its heritage and roots.

In reply to the question, I state that the honourable member is quite wrong in suggesting that the Liberal Government and those of us who understand the issue are inciting community tensions. He is very wrong indeed. I am reflecting the feelings of 60 000 constituents in this State. If the honourable member does not believe me he had best talk to those in the Greek community and understand exactly how they feel.

The Hon. ANNE LEVY: I rise on a point of order, Mr President. Standing Order 110 provides:

In answering any question a member shall not debate the matter to which the same refers.

I suggest that the honourable member is debating the issue.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! There is no point of order. The Hon. Mr Stefani.

The Hon. J.F. STEFANI: I come back to the issue raised by the honourable member. He asks whether I know Mr Andrew Peacock's position. Of course, I understand and realise what Mr Andrew Peacock has said and is saying. He is saying the same thing as we are: that the Federal Government has cheated the Greek community. That is what we are saying, that it has gone back on its word. In March 1992, the Prime Minister promised the Greek community that the former republic of Yugoslavia would not be recognised until the issues of the flag and the name were resolved to the satisfaction of Greece. That is what he said, and we are saying that the Federal Government and Prime Minister Keating have done a backflip. The Greek community is upset, and so it ought to be, because it has been cheated, let down and betrayed.

This is just one more of the promises that the Federal Government has been making and breaking for years. The Greek community will not let the Government off the hook this time. At the next election, the Greek community will remember who these people are. The Greek community is composed of peace loving people who believe in the stability of the country, because they have worked here, as have I as a migrant, for years. We have made our contribution to this country, and we will continue to make our contribution in a peaceful way and to demand our rights, rights which the Federal Government has now denied.

If the honourable member wants to debate this issue, let him do so in the public forum with the Greek community of South Australia. Let him defend himself in the same way as Senator Bolkus tried but failed. He was booed off the stage, thrown off. Let me say further that there are no political opinions about this matter; there is no personal political gain in this for me, I just happen to believe in the principles of these people, their roots and their heritage, and they are not negotiable. Ask the Opposition Leader whether he believes that Macedonia is Greek, Vergina and the 16 pointed star. Ask him to deny that, having been to Greece as I have, and having considered it, touched it and seen it. There are no political gains from that. It is the truth, it is believing in a certain issue and being prepared to stick by your principles, which is what I have done. Finally, I welcome questions such as this from the honourable member; I will take them on board any time he likes, and I will take him out to the community and let him answer those questions with me.

EGG INDUSTRY

The Hon. M.J. ELLIOTT: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Attorney-General, representing the Minister for Primary Industries, a question about the South Australian egg industry.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M.J. ELLIOTT: Last month in this Council I addressed a question to the Minister on this topic, and I have yet to receive a reply. Since that time, the problems have deteriorated markedly. More than 2 000 dozen eggs have been given away to the Salvation Army in the past three weeks at Robin Henschke's Kingston-on-Murray egg farm as the only alternative to burying the eggs. About 270 000 egg laying hens belonging to the three biggest egg producers in South Australia may only be weeks away from being destroyed (perhaps 50 000 by the end of this week) as they are priced out of the market. Already, 3 000 hens have been given the chop at the Henschke farm because of the increasing cost of production. There are signs of this industry going

to the wall, and the South Australian egg industry's main producers fear that the end is only weeks away.

Last week, the State's largest egg producer was forced to place his Murray Bridge operation into receivership. The breaking point came with the latest round of price cuts which the deregulated industry can no longer absorb. I have been told that our second largest producer and a major wholesaler, Golden Eggs, has just had to reduce the price for ungraded eggs to 90¢ per dozen after the South Australian Egg Cooperative offered cheaper prices to Golden Eggs' major stores. The cost of production was \$1.30. This latest price cut, effectively from 11 March, has been the final straw for Stan Copeland, the State's third largest egg producer, who is one week away from destroying his 50 000 birds.

I have been informed that these top three producers, who rely solely on egg production for their livelihood, control about 50 per cent of the industry. Mr. Copeland says that the latest cut will sound the death knell for South Australian eggs and give control of the market to the co-op. It is feared that the industry will eventually end up in the hands of Victorian producers, and it means that South Australia is about to lose its \$34 million egg industry. The new Liberal Government is standing by as the industry is falling apart. Other groups are also failing to act as the rationalisation occurs, in the belief that the industry will be better off. My questions are: what action will the Minister take on this issue—nothing appears to have happened during the past month; and will the Minister now consider a farm gate price, as exists in the dairy industry, even if that farm gate price is set at or below the real cost of production for efficient producers?

The Hon. K.T. GRIFFIN: I will refer those questions to the Minister for Primary Industries and bring back a reply.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW (Minister for Transport): I move:

1. That in the opinion of this Council, a joint committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon the following matters:
 - a. the extent of any existing impediments to women standing for Parliament; and
 - b. what measures should be taken to facilitate the entry of women to Parliament.
2. That in the event of the joint committee being appointed, the Legislative Council be represented thereon by three members, of whom two shall form a quorum of Council members necessary to be present at all sittings of the committee.
3. That a message be sent to the House of Assembly transmitting the foregoing resolution and requesting its concurrence thereto.

I move this motion with great pleasure on International Women's Day. This year South Australia is celebrating the Centenary of Women's Suffrage. In 1894 women in South Australia were the first in the world to win full democratic rights—the right to stand for Parliament and the right to vote. Today, 100 years later, I suspect these women and men of vision who fought so long and so hard to win these rights for women would be bitterly disappointed with the small number of women ever elected to our Parliament. Today women are to be found in increasing numbers in the professions, in middle management and in the work place generally. But few women are yet to be found in the forefront of decision

making in either the private or public sector, including Parliament. The 'glass ceiling' remains firmly in place, and our community still has a long way to go before women enjoy full and equal representation in all spheres of our society.

In Australia, women constitute 52 per cent of the population but only 15 per cent of our national and State parliamentarians. In South Australia only 22 women have ever been elected to our State Parliament. Currently our Parliament

comprises 13 women members—six in the House of Assembly and seven in the Legislative Council. So, while we have made steady progress over recent years, the overall record is not good by any standard. I have a table which details the numbers of women currently sitting in Australian Parliaments, and I seek leave to incorporate this table into *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

WOMEN IN AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENTS
12.1.94

Last Election held															
13.3.93		25.5.91		3.10.92		19.9.92		6.2.93		11.12.93		1.2.92		15.2.92 27.10.89	
Commonwealth		NSW		VIC		QLD		WA		SA		TAS		ACT NT	
HR	SEN	LA	LC	LA	LC	LA	LA	LC	HA	LC	HA	LC	LA	LA	
13/147	17/76	9/99	15/42	10/88	7/44	13/89	10/57	4/34	6/47	7/22	8/35	1/19	6/17	2/25	
%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
8.84	22.37	9.09	35.7	11.36	15.91	14.6	17.54	11.76	12.77	31.82	22.86	5.3	35	8	
30/223		24/141		17/132		13/89		14/91		13/69		9/54		6/17 2/25	
13.45%		17.02%		12.88%		14.6%		15.38%		18.84%		16.67%		35% 8%	
TOTAL	128/841														
Lower Houses	15.22%														
Upper Houses	77/604														
	12.75%														
	51/237														
	21.52%														

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: After women won the right to stand for Parliament in South Australia, it took 65 years before the first women entered our State Parliament. In 1959 Jessie Cooper and Joyce Steele were elected to the Legislative Council and the House of Assembly, respectively. A few years earlier, Nancy Buttfield was the first woman to represent South Australia in the Federal Parliament. She entered the Senate in 1955. In 1966 Kay Brownbill became the first woman member of the House of Representatives, representing Kingston. Incidentally, all four women represented the Liberal Party.

While Australia, and in particular South Australia, was a world leader in women's suffrage, we have the dubious record of having the greatest time span of any nation in the world between the date when women won the right to be elected and when they actually got into the Parliament. It is little consolation that our lack of female parliamentary representation is a phenomenon reflected throughout the world, including all the western democracies. A survey conducted by the International Parliamentary Union in 1991 found that women made up 11 per cent of the world's parliamentarians and men 89 per cent. This figure puts South Australians slightly above average but, at a little less than 19 per cent, this figure is nothing to be proud of.

The Liberal Government recognises that, as we approach the twenty-first century, the low representation of women in our Parliaments is unacceptable. So, today, the International Women's Day in the Centenary Year of Women's Suffrage, the Government is seeking a statement from all sides of politics that the Parliament itself is not satisfied with the progress that has been made since the vote was taken in this place 100 years ago to grant women the right to vote and to stand for Parliament.

We are seeking a bipartisan commitment that the Parliament has a responsibility and an obligation to do all in its power to redress the gender imbalance. Accordingly, I move

this motion today to establish a joint select committee to examine what obstacles prevent women from standing for and being elected to Parliament. The Government maintains that it is in the interests of all South Australians for men and women, inside and outside Parliament, to work together to bring a human perspective on all matters that are the responsibility of Parliament and the Government.

At a Federal level, I note that both the Government and the Opposition have announced initiatives to increase the representation of women in Parliament. This follows the release of a report in 1992 of a Federal parliamentary inquiry into the status of women in Australia. Aptly titled 'Half Way to Equal', the report cited a long list of problems existing for women in every sphere of society, not the least of which is grossly inadequate political representation.

Also last year the Senate passed a resolution on the issue of the under-representation of women in Australian Parliaments. This matter is under inquiry by a joint select committee on electoral matters. What these initiatives from the major Parties and the Federal Parliament signify is a recognition that women's political participation is now an important electoral issue. It is also, in my view and the Government's view, an important issue for the health of our democratic system of Government. Increasingly, it is being recognised that the skills and strengths that women acquire through their caring, nurturing role in families and in the community can be valuable assets in the political sphere. Margaret Thatcher once said, 'In politics, if you want anything said, ask a man; if you want anything done, ask a woman.' Dorinda Haffner, guest speaker at the Unifem Breakfast this morning said, '... give an idea to a man and you give it to an individual. Give it to a women, and you give it to a nation.' Such statements are in sharp contrast to the days, not so long ago, when women were considered to be lacking in the necessary attributes for political life and had to be quite exceptional in one or more ways to win preselection for even an unwinnable

seat, never mind a safe one.

In October 1990, Rod Cameron, the ANOP pollster, made a speech on what he termed 'the feminisation of the audience response'. Mr Cameron talked about a move away from masculine aggression and confrontationist politics. He claimed women's increasing participation in the political process is partly a result of growing voter disillusionment and cynicism with politicians. He predicted that voters will turn increasingly to women candidates. (In fact, South Australians proved this to be so at the last State and Federal elections.) According to Cameron:

... feminisation means a change in the definition of strong leadership, a strong leader... will have a quiet inner strength of conviction rather than an outward show of bravado. Strong leaders, increasingly today, universally in 10 years' time, will be forced to show a human side. The male leaders will be less valued for their brute strength and more for intelligence, commonsense, honesty and creativity—an unusual combination of virtues, more likely to be found among women than men.

I offer no comment. The presence of women in Parliament will also ensure that the issues that are of particular concern to women, for example, child care, domestic violence, women's health, transport, education and family friendly workplaces, will be on the agenda and dealt with in ways that have meaningful outcomes for women and our community at large. But, even though the tide of public opinion is changing and women candidates are now electorally popular, we have to ask why there are not more women standing for public office.

In 1988, a commission was set up by the British *Hansard* Society to identify the barriers that prevent women from entering and succeeding in politics. Its report concluded that barriers hinge on the attitudes of society towards the role of women in the wider social structure as wives, mothers and carers, which in turn lead to overt and passive discrimination against women who seek positions of power and influence. The *Hansard* commission identified the barriers to women as out-moded attitudes about the role of women, widespread discrimination, both direct and indirect, inflexible work and career structures, inadequate child care and stereotyped assumptions and generalisations about the ability and suitability of women for particular occupations. I suspect there are also practical and financial reasons why women may not choose to stand for political office, at least until later in life, such as having a young family.

It is interesting to note that the women who ran for Parliament in the first half of this century—and certainly for some time after the Second World War—were women who either did not have children or could afford sufficient domestic help. There were certainly no child care centres then, Government funded or otherwise. Even today, very few child care centres accommodate the hours that Parliament sits, and there are no child care facilities in either State or Federal Parliament, despite the growing number of male members who have young families.

A further hurdle may be the stress arising from a double workload, with women MPs taking on all the responsibilities of an MP while still retaining their role of carer on the home front, coupled with the need to suppress feelings of guilt that many women feel because they may not be giving of their best to either job. Members will be aware that women are conditioned to live up to other people's expectations of them, to give to and to care for others before themselves, and facing up to their own needs and aspirations can present enormous problems for women. The lack of role models is also an issue, although this is changing. Whereas men have had plenty of

role models and have long used the system of networking and mentors to great effect, these initiatives have only started to materialise for women in recent times.

The joint select committee that I propose will have the job of identifying and examining the impediments to women standing for Parliament and of making recommendations that will facilitate the entry of women into Parliament. It may be necessary for the joint committee to consider the redevelopment and expansion of Parliament to accommodate a child-care centre for MPs (in fact even for staff, which would not be a bad idea) and constituents, together with a change in sitting hours and some of our parliamentary processes to accommodate the needs of women members and, I suggest, of all members.

Whatever the outcome, the Government firmly believes that it is time that Parliament took a lead in addressing women's participation in this place. Through the auspices of the joint committee, Parliament can work in a completely bipartisan way to help ensure that women are fully and equally represented in its own ranks. Only when Parliament is seen to be a truly representative body will our Parliament fulfil the ideals expressed 100 years ago by the women who fought for and the men who voted to grant women their full democratic rights.

The Hon. CAROLYN PICKLES secured the adjournment of the debate.

REAL PROPERTY (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 23 February. Page 128.)

The Hon. C.J. SUMNER (Leader of the Opposition): The Opposition supports this Bill, which was being prepared when I was Attorney-General and which has been picked up by the present Government. I understand that, because of its technical nature, there has been a considerable amount of consultation with groups that might be affected in the community, in particular the professional groups that deal with conveyancing. That being the case, I do not think there is any area in which there is any conflict about the Bill, although I should say that I have forwarded the Bill to the Law Society with an indication that I expected it to be debated this week, but I have not received a response. I understand, however, that the Law Society was involved in the consultation process in preparation of the Bill, and I assume that it and the other people consulted are happy with it.

It is a technical Bill, which has been fully outlined in the second reading explanation, and I do not intend to repeat that or to deal with any aspects of the Bill. However, one matter that I wish to raise for the attention of the Chamber and the Government is that, when looking at this Bill and at the Real Property Act, I noted that there were some phrases and definitions in that Act of which I question the appropriateness in today's circumstances. In particular, I refer to a definition of 'lunatic' in the Real Property Act, and apparently the word 'idiot' is used in some sections as well.

I understood that there was a policy, albeit a fairly general one, that in legislation more appropriate terms would be used to describe mental incapacity than those words, which I believe in today's society have assumed a pejorative meaning that we are trying to get away from in the area of dealing with

mental incapacity. Accordingly, I suggest to the Council that an instruction should be sought to amend other sections of the Real Property Act to deal with those phrases, and I have asked Parliamentary Counsel to examine the possibility of updating the wording of the Real Property Act in this respect.

I am not sure whether there are any legal reasons for not changing this terminology, but, no doubt, the Attorney-General can advise on that when he considers the proposition, and Parliamentary Counsel no doubt can also look at it. However, subject to what the Attorney-General has to say by way of reply, I will be seeking to amend the Real Property

Act to take out what I believe in today's climate are offensive terms and to replace them with more contemporary descriptions of people who are suffering from some mental incapacity or disability.

The Hon. J.C. IRWIN secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT

At 3.34 p.m. the Council adjourned until Wednesday 9 March at 2.15 p.m.