HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 18 September 1985

The SPEAKER (Hon. T.M. McRae) took the Chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

PETITION: PORT AUGUSTA BOTANIC GARDEN

A petition signed by 64 residents of South Australia praying that the House urge the Government to establish an arid lands botanic garden at Port Augusta was presented by the Hon. R.G. Payne.

Petition received.

PETITION: HALLETT COVE SERVICE STATION

A petition signed by 195 residents of South Australia praying that the House legislate to grant the Shell service station on the corner of Lonsdale Highway and Ramrod Road, Hallett Cove, unrestricted trading hours was presented by Mr Mathwin.

Petition received.

PETITION: UNSWORN STATEMENT

A petition signed by eight residents of South Australia praying that the House support the abolition of the unsworn statement was presented by the Hon. Michael Wilson.

Petition received.

PETITION: PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

A petition signed by 247 residents of South Australia praying that the House urge the State Government to request the Federal Government not to reduce expenditure on preschool education was presented by the Hon. Michael Wilson.

Petition received.

QUESTION TIME

TATIARA MEAT COMPANY

Mr OLSEN: Can the Premier say why the Government is refusing to take action to help a meatworks in the South-East which faces the loss of valuable export markets in America and Japan, as well as 100 jobs, because of bans being applied by the Transport Workers Union? The Tatiara Meat Company at Bordertown is facing serious problems because of industrial action by the TWU arising out of the Mudginberri dispute. The TWU action has prevented the company's shipping chilled meat to America and Japan. Because of this, the company has already lost American orders. The Japanese market has only recently been secured but this also could be lost because it depends very much on reliability of supply.

The Tatiara Meat Company has gone against the trends of recent years in the meat industry. It has expanded, based on the supply of specialised products for overseas markets. However, now, five years of hard work is threatened by the actions of the TWU, which has applied bans on chilled meat in a completely discriminatory way to extend general trade union action in the meat industry around Australia, following the Mudginberri dispute.

Two days ago the company involved sent a telex to the Premier about its problems. It warned about the threat to jobs and export markets posed by this union action. However, so far it has not received a reply or an acknowledgment. In view of the importance of this company to the regional economy in the South-East and South Australia's reputation as a reliable exporter, especially to Japan, it is time the State Government indicated what action it will take to assist the company in its difficulties.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: I thank the Leader for his question. The matter is one of considerable concern. As the Leader has outlined, the situation has arisen as a consequence of a national campaign waged as a result of the Mudginberri dispute, which has been an extremely difficult and intractable industrial issue—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: —which has been going on for some time.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: It is a matter which has taken up the attention of the federal courts which, of course, are responsible for the meatworkers awards.

The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy interjecting:

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: I understood that members opposite might be interested in this issue and have some concern for the meatworkers of Tatiara, instead of foolishly interjecting when I am attempting to deal seriously with the question. I will ensure that I send down the *Hansard* report of this episode to those involved in the South-East, just to make quite clear how much concern there is. While on my feet and attempting to say something about the matter, the Government's concern, and about what we might do, I have been faced with constant interjections. At this stage I will be brief, because there is no point in my going into the details any more—those members opposite are not interested. The matter has been referred to my colleague the Minister of Labour. The matter has national industrial ramifications which we are treating very seriously.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Premier to resume his seat. I call the member for Alexandra to order, and members know the consequences of that. I call the honourable member for Newland.

HOME LOAN FEE

Mr KLUNDER: Is the Premier aware that the Commonwealth Bank has recently introduced a new fee on home loans which has increased the cost of home purchase by an average of $80 a year, and can he assure the House that this fee will not be imposed by the State Bank of South Australia? Several of my constituents have brought to my attention the new fee which the Commonwealth Bank has recently imposed on mortgage repayments. The fee is scaled according to the balance outstanding on the loan, and ranges from $30 per annum for amounts less than $50 000, $80 per annum for balances between $50 000 and $100 000, with higher fees for amounts exceeding $100 000. This new fee is equivalent to about .2 per cent on an average home loan and, effectively, it is a backdoor means of raising home loan interest rates.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: This question of home loan interest rates is one of the most serious problems currently affecting our economy. The hopes that so many of us had that we would see interest rates beginning to fall from the middle of this year have not been realised. There are a number of reasons for this, and I have had discussions with federal Treasury.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: I have also had discussions with the banks and with those in other areas in an attempt to understand the matter. One of the problems of course is the current value of the dollar internationally.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Premier to resume his seat. Honourable members have reverted to the practice of barracking (which is all I can refer to it as), with everyone talking and interjecting at the same time. I would ask that some respect be shown for the Standing Orders of the House; it is the members themselves who place the obligation on me to try to uphold them. The honourable Premier.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: Let me continue. One reason of course is the current value of the dollar on international markets. As I understand it, the policy of both the federal Treasury and the Reserve Bank is to restrict the money supply until such time as that value increases and stabilises. There is every reason why it should. Our economic performance, our general situation in terms of international trade, our internal inflation rate, and the wages and prices accord all suggest that the dollar is undervalued on international markets—and there is no question of that. It is still a source of some concern, even surprise, that that value has not increased and stabilised, but until it does, and until that confidence is evidenced in the international market, there will obviously be this policy of restraint in relation to money supply. While that remains, there will be pressure on interest rates.

There are also a number of other factors involved in this situation, but it is an alarming one. I am very concerned that, if it is allowed to continue, and if interest rates remain at this high level, particularly at the high real rate of interest, it will simply call a halt to our economic recovery. Many people have embarked upon home loans and have gone into new houses for the first time. It has been a marvellous boost to our economy. It has been marvellous in terms of their own lifestyles and expectations as to achieving the dream of home ownership in the case of first home buyers and, in other cases, people have bought and sold homes in a rising market. There has been tremendous prosperity and activity in this area. If that situation is brought to a halt because of rising interest rates making repayments difficult, and in some cases even impossible, then we have a very sorry outlook.

As far as the State Bank is concerned, I have had discussions with the Chairman and the Managing Director, and one of the issues raised was this question mentioned by the honourable member, that is, a fee imposed by some banks for loan servicing. As I understand it, it is not just the Commonwealth Bank that has imposed this fee but also the National Bank, the ANZ and Westpac have some form of charge. Today's *Bulletin* reports the National Bank as charging $18 per six months, the ANZ $25 per year, the Commonwealth Bank charges along the lines that have been outlined by the honourable member, and Westpac has an initial upfront charge taking in the loan application charge, valuation fees and other fees. All of those costs add to the home loan repayment cost, and, as such, one could argue they have the same effect as interest rate increases. I have expressed my strong views to the State Bank that it would not be proper or desirable to impose such a charge and the Chairman and the Managing Director have assured me that it will not be imposed.

As to the general area of interest rates, considerable attention is being directed in that regard at all levels. I repeat again that at the moment they have the potential to call to a halt our current economic recovery. Something has to be done about it—they must be reduced.

TATIARA MEAT COMPANY

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: In view of the fact that the company will have to sack 100 workers at the Tatiara Meat Company on Friday, will the Premier condemn the illegal union ban and ask the union to lift the ban immediately?

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: After the frivolous approach taken to the question asked by the Leader of the Opposition, I am a little concerned as to whether or not this question is serious. As I said a moment ago, later today I will be contacting the Tatiara Meat Company and I will advise the company of the attitude which members of the Opposition have adopted on this subject. In doing so—

The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy: All we ask is for you to uphold the law. That is not trivial; that is basic—

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: Cover-up tactics such as that will not work. The fact is that this matter has been treated trivially and the Deputy Leader is going to interject again so that he does not hear the answer. I am certainly concerned about the situation, but I am also concerned that no action is taken that will inflame, exacerbate or prolong it. I believe that the way in which this is being raised and the yahooing and carrying on, refusing to allow me to answer the question earlier, indicates that members opposite have no intention of the matter being settled. They simply want to cause trouble. In due course, I will let the company know.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

OPPOSITION LEADER'S PRESS SECRETARY

Mr GREGORY: Is the Deputy Premier in a position to give the House detailed information in support of his contention in his ministerial statement yesterday that the Leader of the Opposition misled the House in relation to the activities of his Press Secretary?

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: Yes, I am. I do not make an accusation like that lightly or without being in possession of the facts. I think this is the fifth occasion that there has been some reference to this matter in the House.

Mr Olsen: By you.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: I include the personal explanation of the Leader of the Opposition in that calculation. The Leader of the Opposition had an opportunity to conclude this matter at that time, when I assume that he took the opportunity of consulting with his staff; and he had a further opportunity when he wrote to me following the assurance that I requested of him. Both those opportunities were passed up. The only assurance that I received in that letter was in the context of the personal explanation in the House, which denied that there had been any breach of the secondment. The following day I asked the Acting Commissioner of Police to provide me with details of the two occasions to which he had referred in the statement that I tabled in the House on the Tuesday.

I believe that I am now in a position where I simply must give those details to the House. The police have acted quite properly in this matter. I have certainly taken the step in the documents that I will table of removing from those documents any names or references which would identify any particular individual. The first document relates to a report dated 22 August and headed 'Officer in charge' (and I have deleted under that any reference to the location of

the place of which this person is the officer in charge). The document states:

Subject: Sergeant Symons—Request for information.

1. On Monday 19 August 1985 I arrested a man [and there is then a blank for the reasons I have indicated] on a charge of indecent assault on a female person aged 3½ years. Circumstances surrounding this arrest were of a controversial nature, involving a community pressure group, the Department for Community Welfare and questions in State Parliament.

2. On Wednesday morning 21 August 1985, I received a telephone call from Senior Sergeant M. Symons. I knew that he had been attached for some time to the Police Media Liaison Branch and recently been transferred to a position in Parliament House. I was not aware of his exact status.

3. Senior Sergeant Symons asked for information regarding the [deleted] case. I was not entirely happy with the prospect of discussing this case and asked him the following questions: I said, 'Are you still a police officer?' He said, 'Yes'. I said, 'Then you are bound by the same rules that I am over the release of this information?' He said, 'Yes, it's all right. I know what to do with it.'

4. I then outlined very briefly what had happened, and in doing so limited the details to those already released to the press. The only additional matter mentioned was [and I have deleted the rest of that sentence, because it could have a bearing on further investigations].

5. This report is submitted for your information, as requested.

The name at the bottom of the report has been deleted. In the second document a senior commissioned officer notes that on Wednesday 28 August Mr Symons rang a Drug Squad detective seeking to speak to another Drug Squad detective. Mr Symons wanted information about the arrest of an officer of the Metropolitan Fire Service for the possession of Indian hemp. The Drug Squad detective concerned was not on duty and Symons requested that the detective be contacted at home and asked to ring Symons at Parliament House with the details. The document continues (and I quote the senior commissioned officer):

[Deleted] advised me of the phone call and I immediately rang Symons at Parliament House—

he gives the phone number—

Symons said that the matter of [the person involved in the case] was to be raised this date in Parliament, as it was alleged that no action had been taken by the Police Department against the individual concerned. I advised Symons that action had been taken [against the individual] and the matter was in the hands of the Adelaide Magistrates Court.

He then explains that, in fact, the person appeared on a particular date, pleaded guilty to possession of Indian hemp and was fined $80 with $17 costs.

Parenthetically, I remark that of course, as I explained to the House, there was a further charge of which this person was found not guilty. The senior officer goes on to say:

I did not supply any further information.

(3) I advised Symons that under no circumstances was he to seek information from any member of the Drug Squad and that all requests for information were to be referred to Detective [the person's name] or myself. Symons stated that he tried to contact me but I was at a conference.

(4) Forwarded for information.

The name at the bottom is deleted. I want to say in relation to that last piece of information given to Mr Symons that I believe that in itself it was a breach of the conditions of the secondment, but the police officer did that in good faith.

One cannot expect every police officer to know the full details of the secondment, the understanding of which was explained by the Leader of the Opposition in his explanation. At least the explanation got right the interpretation of the secondment. We are in the position, as I table these documents, that the Leader of the Opposition has had an opportunity to make a clean breast of what in fact happened in relation to these two matters. That would have put an end to it. I would accept any assurance from the Leader of the Opposition that conduct such as this, obviously at his direction, would not happen in the future. However, since any assurance I have been given has been in the context of what happened on those two occasions, I have difficulty with such assurances. I believe the Leader of the Opposition stands condemned.

MUDGINBERRI DISPUTE

The Hon. MICHAEL WILSON: Will the Premier say where is the report on the flow-on effects to South Australia of the Mudginberri dispute that the Premier promised would be produced by his Minister of Agriculture on 20 August 1985, and contained at page 379 of *Hansard?*

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: I am not aware that I have seen such a report yet.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: Here they go, yahooing again. This is the seriousness with which members opposite take it.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the House to come to order. The honourable Premier.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: Thank you, Mr Speaker. It seems to me extraordinary that if it is a matter of public importance, and apparently it is because it has been raised by three members opposite, the moment I utter the first sentence in reply I am drowned out by a series of interjections. I will certainly follow up the matter and find out where it is.

DOMESTIC PREMISES SEARCH

Mr PETERSON: Will the Deputy Premier, in his capacity as Minister of Emergency Services, inform the House of any Standing Orders relating to procedures when searches of domestic premises are conducted by officers of the South Australian Police Force?

I am informed by Mr Robert Haill and Mrs Shirley Hodges that, in their absence on 23 August this year, their home was forcibly entered by police officers. They allege that upon their return to the above address they found the house ransacked. They state that a locked cupboard had been levered open, that files, manuscripts, etc., were thrown about the house, contents of cupboards were dumped on floors, items of jewellery were thrown on to a billiard table and a valuable chess set was extensively damaged. I was shown photographs of the house as it is stated it was left by the police and, if accurate, they illustrate a total lack of respect or responsibility for damage to people's personal property.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: I was given information on this matter some time ago and I believe that it has been the subject of some small amount of press comment. I apologise to the honourable member that I do not have the specific information available to me. I can certainly make available to him and the House details under which searches of domestic premises are undertaken by the Police Department.

Of course, the Police Department does have a very good record regarding respect of property in these circumstances and adhering to the rules that we all recognise and support. I am not able to comment on the specifics of the matter to which the honourable member refers. I will certainly be in a position to get a report in very short order and will make it available to the honourable member and the House.

IDENTITY CARDS

The Hon. B.C. EASTICK: Has the Premier told the Commonwealth that the South Australian Government will give

its full cooperation in the introduction of a national identity card system? The cooperation of the States will be crucial in the introduction of this system. It cannot work unless the Commonwealth obtains access to births, deaths and marriages records held by the States. I am led to believe that at least one State has indicated that it will not cooperate. There is also continuing opposition to the national ID system by various community groups, and the Federal Government has been unable to decide whether or not ID cards should carry photographs. In view of the crucial role of the States in this matter, I ask the Premier whether his Government has told the Commonwealth that it will fully cooperate in the introduction of an ID system.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: I cannot recall whether there has been correspondence Prime Minister to Premier on this matter. I can certainly remember it being raised at the national tax summit, when certain proposals were circulated. From memory (and I will check this), the Commonwealth will undertake its study or make its decision and I presume will seek what cooperation it needs from the State. On a number of occasions we have discussed the matter at State level, for example, in the context of photographs on drivers licences or a general photograph identity card which could be used for transport and pensioner concessions, and so on.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: Perhaps some of my colleagues might be interested in the answer I am giving, because it is a matter of some importance. It has been considered on a number of occasions in that context at the State level. On each occasion so far we have felt that the case for introducing such a system cannot be fully justified. A further study is being done in the context of the ability to extend certain concessions.

It has been put to us, particularly from the private sector, that if we had an identity card system it would allow for verification of special groups, such as pensioners, and thus allow further extension of concessions beyond what is currently available. That would be very desirable. Against that, considerable civil liberty connotations are attached to it. I would hate to think that we had some type of *de facto* pass law, as they have in South Africa, for instance. We must look closely at the type and nature of identity cards and the information contained on them. I am yet to be convinced that we should introduce such a system, but when the Commonwealth Government approaches us, as no doubt it will when a decision is being made, we will take into account the arguments in favour of it.

One of the arguments, of course, is that it can reduce fraud in a number of areas, and that must only benefit welfare and other recipients. I stress again that the objection of some groups to this system is validly placed. It could be abused and could result in a citizen's identity having to be used for all sorts of reasons other than those for which it was designed. It has been put to us, in relation to transport cards, that in some instances if persons were able to see the names and addresses of individuals, particularly children, carrying identity cards, it may induce them to follow or harass that person. A number of considerations are involved and the best course is to wait to see what is the proposition of the Commonwealth, what safeguards there will be in any system, and we can then decide to what extent the State should be involved.

STATE'S ECONOMY

Mrs APPLEBY: Can the Premier inform the House on South Australia's economic position compared to that of other States? An economic survey that was reported in yesterday's *Australian* purports to have been conducted on behalf of the New South Wales Leader of the Opposition (Mr Greiner), who intended to use the figures collected from the Australian Bureau of Statistics to show that the South Australian Government had failed to create new jobs and that it was facing problems in housing and industrial relations. According to the report in the *Australian*, the New South Wales Leader's survey appears to have backfired.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: I have seen the report referred to by the honourable member. It is an interesting document because, as she intimated, it does not prove what I am sure its compiler sought to prove. If one looks at those aspects of economic indicators referring to South Australia, we compare favourably in most if not all of the 10 key economic indicators outlined in that study. For instance, contrary to the bleating we have heard from the Opposition, South Australia has the third lowest taxation rate per capita: below New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia. Concerning industrial disputes, South Australia has the best record of all States. Queensland, of course, has the worst: an increase of 120 per cent over the past 12 months and the only State in which there was an increase. On employment growth, South Australia was the third highest, ahead of Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales.

On the unemployment rate, South Australia is again third, cutting the rate of unemployment. We are ahead of Queensland, which is the only State that has had an increase in the unemployment rate, and we are ahead of New South Wales and Victoria. The two States with the highest unemployment rates for July 1985 are Queensland and Tasmania. South Australia has the highest growth rate in car registrations over the past 12 months: only Western Australia is ahead of us, and the States with the lowest growth rates are Western Australia and Queensland. Regarding housing commencements, South Australia is ahead of Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria.

Our growth in housing commencements for the 12 months is 25.9 per cent, almost double the national average. On average weekly earnings and real wages, South Australia has significant cost advantages in terms of business investment, with a growth rate less than the national average and average weekly earnings within .1 per cent of the national average. Our inflation rate is now down to 4.6 per cent. The drop over the past 12 months has been a massive 35 per cent. The two highest inflation States are Queensland and Tasmania.

On retail sales, the figures refer to 1983 and 1984, when South Australia was still coming out of the recession. Our growth rate of 2.1 per cent was poor in that table. However, more recent figures are much more encouraging. In the three months to June 1985 retail sales in South Australia were valued at 8.79 per cent of total national sales figures, just above our relevant population share.

I can only conclude on that analysis that the New South Wales Leader of the Opposition's survey certainly backfired. If nothing else, it shows clearly indeed that Queensland is by far the worst economic performer in Australia at present. Those that seek to import Queensland-style politics, industrial confrontation, and so on, to this State had better look up there to see what the net impact of those policies are. More important, the figures reaffirm that the economic recovery in South Australia is real and that, in spite of the negative nonsense we hear from the Opposition trying to talk down our economic performance, we have emerged from the bad years and are performing strongly. In fact, looking at the survey, perhaps we should ask the Leader of the Opposition in this State either to conduct his own survey or to encourage his counterpart in New South Wales to conduct more of these surveys on a regular basis.

HARD DRUG DEALERS

Mr BAKER: Will the Premier say whether there have been specific cases where he believes that South Australian judges have been too lenient with people convicted for dealing in hard drugs? A front page headline in the *News* last Monday stated that the Premier had slammed judges for their treatment of hard drug dealers. The Premier's reported statement did not give specific details of cases where this had happened, and when the Attorney-General was asked about this matter yesterday he also was unable to give examples. The Premier's statement also referred to the confiscation of assets legislation, which legislation was first introduced—

The SPEAKER: Order! I never like having to stop an honourable member from asking a question, as all honourable members will have noted. However, Erskine May's *Parliamentary Practice,* Eighteenth Edition, pp. 325-9, does set out a list of inadmissible questions, and I circulated that list last year. One such question is now giving me some problems, after having listened to the honourable member so far. According to Erskine May, questions reflecting on the decision of a court of law, or likely to prejudice a case which is under trial, are inadmissible. My difficulty is that, in essence, the honourable member is asking the Premier to comment on specific cases in which judges have adopted a particular attitude. The honourable member, who I understand is a lawyer by practice, would appreciate that some of those cases may still be *sub judice;* some may be on appeal, some of them may be the subject of prerogative writs and others all kinds of other provisions. I suggest that the House should follow the procedure followed by my predecessor and that the honourable member should bring his question to the table, in an endeavour to bring it into line as far as possible with the practice. That would be on the assurance, of course, that he will not lose his question.

RAILWAY CROSSING ACCIDENTS

Mr MAYES: Will the Minister of Transport tell the House what steps his departments have taken to prevent pedestrian and vehicular accidents with rail vehicles at railway crossings in South Australia? I have previously referred to a tragedy which occurred in my electorate in February this year resulting in the death of a young student *en route* to school. That accident caused great trauma and concern to Millswood residents and, in particular, the Goodwood school community, members of which have raised this matter with me and the Minister and are seeking from the Minister and the Government an undertaking that steps will be taken to prevent such a tragedy from occurring in the future.

The Hon. G.F. KENEALLY: I thank the honourable member for his question. I am well aware of the representations that he made both to the previous Minister of Transport and to me as Minister of Local Government at that time, seeking a resolution of the problems that the South Australian community faces involving accidents at pedestrian and railway crossings.

I can recall the tragedy to which the honourable member has referred. As a result of that accident and the increased number of fatalities (in 1984 I think there were eight or nine fatalities—more than had occurred in any recent previous year), my predecessor in the Transport Ministry took certain action in this matter. In fact, he constituted a committee which was chaired by an officer of the Division of Road Safety of the Department of Transport to inquire into and make recommendations to the Government as to the appropriate action to take in an attempt to eliminate these accidents.

I understand that the accidents can be divided into two categories—there are those accidents in the tragic sense and there are those that may be the result of suicide. Leaving aside the suicide aspect, there is nevertheless a problem that we need to address. The committee contacted 15 railway authorities in Australia and internationally to find out how they overcome similar problems, because of course the problems are not unique to South Australia. The acknowledgments are to hand, but the responses are not.

Members of the committee have been and will again go to Victoria to have a look at the boom gate system in that State. I believe that it is the committee's preliminary assessment that the Victorian system may not be the best system for South Australia. Apart from the fact that one can move under the boom gate—

The Hon. D.C. Brown: Are you going back on the undertaking of the former Minister?

The Hon. G.F. KENEALLY: No, I am not. This is a very serious question that bears upon the safety of citizens in South Australia. I do not believe that it is the sort of question that deserves the political response of the shadow Minister.

The Hon. D.C. Brown interjecting:

The Hon. G.F. KENEALLY: The member for Davenport has great difficulty divorcing serious safety matters in South Australia from his own political point scoring. We have looked at the boom gate system that applies in Victoria. That was originally thought to be the answer to the problems in South Australia, but in Victoria vandalism renders that system inoperative for a considerable amount of time. I think that each boom gate has been replaced 2.6 times in the past 12 months and that would not seem to be the appropriate system for South Australia.

The Hon. D.C. Brown interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. G.F. KENEALLY: Another problem is that, if one desperately needs to cross the track, one can get under the boom gate. We are also looking at a system which is used in European railway systems where there is a locking device on the locking gate within the maze. That device will not release until the train movements have passed. In fact, accidents more often occur when there is a passing of two train movements at a pedestrian crossing, so we need a system that prevents the unlocking of the gate until those trains have passed.

Whilst we are looking at obtaining the best and most modern remedies to this very acute problem, we are also aware that it is quite likely that ideas may be available within South Australia. As a result of a suggestion put forward by the member for Unley, we are prepared to advertise and request ideas from the engineering and technical fields and the South Australian community generally as to the best possible resolution of this problem. We are aware that under-walkways and over-walkways are possible solutions, but, as there are between 200 and 300 pedestrian crossings in the metropolitan area, whatever resolution we come up with will be very expensive, so in regard to the implementation of the resolution we will have to look at those crossings that have the highest accident record, or the highest pedestrian patronage, and we will need to address those first, because it will be impossible, once a resolution has been determined, to overcome all the difficulties in any one year.

I can advise the honourable member that it is our intention to call upon South Australians to make suggestions and, if he so wishes, the shadow Minister can also make recommendations to the committee of inquiry as to the best resolution of this problem. I believe that that is the appro-

priate way to go about it. The worst thing that we could do is to implement a short-term resolution, because that will not work and in itself it may provide additional difficulties for pedestrian traffic. The only way we can determine the most appropriate way of overcoming this problem is to rely on the research that is available throughout the world.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. G.F. KENEALLY: I am surprised that the member for Glenelg should feel that this is a matter of some levity. Only last week another Adelaide citizen was killed on our railway tracks. It is a very serious matter. As Minister, I will treat the matter very seriously, as will the Government. We will seek the best, most appropriate and most effective resolution of this problem. I thank the member for Unley for his question. I understand his concern for his constituent and the fatality at Millswood. We all feel for the people involved and we all appreciate the efforts of the mother of the child who was killed at Millswood in trying to achieve a resolution of this problem to ensure that such fatalities do not occur in the future.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

HARD DRUG DEALERS

The SPEAKER: I recall the member for Mitcham.

Mr BAKER: What action does the Premier intend to take as a result of his recent criticisms of leniency exercised by judges when sentencing hard drug offenders? A front page headline in Monday's *News* stated that the Premier had slammed judges over their treatment of hard drug dealers. The Premier's statement did not go on to give specific examples of cases where this had happened. When the Attorney-General was asked about this yesterday he was also unable to provide examples.

The Premier's statement also referred to the confiscation of assets legislation, which was first introduced by the Liberal Party in another place in 1983 but was rejected by the Government. The Government did not introduce its own legislation until 1984; it then took 15 months to proclaim it; and no prosecution under this legislation has yet been brought before the Supreme Court. In view of this history and the fact that we do not believe that there are specific cases, can the Premier tell us what he is going to do?

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: I am interested to learn that the Opposition rejects the statements that have been made by the Attorney-General and me on this matter and that it is obviously completely satisfied with the situation regarding sentencing in this State. That is fine. That is the Opposition's opinion, and I hope it makes that quite clear to everyone.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: I assure honourable members that whatever satisfaction the Opposition has about everything being perfectly appropriate and all sentences being quite adequate —

Mr Lewis: Not true.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: That is the implication in the statement. In fact, the member for Mitcham said as he sat down that there could not be any specific examples. Obviously, if the member for Mallee has some examples, he had better tell his colleague pretty quickly. As the Attorney has pointed out, it would be quite improper for me or for anyone to name specific examples and criticise specifically the Judiciary, unless that was done in the proper context. As the chief law officer of the Crown, the Attorney-General obviously has opinions on sentencing. Indeed, he has had opinions on 80 cases, because that is how many appeals he has authorised, and nearly 50 per cent have been successful. That power was instituted and available during the time of the previous Government. In fact, I think the previous Government exercised that power a mere 15 or so times, if that. We have instituted 80 appeals, which in itself is worthy of note.

Secondly, in terms of the Judiciary's right to sentencing and deciding cases on their merit, it is not proper for members of Parliament or anybody to interfere with that process. However, it is quite proper and adequate for me or the Attorney-General to draw attention to the state of the law, the intention of the Government in introducing legislation carrying those penalties, and the level of penalties that should be put into operation.

That is exactly what I did. I stand by that statement. Although the Opposition rejects it and is perfectly happy with sentencing procedures and the adequacy of sentences, I am saying that we have instituted, under the Controlled Substances Act for instance, a regimen of penalties and offences which indicate the high gravity we place on these matters. Talk about the Opposition doing it—they had three years in government!

Lamely in 1983, after the change of Government, I might add, they produced some patched up piece of legislation. We, on the other hand, undertook a comprehensive review—a major piece of legislation—tackling all aspects of this area. We have gone to the Police Offences Act and a whole range of other things, and some penalties had not been touched for 30 years. All of this has been done by this Government.

What were members opposite doing in their years in office? A lot of hot air, windy rhetoric and talk has been going on while members opposite have been in Opposition, but it has not been matched by facts. It is true that it took quite a few months to promulgate the Controlled Substances Act, because it required the drawing up of an extremely complex set of regulations. Most importantly, those regulations had to be drawn in such a way as to ensure that each and every clause of that pioneering legislation would be enforceable, would have backing and would have appropriate regulations attached to it.

That is not something one does overnight: it must be done properly, because that legislation and those regulations will be the subject of examination by the courts. Prosecutions will stand or fall on them. We were not going to go off half cocked with a half baked private member's Bill. We have gone with a comprehensive piece of Government legislation, properly planned, developed and regulated. That is in force at the moment. My statement simply drew attention to that legislation and to the level of penalties it embraced, and, incidently I suggest that it would be as well if other States in the Commonwealth followed our lead so that we had a national approach to this area.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: I warn the member for Mallee.

FRINGE BENEFITS TAX

Mr INGERSON: Will the Premier say whether the State Bank will be liable to pay the Federal Government's fringe benefits tax and, if it is, what impact will this have on the State Government's revenue from the bank? While the State Bank does not pay federal income tax, it is not clear whether it will be liable to pay the federal tax on fringe benefits, including concessional home loans, to its employees. Low interest home loans have been an integral component of the salary package of employees of the State Bank for more than 50 years.

It is reasonable to assume that a fringe benefit tax on these loans could cost the State Bank more than $1.4 million

a year. In effect, if the State Bank is liable for the fringe benefit tax, this amount would be paid to the Commonwealth rather than being retained as profit to provide revenue for the State Government.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: That question was posed to me in exactly that form by a member of the media last week. I am pleased that the honourable member has come across it himself. Of course, at this stage we do not know what the proposal from the Federal Government is or what its incidence will be. However, I point out that the State Bank is operating on corporate lines quite deliberately.

Honourable members may recall the historic legislation we introduced into this House under which we amalgamated the Savings Bank of South Australia and the former State Bank into the new entity. One of the principles on which we formulated that new entity was that it would compete properly in the marketplace without special advantages. It must have particular concern in some areas, such as housing, and it has particular concerns in terms of the State.

That is set out in its objects, but I point out that the bank does operate as a corporation in a competitive environment. If it was specially protected in some way (and I imagine that the point that the honourable member is making is that he believes some special arrangement should be made so that it is exempted from any of these federal charges) there would be an immediate cry from the private banking sector that a special advantage is enjoyed by the State Bank.

I happen to agree. It pays the equivalent and has no competitive advantage. It just happens to pay it to the State rather than the Federal Government, and that is appropriate. In terms of its commercial operation, the point I am making is that it enjoys no advantage in that area. That is as I would have thought some members would want it. I happen to agree with the honourable member that, as it is a State Bank, it should enjoy certain privileges and competitive advantages in the community interest, but I still believe that they should be kept to a minimum. As to the exact position in this area, we will not know until the Commonwealth brings down whatever decision it will.

TEACHER NUMBERS

Ms LENEHAN: Will the Minister of Education outline to the House how current teacher numbers compare with those existing when this Government came to power?

The Hon. Michael Wilson interjecting:

Ms LENEHAN: The member for Torrens is laughing. He was quoted in the media last Friday—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms LENEHAN: —as saying that a future Liberal Government would maintain teacher numbers in real terms, in spite of falling enrolments. He further asserted that that had not been the case under Labor. Will the Minister clarify the position?

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: I thank the honourable member for her question, which is certainly a pertinent one.

The Hon. Michael Wilson: A big surprise!

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: The shadow Minister says that it is a big surprise. It is a surprise that I was not asked the question by the shadow Minister as he believes there is such a major discrepancy in the Government's actions on this matter. I thought that it would have been fundamental fuel for a question in this House, but we have not had that from the honourable member. First, I note that the honourable member is reported as having said that his Party's policy, in the vague chance that it might happen to be on the Government benches at some future time, is to maintain teacher numbers. That is a significant change of policy, and shows that the shadow Minister not only dabbles in changing federal policies when they want to privatise schools but also dabbles in changing his own Party's policy. It means that he totally rejects the policies followed by his colleague the former Minister of Education, who managed to do disastrous things to teacher numbers within this State.

Let us clarify what has happened with teacher numbers in South Australia. We will take it in two episodes. We need to go back to the years 1979-82, to look at what happened over that three-year period. The Auditor-General's Report, quoted by the Leader of the Opposition yesterday in his speech, states that in June 1979 there were 15 179 teachers within our schools in South Australia. By June 1982, after the Liberal Party had been in power three years and was about to be thrown out of office, it had got rid of 596 teaching positions, and planned, in the budget it brought down in the twilight of its time, to get rid of another 231 positions. We were able to put a stop to that, but the Liberal Government planned to get rid of another 231 positions, giving a total reduction, either actual or planned, within its term of government of 827 positions. On top of that its policy for the past three years was to dispense with more positions still, probably, on information available, about 250 positions a year. It appeared that it was going to get rid of a further 750 positions.

Referring again to the Auditor-General's Report, we see the figure for June 1985, namely, 14 553. That is actually 30 fewer positions than in June 1982. Twenty of those positions were transferred across to the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia, as mentioned in Estimates Committees last year. That is not a loss to education but merely a transfer of effort, as was indicated in this House would always happen. There has been a net reduction of 10 positions—a figure that is a variation that can occur from month to month and will be fixed up within this financial year.

The honourable member may not believe the Auditor-General's Report, so I refer him to the yellow books (the program performance budgeting papers) to see what the figures say. The statement in that report regarding primary, secondary and special positions shows that in 1982-83 the figure proposed was 15 638.3 and the figure proposed for this year is 15 576.9 for primary and secondary categories—a drop of 61.2. However, pitted against an increase in special positions of 52.9, that results in a net drop of minus 8.3 before taking into account 20 SSABSA salaries, which in fact results in a net gain of 11.7 over that period.

The honourable member mentioned in passing that there had been a reduction from the 1983-84 to the 1984-85 financial year and said that that was a breach of the Government's promise to retain positions. However, our promise, which was clearly stated in our policy document and clearly spelt out to the electorate, was that we would retain the teacher positions existing when we came into office, and we have done every bit of that. The variation of 10 positions is a minor variation to be fixed up, and we can tell the electorate that we have done precisely what we said we would do.

What happened (and this was acknowledged in the Estimates Committee, at which the shadow Minister was present) was that an overspending in 1983-84 had resulted in a head count in excess of budget and in excess of that which had been planned. That, for sound management reasons, was corrected in the 1984-85 year and that over-allocation, that unbudgeted allocation, was removed from the figures. Therefore, the June 1985 figures take us back to where we should have been, and represent the maintenance of the head count as we had promised against a reduction of 12 000 students over the same period.

The other point referred to by the honourable member was that there had been a change to primary staffing as had been indicated should be the case. As indicated before the last election, in good faith the then Government gave us figures of enrolment projections which indicated that there would be a secondary enrolment decline over this three-year period. That led us, in good faith, to interpret those figures into a belief that there would be a decline in enrolments such that 950 positions could be liberated: about three-quarters primary and about one-quarter secondary.

We said that given that that was the case, the bulk of the positions would go to primary and a lesser proportion to secondary. That was the premise on which that was built—the fact that there would be a secondary enrolment decline. In reality, of course, that did not take place. I have never blamed the former Government for this projection because I did not believe that it was possible for the correct projection to be made, given the sudden change that took place after that time. However, it required a change in what was done with salaries.

In 1986, when there will be an enrolment decline in secondary for the first time, we will in fact be having a net gain to the primary education sector and there will be a net loss to the secondary education sector, this being the sort of thing that we said would happen in 1983. I believe that the honourable member was just playing games with statistics when he made his statement last Friday. He owes the electorate more than that.

PORT LINCOLN TAFE COLLEGE

Mr BLACKER: Can the Minister of Education say when it is expected that work will commence on the new Technical and Further Education College at Port Lincoln? Can he also give details of the interim measures that will be required for the college to continue its operation during the construction stage? Planning for the new college has been under way for 10 years or more. Ownership of land has now centred on the site of the present college, the land being bordered by London Street, Porter Street, and Liverpool Street. The local community is anxiously awaiting the development of this project and any information that the Minister can give would be appreciated.

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: I thank the honourable member for his question. He has certainly been actively concerned about the Eyre Peninsula college of TAFE for a long time. Indeed, I recall that, as long as I have been actively involved in the education sphere, either as shadow Minister or as Minister, he has wanted to know about the attitude of my Party regarding the construction of this college.

We came to government on a promise that the Port Pirie college of TAFE had a high priority and should be the next major construction work to be achieved. That policy has been followed and the Port Pirie college will be opened within the next month on what should be an exciting occasion. We adhered to that promise, using State funds and not Commonwealth funds. Before the last election, I also indicated that the next major college redevelopment after that really should be the Eyre Peninsula college of TAFE. Indeed, the submissions that we have made to CTEC for funding of TAFE capital works has indicated at all stages that we are following that proposition.

We have permitted the purchase of land around the college over the past couple of years so that we can get the site ready for major development. The priority remains as it always has been and the Commonwealth has told us that it acknowledges the priority and is allowing design and documentation money to be spent for the design of the college. I will get a more detailed report for the honourable member regarding the time line on which we are operating. It may have been varied as a result of the Commonwealth cutback in capital funds for TAFE, but I am not certain. I will get an up-to-date report for the honourable member and have it incorporated in *Hansard*. However, I repeat that the State Government is committed to the project and we are proceeding with land acquisition and with design work for the college.

The SPEAKER: Call on the business of the day.

HALLETT COVE SERVICE STATION

Mr MATHWIN (Glenelg): I move:

That this House requests the Government to alleviate the unfair situation which prevails concerning the Shell service station situated on the corner of Lonsdale Highway and Ramrod Road, Hallett Cove, by invoking section 17 of the Shop Trading Hours Act 1977 to allow this service station unrestricted hours of trading for the sale of fuel, oil, lubricants, etc.

I ask for the full support of the House for this motion and I also ask the Government to be consistent in its attitude concerning the trading hours of service stations generally throughout the metropolitan area. I remind members, particularly Government members, of some of the outlets that are already enjoying the opportunity to trade freely. Indeed, in naming some, I am sure that some of my colleagues will name others later in this debate.

First, I refer to the Holden Hill area, which is covered by a metropolitan council and which lies within 10 km of the General Post Office. Darlington, which is 13 km from the GPO, is on the South Road in a strip known locally as Gasoline Alley. Cavan, which is in the metropolitan area and less than 10 km from the city, has been given special dispensation. In the middle of the metropolitan area there is the Adelaide Airport, which has a service station at which anyone can buy petrol at any hour of any day of the week. That service station adjacent to the Adelaide Airport is in the middle of the metropolitan area.

The situation of petrol resellers is most unfair. This applies particularly to the operator of the service station at Hallett Cove which is close to the boundary of the metropolitan area. The area is developing rapidly, with many people building homes there. There is a large concentration of people and houses. I believe that the residents in that area are being disadvantaged by the present situation governing the operations of that service station. Those people, who are in the Marion council area, are virtually residents of the metropolitan area. If they run out of petrol at the weekend or late in the evening, they must travel north to Darlington, some eight to 10 kilometres, in order to obtain petrol from one of the many service stations operating there 24 hours a day. The situation is unfair for people who live in the Hallett Cove and Karrara area, as well as for people passing through the area.

I am aware that two Ministers have been approached about this matter. First, an approach was made by the proprietor of the Shell service station, who wrote to the former Minister of Labour (Hon. Jack Wright) in October 1984. He replied to her request with a definite 'No', indicating that he would not consider giving permission for that service station to remain open for extended trading hours.

I also was approached, and on 23 April this year I made representations to the Hon. Jack Wright, pointing out to him that the legislation enabled him to give permission for the service station to trade as it wished. Again, the Minister

refused to accede to such a request. The reply to the request made in April came back in June and indicated that the Government would not allow petrol such stations to remain open for extended trading hours.

It was then decided that it would be a good idea to ask the local people how they felt about the situation. A petition was drawn up and supplied to those operating the service station as well as to other traders in the Hallett Cove/Karrara area. People were asked to sign the petition if they had concerns about this matter. The petition, referring to the present position stated that—

There is a public need for the Shell service station on the Lonsdale Highway at Hallett Cove to be allowed unrestricted trading hours for the following reasons:

1. the service station is in an isolated position between the metropolitan and southern areas—

that is, on the Lonsdale link road—

2. there is a lack of public transport on the highway;
3. the distance from the Adelaide GPO is 22.2 kilometres, which is far greater than other seven-day trading sites at Darlington to the south;

I have referred to the other areas, such as Holden Hill, which is about 10 kilometres from the GPO; Darlington, about 13 kilometres; Cavan, which is about nine or 10 kilometres; and the Adelaide Airport, which is one or two kilometres away. However, the Hallett Cove service station is 22.2 kilometres from the GPO. The petition continues.

4. the Darlington service stations are 13 km from the Adelaide GPO, this being 9.2 km difference;
5. there is a lack of telephone communication on the highway; and
6. the service station is on the summer tourist route.

The petition was signed by nearly 900 residents, and that indicates to me that there is a great need for a change. If the Government and members of this House do not support this motion it will mean that the residents in the area are being punished because of their geographical location. If those people require petrol they must travel some distance towards the city. The simple answer to the problem is that the Minister could invoke section 17 of the Shop Trading Hours Act, and that would not be difficult. That section provides:

(1) The Minister may, upon the application of a shopkeeper, grant a licence to that shopkeeper permitting him to sell and deliver motor spirit and lubricants . . . on any day after closing time and on Sundays and other public holidays.
(2) The licence may be subject to such limitations, restrictions and conditions as are prescribed.
(3) The licensee shall pay to the Minister such fees as may be prescribed . . .
(4) If the Minister considers that a licence granted under this section has been abused in any way, he may, by notice in writing addressed to the holder of the licence, cancel the licence and the licence shall thereupon become void.

So, the Minister has complete control over the situation. If the provisions are abused or if a problem arises and things do not work out, or if the Minister believes that he has made the wrong decision, he is able to revoke that decision: that power is provided in the Act. The provisions are all laid down here for the Government and the Minister to take advantage of. The position is covered, and the solution to the whole problem is a simple one and lies within the Minister's control.

I mentioned earlier how important this matter is. It is certainly important to the local people, who live in a new and fast developing area. As the member for Mawson would know from her knowledge of Trott Park, which is also developing very rapidly indeed, there are many new subdivisions and hundreds of new houses being built in that area, as indeed is the case at Karrara. In that area 400-odd blocks were sold on a weekend before a road was laid. That gives members some idea of the rapid growth in this area.

The Hon. R.G. Payne interjecting:

Mr MATHWIN: The fact is that it is such a beautiful place in which to live. If people choose to live in the South, particularly on the southern side on the coast, they have such a strong desire to live there that, as soon as a subdivision occurs, they jump at the opportunity.

The Hon. D.C. Brown: I think they're going down there in anticipation of the north-south transport corridor, aren't they?

Mr MATHWIN: There are a few assessments that could be made. It could be said that they anticipate that the north-south corridor will be completed and, also, that they are about to have a new member of Parliament; that I will be representing the area in a very short period of time—and they will indeed be very pleased.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr MATHWIN: No, you do not worry about that. If all I have to worry about is my opponent, I really have little to worry about.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I think that members must stop congratulating the honourable member for Glenelg and let him proceed.

Mr MATHWIN: Thank you, Sir. I feel so humble at this stage. I stress that this matter is very important to the people who live in the area and also those who are going to live there in the future. It is interesting to note what can be sold in the area on Sundays. There is an almost unrestricted trade in alcohol. One can go to the local hotel and fill the boot of the car with as much wine, beer, or whatever, as you wish, but you cannot fill up your petrol tank. I believe that it is quite wrong to have unrestricted trade in liquor when there are restrictions on the purchase of petrol. The Government, and in particular the Minister, has an opportunity to right this wrong that has been imposed on the people in that area.

The other matter raised was the effect on tourism. This area is on the tourist route. Nobody can blame people who visit South Australia for wishing to travel to the South. Nobody can blame them for wanting to travel down the coast, to Willunga to see the beautiful blossom, or to travel further south to Victor Harbor and Goolwa. They are beautiful places to visit. When those tourists are travelling south, they must pass through this area. We profess to support tourism, because it is going to bring a lot of revenue to this State. We also say that we want to encourage people to come here again by having tourists tell their friends and neighbours to visit South Australia. Are we going to tell these people that, if they wish to visit the South, they must fill up their petrol tanks at the Adelaide Airport, because a petrol station some 22.2 kilometres away is not allowed to sell petrol?

I believe that the Government ought to look again at this problem and that it ought to be sympathetic to the needs of the area, to the families and to the people who have signed the two petitions (some 900 local people). The Government ought to be aware that this is a rapidly developing area and it ought to remedy immediately what I believe is an unfair situation.

The Hon. D.C. BROWN (Davenport): I second the motion, and I wish to speak briefly to it. The honourable member has highlighted what one could describe as an anomaly that exists at present under the Act that prevents this Shell service station on the Lonsdale Highway from trading on a seven days a week basis. I will also highlight another sort of anomaly that existed when we came into government and which we solved whilst in government. I might also point out that the 10 years of the Dunstan Labor Administration of this State failed to solve the problem. In fact, the lack of action was causing a significant traffic hazard

on the South-Eastern Freeway. There are three service stations on the South-Eastern Freeway at the Eagle on the Hill that currently sell petrol seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Under the Act, only the two on the southern side of the South-Eastern Freeway at the Eagle on the Hill are permitted to do so because they are outside the metropolitan inner area. The service station on the northern side of the freeway has always been closed, because it falls within the council area of Burnside, but the two on the southern side of the road fall within the council area of Stirling. Stirling is in the outer metropolitan area, whereas Burnside is in the inner metropolitan area.

The farcical situation then exists with two service stations being literally no more than a road width apart operating under different trading restrictions. The two stations on the southern side are allowed to trade seven days a week and the one on the northern side is restricted to 5½ days of trading and having to shut by 6 p.m. each night. The situation was that motorists wishing to head out of Adelaide at night, particularly on a Friday night, Saturday afternoon or Sunday, had to fill up with petrol before they proceeded with their journey. They were forced to make a righthand turn across the down lane of the South-Eastern Freeway in order to fill up with petrol, and then they had to turn across that road again to get back to the upward lane and head out of Adelaide.

As a result of that situation I used the powers that the Minister has under section 17 of the Shop Trading Hours Act 1977 and made sure that a special exemption was granted to the Shell service station on the uphill lane. That service station now trades on a 24 hour, seven days a week basis.

I believe that a similar situation exists at Hallett Cove where, again because of council boundaries, a service station is situated well out from the inner metropolitan area of Adelaide. It is perhaps six or seven kilometres beyond the service stations operating at Darlington which are currently permitted to trade seven days a week, 24 hours a day, but this service station, again because it falls within the council area of an inner metropolitan council (and that is Marion, which has a tongue of land that shoots on down south), was prohibited from trading 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

I agree with what the member for Glenelg (soon to be the member for Bright) has said. I am pleased to see that, even before he gets into his new electorate, he is standing up and fighting for the issues in that area. It is obvious that, even before he gets there, he is taking up the case that members opposite, as the sitting members, have neglected to take up in the past three years. It is interesting to see that this Government has been so inactive and inept as to not be able to rectify this anomaly. I commend the member for Glenelg on the way that he has taken this matter up and spoken on behalf of that service station and, more importantly, on behalf of the customers and residents in that area who would use that service station at night, on Saturday afternoons and on Sundays.

I highlight the fact that power does exist and that it has been used in South Australia. As Minister of Industrial Affairs I used that power. We used it last time and ensured that commonsense prevailed. I believe that the matter raised by the honourable member is another act of commonsense. I urge the Government to consider what the honourable member has said and support his application to use the power that is there and ensure that this service station is allowed to trade 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER secured the adjournment of the debate.

ELECTRICITY SURCHARGE

Mr GUNN (Eyre): I move:

That, in the opinion of the House, the Government should immediately abolish the 10 per cent electricity surcharge which applies to certain parts of the State and institute an electricity pricing policy in which all citizens of South Australia are charged on the same basis; and, further, the House condemns the Government for its failure to implement a fair and equitable system of charging for electricity in country areas.

Since I gave notice of this motion, the Leader of the Opposition has announced a policy of abolition of the 10 per cent surcharge without any strings attached. After steadfastly refusing to do this for a number of years, the Government put forward a proposition to phase out this surcharge on Eyre Peninsula. Since making that announcement the Government has been negotiating with those councils which currently operate electricity undertakings or act as agents for the Electricity Trust. I understand that those negotiations revolve around the future employment of staff and the location of depots to service these areas. I understand that it will take some time to resolve these matters.

I think it is very important that those people who have had long standing employment are not suddenly thrown to the wind. People who own their own homes and whose families are established in these areas would not want to move out to one of the three centres on Eyre Peninsula. I think that that course of action would be unfortunate. I am intrigued that, in certain other parts of the State where the 10 per cent surcharge must be paid, councils have not been invited to participate in this scheme. For example, I would be most interested to know the attitude of the District Council of Hawker. I sincerely hope that the appropriate Minister will approach that council because, even though it may not wish to participate (and I would find that hard to believe), at least it should be given the opportunity to participate in the scheme.

In my judgment there can be no valid reason for charging people in outlying areas more for their electricity. Electricity is generated at Port Augusta and Adelaide and it is reticulated throughout the length and breadth of the State. Therefore, people should be charged on the same basis. I also believe that, in considering this matter, every endeavour should be made to connect to the grid system those few areas in the State which are currently not fortunate enough to be connected. I repeat: action should be taken in areas such as Parachilna, Blinman and Wilpena. I also believe that consideration should be given to assisting other areas, such as Arkaroola, where people must generate their own electricity, at a high cost, in order to provide facilities to attract tourists. Some consideration should be given to assisting those people.

This motion was framed before the Government's announcement. I will not take a great deal of the time of the House. I have been raising this matter in the House for a long time. I am pleased that, at this late hour in the life of this Parliament, the Government has suddenly seen the error of its ways and has accepted that what I have been saying is correct—that this discrimination should not exist.

However, I am concerned that the Government has been somewhat selective. I do not believe that those areas that have been excluded should be left out on a limb. Therefore, I ask the Government, through the Electricity Trust, to give this matter urgent consideration. I will be having a fair bit to say about the Electricity Trust in relation to another matter, in particular regarding a current proposal over which the Government has got itself into a bind. At this stage, I think I have said sufficient and seek leave to continue my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

DEREGULATION OF HOUSING INTEREST RATES

Ms LENEHAN (Mawson): I move:

That this House—

(a) expresses its strong opposition to the Liberal Party's proposals for the deregulation of housing interest rates;

(b) strongly supports the maintenance of the ceiling on housing interest rates; and

(c) urges the Federal Government to reject calls for deregulation and to maintain the ceiling on housing interest rates.

I refer to calls, primarily from the former federal Liberal Treasurer, now Leader of the Opposition. I believe it is important that we look at the history of deregulation of housing interest rates when embarking on this debate. The Campbell Committee of Inquiry into the Australian Financial System made its final report in September 1981. In March 1982 the then Federal Treasurer (Mr Howard) announced a package of measures which included lifting the ceiling of housing interest rates by 1 per cent to 13.5 per cent (the current rate).

The Martin Review Group on the Australian Financial System reported in December 1983. Both the Martin and Campbell committees advocated deregulation of housing loan interest rates on the grounds that the system is inequitable (benefiting middle and higher income earners more than lower income groups), an ineffective tool for providing assistance to low income groups, and inefficient in that it distorts the flow of finance and results in higher house prices.

Until the present time there has been no change in the current practice of regulation of housing interest rates. I believe it is particularly relevant to this motion that we analyse some of the arguments which have been put forward and which challenge the assertions made by the Martin and Campbell committees. Therefore, I refer honourable members to a comprehensive article by Tony Nippard entitled 'Campbell, Martin and Housing Finance Regulation—A Review of the Debate.'

This article was published in the *Journal of Australian Political Economy*, No.18, in June this year. Mr Nippard argues that the conclusions of the Martin and Campbell committees regarding housing interest rate deregulation are open to question and that, even if the current system was to be changed, it is not clear that regulation solely by market forces (which is being advocated by the Federal Opposition, at least—and I will get to the State Opposition in a moment) would be the most appropriate system.

It is important that we examine these arguments in detail. It is argued that the Martin and Campbell committees' conclusions are based on data covering financial assets only (that is, excluding property). These data show that low income households hold a higher proportion of their assets in savings accounts (gaining low rates of interest) than do high income groups. The committees concluded that as long as housing loan interest rates were regulated, savings deposits would continue to attract relatively low interest rates and that as a result low income earners were being disadvantaged by regulation. Nippard argues that a large proportion of these low income groups are in fact (and, of course, any demographic evidence would support this) aged couples who have benefited from low housing loan interest rates in the past.

As a result, if we take the life cycle factors into account (and surely that must be an important aspect), the system is not necessarily disadvantaging low income groups *per se*. This argument was raised by the Campbell committee's consultant, Dr Judith Yates, but was discounted by the committee. More recent data from the Victorian housing survey on housing loan applicants shows a higher proportion of low income earners gaining housing loans. Twenty per cent of bank borrowers had incomes below the average weekly earnings compared to the 13 per cent shown by the Campbell committee's data. That is a fairly significant difference. The more recent data also shows that low income earners borrowed from low interest lenders for both first and second mortgages. Nippard argues that low income borrowers are not excluded from low interest avenues, but that, to the degree that other borrowers also have access to relatively cheap finance, regulation may be a blunt instrument in providing finance for a target group of low income earners.

The committees argue that deregulation would not substantially increase interest rates on housing loans and may not increase them to the level of uncontrolled rates of interest. Nippard cites a study by Albon and Piggott which argues that the market rate for housing loans would probably be equal to the current uncontrolled rate of interest.

It is also relevant to the debate today that I refer to some of the work which is being done by Albon and Piggott entitled 'Housing Interest Rate Deregulation and the Campbell Report'. This study was published in the *Economic Record* of March 1983. They argue that deregulation would increase the rate of housing loan interest to a level roughly equal to that of interest on non-housing loans—the uncontrolled rate. If that was to happen it would be totally disastrous for the home buyers of this country and South Australia.

Sheehan and Derody, in an article entitled 'The Campbell Report: a Critical Analysis' have also referred to the Campbell committee's argument that the supply of housing finance would be more stable if interest rates were not regulated, because financial institutions would be able to offer higher interest rates to depositors. Sheehan and Derody argue that deposits with housing institutions are already more stable than general monetary variables and that deregulation could destabilise housing flows.

The committees' argument that the effective cost of housing finance would not necessarily increase under deregulation is based on the assumption that second mortgage borrowers with high interest institutions may have their interest rates lowered, but Sheehan and Derody argue that only about 9 per cent of loans for owner/occupied housing is currently at unregulated rates. Of course, that is a very small part of the housing interest rate market. Therefore, this would not offset the increase in rates to those borrowing under regulated rates. Sheehan and Derody cite three reasons why deregulation could result in higher interest rates and a restricted flow of finance to the housing sector.

First, it is argued that housing lenders may find semi-government bonds more attractive investments than housing unless the housing rate is higher than the bond rate, which would mean increasing the rate of housing loan interest. Secondly, it is argued that the gap between the bond rate and the housing loan interest rate has existed only since 1979. As a result, it is likely that the housing rate would increase to the bond rate under a deregulated environment. Thirdly, it is said that the evidence from Canada and the USA shows that housing rates are about two or three percentage points above our housing rate. Assuming a tight monetary market with demand for money from the business and semi-government sectors, Sheehan and Derody conclude that deregulation would produce only a small increase in funds available for housing.

Using the same data that the Campbell committee used, Sheehan and Derody draw different conclusions on the question of low income groups' access to the housing market. They cite the life cycle factors, to which I have already referred, that is, that we are looking at people who have already got their low interest rate and who are in the aged group. Sheehan and Derody also cite the example that inter-

est rate regulation may not be the primary governing factor which restricts low income groups' access. A more likely factor could be that lending institutions prefer to lend to households borrowing a lower proportion of family income, especially when interest rates are high, and that regulation has helped.

That is a really important aspect—that regulation has in fact helped low income families into housing by keeping interest rates and hence repayments as a proportion of income relatively low. Sheehan and Derody argue that alternative forms of loans—perhaps indexed or credit loans—should be investigated before deregulation is embarked on.

I thought it was important, in moving this motion, to look at and analyse some of the arguments which have been put forward recently with respect to supporting the maintenance of regulation of housing interest rates. While we can sit here in this Parliament and argue academically about the merits and demerits of the top levels of housing interest rates being regulated, I suggest that one of our most fundamental considerations is what will happen to home buyers in South Australia if, in fact, the proposals of the Howard regime are implemented. Mr Howard in a recent article supported the lifting of the maximum rate for housing loans. In the small business publication of 30 April this year he said it was regrettable that the Government had not taken the opportunity to deregulate housing interest rates at the same time as it had deregulated the interest rates for small business loans, personal loans and bankcard.

This would mean, I believe (and this has been reinforced in today's *Bulletin*—and we cannot get anything more up-to-date than that), that home buyers would be forced out of their homes and, on all current information, housing interest rates would rise. They would not remain stable or fall under this policy. The *Bulletin* article entitled 'Wages and monetary policy move into the politics centre stage' states, in part:

> The lobby for deregulation of interest rates will continue in earnest. Desperate borrowers will be hoping that the Government continues to say no.

I believe this is the very heart and soul of this motion, that in fact we are calling on the Federal Government to say, 'No', and the Opposition must have a duty to the people of South Australia to stand up in this Parliament and tell the people whether they are supporting deregulation as are their federal colleagues or whether they are supporting my motion before this Chamber, namely, to call on the Federal Government to resist the pressures for deregulation so that the people of South Australia will be able to remain in their homes and realise the great Australian dream of owning their own home. I seek leave to continue my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

AUSTRALIA DAY HOLIDAY

Mr BAKER (Mitcham): I move:

That this House believes that, in keeping with the spirit of the founding of this country, the Australia Day holiday should be held on 26 January each year and urges the Federal Government to implement this policy.

I have been concerned for a number of years that Australians pay little heed to their historic beginnings. Australia Day is the time in which people recognise how the country was founded, appreciate the hardships endured by our pioneers, acknowledge the contribution made to Australia's development by the people who have immigrated from other countries, and appreciate the gifts that this country bestows. It is impossible to find another country in the world endowed with the natural attributes and the multicultural flavour of Australia.

Whilst we often read about the tensions between races in other countries, we fail to understand that our political forebears made it possible for Australia to grow as one nation without division. Australia Day is a special day, but for many the only significance is the Monday holiday on or after 26 January. A need exists for greater national pride, and what better way than to ensure that due recognition is given to our foundations? There is much more of which we should be proud, yet the occasion is lost amongst the many holidays that abound in Australia.

One small step to increase the awareness of Australians would be to ensure that Australia Day is celebrated on 26 January. Setting aside the emotional merits of such a change, it is useful to observe that Australia is out of kilter with the rest of the world. For the edification of members I have gathered research on five selected countries. They were selected at random without knowledge of how they celebrated their national day.

Although Great Britain has no national day, in England they have St George's Day, in Wales St David's Day, and in Scotland St Andrew's Day. Not one of those days is a public holiday. In the United States of America the closest occasion to a national day is Independence Day, on 4 July. The holiday is celebrated on that day: should it fall on the weekend the holiday is transferred to the nearest Friday or Monday. In France the national day is Bastille Day, on 14 July. The public holiday is celebrated on the day itself or, if the date falls on the weekend, it is transferred to the nearest Friday or Monday.

In Austria the national day is 26 October and is a declared public holiday. The celebrations are always held on that day whether or not the day falls on the weekend, in which case there is no holiday. In Japan they have a number of days, the closest to a national day being the Emperor's birthday on 29 April. The holiday is on that day, whether it falls on a weekday or weekend. A holiday is not always granted on a working day: decisions are made on an *ad hoc* basis.

From information about the five countries I have selected at random, it is apparent that Australia is out of step with the rest of the world. Most of the other nations of the world that have enough pride in their country to declare a national day believe that that is the day on which their history should be celebrated. Indeed, I believe Australia should come of age. It is one very small step to ensure that the Australia Day holiday is celebrated on the declared day—26 January. I commend the motion to the House and ask for the support of all members.

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER secured the adjournment of the debate.

MOTOR VEHICLE TAX

The Hon. D.C. BROWN (Davenport): I move:

That this House deplores the move by the Federal Government to tax the use of motor vehicles supplied to employees by employers and the adverse effect it would have on the motor industry and its employees in South Australia, and calls on the Government to forward these views to the Prime Minister.

In moving this motion I bring to the attention of the House that in Canberra this morning apparently the Federal Labor Government agreed to a tax package for the whole of Australia. One of the elements of that tax package is apparently a proposal by the Federal Government to tax companies for motor vehicles supplied to employees where that company pays for the vehicle. We all know that it is a common occurrence throughout Australia. We know that there are literally thousands of people who, as part of their pay package or conditions of employment, receive a so-called com-

pany car. They receive that company car for legitimate purposes. Perhaps their role is a land agent who has to drive home direct from a house that has been sold or next morning to visit a house yet to be sold and so on. A large percentage of people within the community have no fixed base from which they work, but they are working and their travel to and from their home is a legitimate part of their work. A fair number of Government employees are in that position.

I highlight the Department of Housing and Construction, in which there is a significant number of engineers and others who are required each day to travel direct to a building site or from a building site at night. Yet, the Federal Government appears to be absolutely blind to that sort of condition being laid down and has decided that all such motor vehicles should be taxed regardless of how legitimate the cause of the journey.

The thinking behind such a decision is beyond my comprehension. I do not know whether it is beyond your comprehension, Madam Acting Speaker. I realise that you are a member of the Labor Party and have been party to some of the discussions that have taken place on this tax package. I would welcome some logical explanation from the Labor Party of this State as to how it can justify that package. I do not believe that it can, and certainly I do not believe it can justify a tax on vehicles supplied by the employer where the employee takes that vehicle home. That apparently is what it is about to do.

I realise that the full details of the package have not been announced, but, as I understand it from leaks from official Government sources, it appears that the vehicles are to be taxed and that the company itself will have to pay the tax on that vehicle at, one would assume, the speculated rate of 49 cents in the dollar for the value of that vehicle.

If that is so, the cost of a car that is supplied to an employee to drive home will be effectively doubled. What is currently a legitimate tax deduction for the company will no longer be a legitimate deduction. That concerns me, and I am especially concerned about the impact of this decision on South Australia. The federal Treasurer is to announce his final tax package tomorrow afternoon. Unfortunately, there will not be a chance for this motion to be finally debated by this Parliament before that package is handed down. Even so, I would still like this Parliament to express its clear views, even if it is after the package is brought down.

The Federal Government's proposed tax package would cause the loss of thousands of jobs in the South Australian motor vehicle industry and severely damage the very core of our manufacturing sector. I am concerned because the Federal Government's tax proposals will damage South Australia more than any other State, because the motor vehicle industry is the main part of our manufacturing sector. South Australia has a higher percentage of its work force in manufacturing than has any other State. Indeed, we have between 35 per cent and 40 per cent of the whole Australian motor vehicle industry in this State, even though in total terms we have only 9 per cent of all Australian jobs in the industry. South Australia has about one-third of the Australian motor vehicle industry with two major manufacturers (General Motors-Holden and Mitsubishi) and well over 100 component manufacturers, providing about 20 000 jobs in South Australia directly involved in the motor vehicle industry, and many thousands of other jobs would be depending on these primary jobs in the industry.

Indeed, the motor vehicle industry is the hard core of the manufacturing sector. Many component companies produce products besides components for the motor vehicle industry but, if such companies lost their contracts with the motor vehicle industry, many would no longer be viable. I can say that with certainty. As Minister of Industrial Affairs for three years, I argued more than any other Minister for the protection of the motor vehicle industry in South Australia. Time after time I went to Canberra and argued publicly with my federal Liberal colleagues because I was prepared to stand up and fight for the South Australian motor vehicle industry.

I am concerned that all we have had from the present Government is a meek telex to the Federal Minister for Industry and Commerce expressing concern. The Premier gave details of the telex yesterday. However, the State Government should be prepared to tackle the Federal Government head on if necessary. It should tell the Prime Minister in no uncertain terms that any such tax on company cars is totally unacceptable because it would affect South Australia more than any other State.

Indeed, the effects of such a tax on this State would be devastating. The motor vehicle industry itself has predicted that as many as 15 000 jobs throughout Australia could be lost in manufacturing, distributing and retailing motor cars, and South Australia would lose an abnormally high percentage of jobs because so much of the Australian motor vehicle manufacturing is done in this State. In fact, the motor vehicle industry itself has predicted (this is not my prediction) that South Australia's loss could be as high as 5 000 jobs, one-third of the total national loss, which would be disastrous. Indeed, the proposal to tax such cars would result in South Australia's losing one of our two motor vehicle manufacturers and, in addition, many small component manufacturers would collapse because of the resounding domino effect such a tax would have on other sections of the economy.

The Premier has assured us that he is keeping the situation, in his own words, 'under close study'. However, if our motor vehicle industry is to suffer, as it will if the tax package is introduced tomorrow, such suffering will be on Mr Bannon's head because he has not taken greater action to stop the Federal Government's introduction of the tax. At least 50 per cent of the motor vehicles sold in South Australia are company vehicles and any tax on those vehicles would severely reduce the number of vehicles sold. As GMH in this State produces a high percentage of fleet vehicles, especially in the six-cylinder class, it would suffer considerably as a result of such a tax. I understand that the Vehicle Builders Union in South Australia (a union that backs the present State Government) has forecast the possible loss of one motor vehicle manufacturer from this State as a result of the introduction of the tax on company cars for employees.

That is how serious is the position. It is not just I who is saying this: the VBU apparently has said this and it has made it known within the Labor Party, yet the Federal Labor Government is proceeding with the tax simply because this Government in South Australia will not stand up to it. It is time that the Bannon Government stood up for South Australia rather than meekly agreeing in principle with the new tax package being forced on Australia by the Hawke Government. Once again it looks as though South Australia will lose.

I have highlighted the loss that would occur in the manufacturing sector, but enormous losses would also occur in the distribution of motor vehicles. Well known companies that depend solely on the distribution of motor vehicles from this State to other States would be severely affected as a result of losing a considerable percentage of their custom. Further, a severe loss would be suffered by the retail sector of the industry, especially those motor vehicle retailers that are well known as fleet distributors. These include some of the large retailers within the metropolitan area, including United Motors, Stillwell Ford and Yorke Motors.

These are some of the more classic vehicle distributors and retailers in South Australia that depend heavily on the sale of fleet vehicles to companies.

I ask that even at this late date the Premier of this State immediately take up this issue in Canberra, get on an aircraft, fly to Canberra, and argue his case. His lack of willingness to do so over the past few months shows a reluctance to tackle the Prime Minister head on. There have been other issues on which the Federal Government has talked for months about taking action that would disadvantage South Australia, yet Mr Bannon, as Premier of this State, has been reluctant to take on the Prime Minister and, consequently, South Australia has lost.

I will give one or two classic examples to back up my argument. First, I refer to the proposed Alice Springs to Darwin railway line. We gave the Premier plenty of warning that, if he was not careful, South Australia would lose out, despite Mr Hawke's promise made immediately before the 1983 federal election that that line would be constructed, and South Australia has lost out. Another classic case where the Premier again meekly argued that the Federal Government should not go ahead with proposals concerned the reduction of road funds for State Governments. Again, because he would not take up the issue and fight for South Australia, we have seen a 6 per cent cut in road funds across the board for South Australia and a 10 per cent reduction of road funds in real terms under the Road Grants Act.

I cautioned the State Government before the recent federal budget to take up the fight for the airport which I started at the beginning of this year, but the Minister of Transport was not prepared even to sign a telex to the federal Minister for Transport to support and back this State. It was not a political telex: it simply asked the federal Minister to make sure that there was money in the budget so that South Australia could extend the passenger facilities at Adelaide International Airport. However, the State Minister of Transport was not prepared even to put his signature on that telex to the Federal Government.

The Hon. B.C. Eastick: What did we get? What Buckley shot at!

The Hon. D.C. BROWN: We got nothing in the Federal budget to enable facilities at the Adelaide International Airport to be extended. After we had lost, the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Tourism suddenly sent off a telex the next day. If only they had supported this State and taken a bipartisan approach with the Liberal Opposition to fight for those extensions before the federal budget was presented, we may have had positive results, but they waited until the horse had bolted and it was too late to take action. I fear that we are about to see that happen again. Yesterday the Premier had the opportunity to argue against the Federal Government's tax package, but he gave his absolute approval in principle to it.

The Hon G.J. Crafter interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. BROWN: The Premier gave approval in principle. Despite what the Minister might argue across the floor, the Premier gave his support in this House for a capital gains tax and a tax on fringe benefits, including motor vehicles. At the end of his speech the Premier simply added some qualifications in relation to how he would like to see the tax applied. It is easy for the Premier to add such qualifications, but the important thing is whether or not those qualifications are taken up the Premier will back that tax package.

It is quite clear that the Premier's qualifications are already being shunned by the Federal Government, and the real question is whether the Premier of South Australia is prepared to back this State or whether his loyalty to Bob Hawke and the Federal Labor Party is greater than his loyalty to South Australia. All the indications over the past three years have been that his loyalty to the Labor Party of Australia overrides all other loyalties or obligations, particularly to South Australians. That is the reason for my moving this motion today.

For once, I hope that the Premier will stand up and put South Australia first, although the indications are that that will not occur and that, as a result, South Australia will suffer, especially the manufacturing and car industries and the retailing sector. As a consequence, thousand of jobs will be lost. In the past three years alone, 14 000 jobs in the manufacturing industry have been lost. How many more thousands of jobs will be lost before the Premier realises that he is seriously eroding the key employment and manufacturing base of this State, to which so much damage has already been done? Because of that, in the short term it will be almost impossible to ameliorate the effects of that damage and increase employment.

The package being considered in Canberra at present hits not only at the motor vehicle industry in South Australia but also at the wine industry in this State, as well as at the hospitality industry of the whole of Australia. South Australia produces something like 60 per cent of Australia's wine. It will also build into the taxing system a disincentive for small businesses, in particular, to invest and reinvest in new equipment in order to become more productive.

The fundamental approach to this matter should take into account that at present manufacturing industry is under threat from this new package. That is the very reason for my moving this motion, and I am looking forward to receiving support from the entire House. Members here should be prepared to put South Australia first so that at least on this occasion South Australia has some chance of winning.

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER secured the adjournment of the debate.

FUEL FREIGHT EQUALISATION SCHEME

Adjourned debate on motion of Mr Blacker:

That this House condemns the Federal Government for its decision to terminate the fuel freight equalisation scheme, thereby treating non-metropolitan people as second class citizens, and in particular it draws to the attention of the federal Treasurer and Prime Minister the effects such actions will have in—

(a) increasing freight costs on all consumer goods thereby further increasing the cost of living for non-metropolitan people;

(b) increasing fuel costs in primary production thereby—

(i) forcing smaller operators out of the industry;

(ii) encouraging greater use of chemical farming as an alternative to traditional farming practices;

(iii) forcing an already cost-squeezed industry to the point of bankruptcy;

(iv) raising the overall costs of production; and

(v) raising the freight costs of primary products which will increase home consumption prices in particular of wheat, barley and livestock;

(c) increassing the already high costs of the fishing industry which will, in cases where the respective fishery is managed with quotas, force many of those operators out of business; and

(d) the tourist industry generally and, in particular, the hotel and motel, hospitality, caravan and tent manufacturing, airline, coach and busline and vehicle and associated component parts industries;

and, further, this House calls on the Federal Government to immediately reinstate the scheme.

(Continue from 11 September. Page 829.)

Mr MEIER (Goyder): I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this motion. This is another classic case of where the heart of Australia's economic prosperity, the rural sector, has been ignored and neglected by the Federal

Government. People in South Australia are feeling the pinch already, and it will be felt a lot more acutely in the future.

The Hon. Ted Chapman interjecting:

Mr MEIER: That is a very interesting analogy to consider: Indian giving, referring to something given and then taken away. Unfortunately, in the immediate future this will be a tragic situation, because at present the value of the Australian dollar is decreasing, and this afternoon's *News* indicates that the dollar has again dropped. How low can it go? One would think that the Government would try its best to help the various sectors of the economy, providing economic stimulus and growth. You, Mr Deputy Speaker, a person who will be going into rural enterprises, would appreciate, as would many other rural producers, what I am saying.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member should not fraternise with the Chair.

Mr MEIER: I will endeavour to refrain from such action in future, Mr Deputy Speaker. The philosophy behind this motion, undoubtedly, is that all citizens should be treated as equals. An obvious example that comes to mind concerns the way that citizens in the metropolitan area are assisted, compensated, subsidised and propped up in a variety of ways. The State Transport Authority is a prime example; some $100 million of taxpayers' money is now being used to prop up it operations.

I am not suggesting that that authority should be done away with, but I am pointing out that people in Adelaide get very cheap transport, although they do not realise how well off they are. That type of subsidisation is non-existent in rural areas. Some subsidies are provided for pensioners, and little is provided for unemployed people, the attitude to people on low incomes is—too bad!

It is just too bad for the person who has to make a number of trips. Being particularly concerned here with the fuel equalisation scheme, we see in the metropolitan area of Adelaide fuel prices at around 55 cents per litre, whereas in parts of Goyder they are near the 60 cents to 62 cents per litre. I was speaking earlier today with a colleague who indicated that in a part of his electorate the price of fuel is 68 cents a litre, so there is a differential from 55 cents through to 68 cents a litre. If we looked at the situation two or three weeks ago I think we would have seen a differential ranging from 49 cents to 68 cents in the country, representing a difference of 20 cents a litre as between the city and country.

Rather than trying to tackle the problem, the Hawke Government has said, 'We will wash our hands of it and do a Pontius Pilate. It has nothing to do with us. We will leave the market forces to sort it out.' What the Hawke Government does not remember is that the rural economy is so dependent on fuel costs in every area from the bringing in of fertiliser and planting the crop to harvesting and transporting out the reaped crops (and a similar situation applies with livestock), that the man on the land is hit left, right and centre. It is interesting to note what other speakers in the House have said about this matter in the past. I cite the example of Argentina, which was a country where the agricultural capacity was of prime concern. However, years ago the rural economy was overwhelmed by the Peronist Governments obsessed with the interests of urban trade unionists, and the consequence was the neglect of the rural wealth creators of that country and Argentina's slide into present-day economic oblivion.

The Hon. Ted Chapman: Under Labor, that is the direction we are heading here.

Mr MEIER: Mr Deputy Speaker, without wanting to reply to the interjection, the shadow Minister of Agriculture, the member for Alexandra, is quite correct that, under Labor, that is exactly the direction in which this country is heading, and we are seeing that occur in South Australia. In fact, it was the member for Alexandra who pointed out in earlier debates that, in 50 years, we have seen our national living standard slide from being the highest to twenty-first in the world. Australia has slumped from being the twelfth greatest trading nation in the world to the twentieth and we have dropped from being the eighth most competitive nation to the nineteenth. What a tragedy!

The Hon. Ted Chapman interjecting:

Mr MEIER: It is a pity that we are being seen as an international joke.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! It would be better if the honourable member for Alexandra did not interject.

Mr MEIER: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. We need to help not only our rural industry but also manufacturing industry. Many engineering enterprises have been going well since the economy took a turn for the better because of the breaking of the droughts, but those industries are also feeling the pinch of higher transport costs, particularly due to higher fuel prices. This applies not only to engineering: I can think of a marvellous pizza firm, Thorpys, which is based at Yorketown. It is a small enterprise that has gone from strength to strength, and on the latest information I have it employs a dozen people. It, too, has been feeling the pinch of the higher fuel prices, especially since the Hawke Government withdrew the fuel subsidy, so it means that decentralised industries are less competitive than the centralised ones.

What about the ordinary person living in the country? We are finding it more and more expensive. We have fewer facilities than are available to the people in the city. It is costing us more and more to take our children during the school holidays to the city to see events that cannot be seen in the country. I do not see why the Federal Government should be encouraged to keep moving in that direction. I feel that this State Government needs to do everything that it can to convince the Federal Government that we must return to a fuel equalisation system, one where our industries are going to benefit, thus enabling us to return to a strong position.

Apart from the farming industry, there is also the fishing industry. In an earlier debate on this matter it was pointed out that cost containment is of the utmost importance to the fishing industry. In fact, I believe that some of the larger tuna vessels require a tonne of fish to pay fuel costs to get to the fishing grounds and another tonne to pay for the return journey. If that is so, then even a small reduction in fuel costs can only benefit the fishing industry and South Australia. Surely that is what we want. I remember an old Labor Party slogan that was used when it was in Opposition: 'We want South Australia to win.' We have seen that we have been losing ever since. I believe that the Government must look at this problem and come to the conclusion that it is time for a reversal. I think that, by the time it looks at the problem, we will be in government, and then at long last we can start winning again.

We also have the tourist industry, and as the member representing Yorke Peninsula I know that the tourist industry is essential to that area. Several years ago I spoke to one shopkeeper in a small town and asked him how his business was going. He indicated that it was satisfactory but added that, if it were not for the tourist industry, he would pack up and leave the area next day. The tourist industry is very important to the area, and of course it has spin-offs in many directions, whether it involves the manufacture of caravans or tents or whether it involves hotels, motels and the service industries generally. They are all affected by tourism.

If the Federal Government kept fuel prices down in the country areas, we would find that tourists would not concentrate their attentions close to major cities but, rather,

that they would be prepared to travel further into South Australia's outback. We could attract not only more South Australians into our interior regions but more interstate visitors to South Australia, and this would add to the State's wealth. I believe that this motion is one that both sides of the House will support. If the Government does not support the motion, I believe that it has little or scant regard for the interests of the rural people in this State. I seek leave to continue my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

TOXIC WASTE DISPOSAL

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. P.B. Arnold:

That this House rejects the proposed construction of a toxic waste disposal incinerator within the Murray-Darling Rivers catchment area or any other populated area and calls on the Government to vigorously oppose the project.

(Continued from 11 September. Page 831.)

The Hon. TED CHAPMAN (Alexandra): My speaking to this motion must shock the pants off you, Mr Deputy Speaker, and it will probably come as a great surprise to members of the House, because the subject to which I will refer is the environment.

Ms Lenehan: Whoops!

The Hon. TED CHAPMAN: The member over in the back corner says, 'Whoops!' In this instance, when things are different they are not the same. I happen to have an interest in this subject. We all know that in the industrial cities of Australia there is an accumulation of toxic wastes, including a whole range of substances of a bicarbon or organic compound type. Some of these substances are not toxic, but others are—and they are extremely dangerous. Accordingly, some care and attention needs to be taken when one seeks to dispose of these substances, particularly those toxic wastes which include dioxins, furans, polychlorinated biphenyls and many others (which without reference to the documents I cannot lay tongue to at the moment and, even if I could, they would be difficult for me to pronounce).

I think that my colleague has a real point to canvass in this place. Indeed, he seeks to have waste from South Australia and other States disposed of in areas outside those identified. It is easy to criticise proposals put forward by the Federal Government and other groups from time to time and not have an alternative. When we say that we do not want incinerator facilities installed in the Murray-Darling region, in the near vicinity of Broken Hill, or in this State we are obliged to offer a reasonable alternative.

I prefer the alternative of ocean furnacing or ocean burning of wastes. Although this is practised in several parts of the world, I think it requires a little more research. On the evidence made available to me so far it appears to be good sense to explore the idea of waste disposal at sea rather than on land, even though in Australia we have a large land mass in which to select a suitable site.

Wherever we go now and in the future there will be public objection or public concern about this matter. Indeed, I share that concern if waste disposal is proposed around settled areas or around the water resource catchment areas of this country. I think that in the interests of this generation and future generations of Australia we should not be dumping wastes but incinerating them at sea—as has been done elsewhere. I recognise that the Environmental Protection Agency has some concern about this matter. According to an article dated 6 June 1984 provided to me earlier today, a chemical waste management team has had its proposal to incinerate toxic wastes in the Gulf of Mexico rejected by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Accordingly, the team has been requested to seek another site further out to sea or more distant from community occupation. Many articles have been provided to me on this subject, but I will not take up the time of the House in citing them. I refer to page 101 of *Hansard* of 7 August and a reply from the Minister for Environment and Planning to a question asked by my colleague the member for Chaffey. The member for Chaffey asked the Minister whether he concurred with his federal colleague, the Minister for Home Affairs and Environment (Mr Cohen), in the establishment of a toxic waste incinerator east of Broken Hill. In answering the question, the Hon. Dr Hopgood waffled around the subject and did not say whether or not he concurred with his federal colleague. However, he did say:

There are successful plants around the world, and I visited one very recently in France, but there is no proposition, nor does it make economic sense, to set up such a facility in South Australia or Western Australia. We oppose, have opposed and continue to oppose any proposition which would involve the transport of any such material across any part of the Murray-Darling Basin.

Broken Hill and indeed the location suggested by the federal Minister are within the boundaries of the Murray-Darling Basin. One can take it from the reply of the Minister for Environment and Planning (even though he did not spell it out in so many words) that he does oppose his federal colleague in relation to this proposal.

The Hon. P.B. Arnold interjecting:

The Hon. TED CHAPMAN: I raise it now with the idea of seeking clarification from the Minister when he responds. Above and beyond that, I seek the Minister's support and that of his colleagues for the motion moved by the shadow Minister of Water Resources. As I said earlier, it is a bit unusual for me to speak to sensitive environmental subjects. On most occasions the shadow Minister for Environment and Planning bounds to his feet to expound the views of the Opposition on subjects of this nature. However, on this occasion it is a little bit closer to home for old Ted. The area in question happens to be in the broad-acre pastoral region of the country, an area where our rural industry is well entrenched.

It happens to be in the catchment area of the Murray River. South Australian agriculturalists, horticulturalists, viticulturalists and the South Australian community generally depend on that river. From that point of view I think it is not only relevant, appropriate and reasonable that I speak to this motion but I am delighted to do so in support of my colleague. I look forward to the same level of support from the Minister and his colleagues. That concludes my remarks on this subject. In view of the response I received from the Minister earlier today, I do not believe there is any need for me to canvass this subject at greater length.

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER secured the adjournment of the debate.

MINDA INCORPORATED

Adjourned debate on motion of Mr S.G. Evans:

That this House—

(a) recognises and applauds the major role Minda Incorporated carries out in caring for mentally disabled people and the resultant saving of taxpayers' money;

(b) should do all in its power to see that no Government action will result in decreasing the value of any assets held for the benefit of the mentally disabled by Minda;

(c) recognises the great assistance Minda has given to the Golden Spur Pony Club, Riding for the Disabled and other community groups by the use of land and facilities;

(d) recognises the public demand for the Minda Craigburn Farm at Coromandel Valley to remain open space and, if Minda indicates it no longer requires all or part of

that property, calls on the Government to acquire it; and

(e) calls upon the Government to negotiate with Mitcham council, local sporting groups and the Minda Board to identify Craigburn land which will be required for sport and recreation in the future and to set funds aside ready to purchase such land.

(Continued from 11 September. Page 833.)

Mr S.G. EVANS (Fisher): I have said all I need say on this subject, except to clarify two matters relating to the Craigburn property, which is under the control of Minda Incorporated. I have explained to the House the concern of the community: people wish to have that land retained as open space. Some people who have signed the petition believe that it should be completely open space, with possibly little organised activity on the property and that there should be an emphasis on passive recreation.

If the land should become available for public control and use, others see a need to cater for groups such as sporting clubs which may not have home ground facilities at the moment. I have advocated at all times when considering the needs of such groups that local residents should have an opportunity to make representation so that their quality of life is protected as much as is humanly possible without the encroachment of noisy activities or a large amount of traffic in their living environment. I make that clear, because I have heard a couple of comments and have received letters about what I have said so far about the matter.

Some residents have expressed concern about the property (320 hectares to the north of the Sturt River) becoming an adjunct to Belair recreation park and its being available to the public for activities similar to those carried out in that park. I am advised by my colleague, the shadow Minister, that about one million people use the park each year, although I realise that some people use it more often than others.

However, if we make this area available for such activities, it must affect the environment of people whose homes are nearby. People want the authorities to consider that matter deeply before taking the final plunge of turning the area into another Belair recreation park. That would defeat the object of many of the people who signed the petition: it would be more disastrous in terms of quality of life than perhaps building houses there, although the building of houses was strongly opposed by those who signed the petition.

Some of those people who signed the petition believe that Craigburn should be considered as part of second generation parkland. I have asked a question of the Minister about that matter and he was kind enough to tell me that the second generation park concept is being considered in relation to the Craigburn property. I hope that is enough to convince those who are concerned, as I am, to see as much as possible of Craigburn included in a second generation park concept, if this can be achieved. People will be aware that the Minister and I are concerned and conscious of such a need.

The other area that concerns many people is how far away is the possibility of the property, becoming public. Some advocate that we buy it piecemeal over a number of years—five, 15 or whatever. But that does not necessarily achieve very much so far as Craigburn is concerned, unless the purchase price takes into account the inflation value of the money for each of those progressive years. If we try to buy the property for a lump sum by time payment, and pay for part of it each year, no-one knows exactly how much it will cost because each year the land would be of higher value and it would depend on how many years it takes to achieve that and what the inflation rate is. Some hold the strong view that there is no possibility of the Minda board subdividing the land. I cannot argue that: I leave that to be decided in the future.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the motion seconded?

The Hon. D.C. BROWN (Davenport): Yes, Sir, and I seek to secure the adjournment of the debate.

The Hon. D.C. BROWN secured the adjournment of the debate.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Chair points out (and I think it is proper for me to do so) that on the last two occasions, on a Wednesday afternoon, the Chair has run into the snag that Opposition members are moving motions and Bills; they have to second them as a resolution, and then they want to proceed immediately. That is not usual practice: although it is not strict under the Constitution, it is a fact that members of the Government normally take the adjournment of the motion. I will allow it again this time, but I hope that members cooperate in future. This is not the practice and it ill behoves us to get into it.

HILLS FACE ZONE FIRE PROTECTION

Adjourned debate on motion of Mr S.G. Evans:

That, in the opinion of this House, the Government should take immediate action to:

(a) have the large amounts of highly flammable dead vegetation, olive trees and noxious weeds removed from the Government owned sections of the hills face zone;

(b) assist and encourage more hills local community fire action committees to be set up; and

(c) provide adequate fire tracks in the hills face zone.

(Continued from 11 September. Page 834.)

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD (Deputy Premier): The first point I make about this motion is that, to the extent that it is directed to the Government, there seems to be an assumption that most of the subject area is in public ownership. I know that the mover of the motion does not have that in mind, but it is worth saying, before we go any further, that the land to which we are referring—in part hills face zone, in part in effect urban land use, as well as rural of various types—for the most part is in private ownership. There are, however, significant areas of land in this region in public ownership. Quite obviously there is a necessity for the whole of the community to exercise adequate fire control and fire prevention measures over the whole of this land. The second thing that could be read into the motion is the fact that very little has been done by Government or its agencies in these matters. That is not true, although more could be done—more could always be done.

First, wearing my environment hat, I point out that the national parks have a program of fire management plans for all parks. For the most part the overall management plan for a national park in a bushfire prone area includes a plan for the proper addressing of these matters. My responsibility and that of my department is to ensure that adequate resources are secured for the carrying through of the plans as they have been recommended to us in those various management plans. This involves adequate fire tracks, as the motion indicates. It also involves proper fuel reduction measures. Here, of course, we run into somewhat of a problem because these areas have been set aside because of the vegetation component. No doubt exists that under the appropriate conditions that vegetation component is a fire hazard. I know of no responsible person who is arguing that such areas should have the biomass removed because

of the fire hazard that it obviously represents. However, certain things can be done and are being done.

One of the unfortunate consequences of urbanisation and, indeed, of a very high frequency of fire regime in such areas is weed infestation. It is also true that a weed infested area is more highly susceptible to wild fire than is the native bush. The responsibility is on private and public landowners to do whatever they can to suppress the growth of weeds. This is by no means easy. Some of the chemical methods available run into environmental problems or problems of individual health and welfare if the person using the material does not know how properly to use it. It is not unknown for prescribed burns to get out of control and have the opposite effect of what was intended. Nonetheless, in terms of Government responsibility, prescribed burns are carried out on parks with a view to environmentally sensitive fuel reduction programs being properly carried out.

We have a particular problem of olive infestation, and community attitudes must change towards this weed. For as long as people see it as a tree with a certain product, attempts to eradicate it in these areas will be half-hearted. Where people see it as the weed that it is—the exotic invasion that it is—more will be done. The honourable member has talked in his motion about Hills local community fire action committees being set up, or at least more of them being set up. As it concerns his area, the honourable member will be aware of a very active such committee in the Blackwood area.

Last year I was invited to be part of a program that it ran involving an educational component, with the local CFS turning out and displays being available on some of the things that people should do in this area to control or avoid a fire. There was also a vigorous program of people down a gully hacking down the olives and poisoning the stumps with a view to eradicating them. It is a growing problem in our Hills area. I have seen areas that people have represented to me as being areas of native vegetation or natural scrub where perhaps three-quarters of the total biomass in the area is now olives which have out-competed the natural vegetation through the invasion processes that we well understand.

The proper and responsible management of these things on the areas that are publicly owned does not exhaust the responsibilities of Government in these areas. I am concerned, and continue to be concerned, about prospects of continuing urban style development in some of these areas which, in some cases, will place people at considerable risk. This can occur in one of two ways. It can occur through the continuing development of areas that were subdivided a long time ago and where there are vacant blocks that have still not gone into development for housing or whatever, for various reasons—possibly the problems associated with the servicing of these areas.

A high number of individual blocks of land through these fire prone areas of the Hills could be developed within the normal confines of the Planning Act. No subdivisional approval is required, because such approval was obtained a long time ago. The consequences of this approval being secured would be to place people at risk in these areas. On top of that there is always the possibility of there being further subdivisions in some of these areas, which means a quantum leap in the availability of building allotments for residential style building. The Government has been moving to control this in an appropriate way.

Members will be aware of the way in which development control occurs in this State through a State plan that is amended through supplementary development plans. This means that, when the development control authority makes a decision, it is not made in a policy vacuum: it is made with reference to a set of planning guidelines that are well understood. Therefore, there is a degree of predictability about such a decision.

We have not had the planning policies that would adequately address these matters. In the past 12 to 18 months, my department has undertaken a fire mapping program in which contours have, in effect, been drawn taking into account variables such as slope and fuel quantities available. On the basis of that, officers consider the probability of fire occurring in such areas, given the proper meteorological conditions. This program now gives us a basis for drawing up proper supplementary development plans which will guide the development control authorities, mostly local government (although the South Australian Planning Commission is the authority in relation to the hills face zone), in making decisions on these matters. That, of course, still does not exhaust the responsibility of the State Government and local government in this area.

There is also the matter of the Building Act and the appropriateness of specific forms of material being used in building construction. As a result of the Ash Wednesday tragedy, for example, I heard that a house had been built using bitumen-based tiles on the roof, even though, in 1943, a committee of inquiry into a Victorian bushfire had recommended that that sort of flammable material (flammable at high temperatures, anyway) should not be used. It is a long time since 1943, and that advice had been lost to the general community. So, it is important to upgrade, as we have been doing, our appreciation of what the Building Act should say as to the appropriateness of certain forms of material for building construction in these areas.

We are all aware of the $8 million ETSA line clearance program and of the work that has been undertaken by the Engineering and Water Supply Department to clear flammable material from around its water storage tanks in these areas. The recent report on bushfire prevention involved the setting up of a council, and we are proceeding with that. We are also aware of the need for local government input and for designated officers to take greater responsibility for land management in local government. All these matters are under active consideration right now. I have indicated the significant work being done by the National Parks and Wildlife Service on olive and weed infestation in the Hills, especially recently in the Black Hill and Morialta areas. However, it is important that community attitudes on some of these matters be changed.

To be fair to the House, I should move an amendment to the motion, and I hope that I have reasonable acquiescence from the mover of the motion for me to give notice of the general form of the amendment that I will move and then to seek leave to continue my remarks, so that at the next appropriate opportunity I may speak briefly to a properly drafted amendment and leave it to the whim of the House. I know that it is normal in such debates as this for the Minister to take his remarks right through, but private members who have moved motions have sought leave to continue, and I would therefore ask for the same consideration. The sort of thing that I wish to move, without being absolutely held to it, is as follows:

That, in the opinion of this House, the matter of fire prevention and control in the Adelaide Hills is one that requires the mobilisation of public and private resources with a view to actively following through on the following matters:

(a) Planning controls which minimise the risk of schemes of land subdivision placing increasing numbers of people in areas of high fire risk;

(b) Building regulations which adequately control the use of appropriate materials in construction of homes and outhouses;

(c) Educational programs to effectively sheet home the necessity for adequate measures of prevention and control by all property owners, such programs to include weed control;

(d) Government initiatives to maintain adequate fire tracks on public land and environmentally responsible programs of fuel suppression;

(e) Assistance for the setting up of Hills local community fire action committees.

I commend the member for Fisher for bringing this important matter forward. It requires the full consideration of the House and obviously a high level of community input of both private and public resources. I should like further time to consider the exact drafting of my amendment, which I would urge on the House. I therefore seek leave to continue my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Adjourned debate on motion of Mr M.J. Evans:

That this House believes that all children in South Australia are entitled to the benefit of an education which takes into account the multicultural basis of the community within the framework of a single mainstream system and, accordingly, the House opposes the establishment of a separate Urban Aboriginal School at Elizabeth.

(Continued from 11 September. Page 835.)

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD (Minister of Education): I intend to start my comments this afternoon and, by agreement, to seek leave to continue them later. As to the structure of my comments, I will briefly outline the history of the proposal that is the subject of this motion; detail what will happen as a result of the proposal's having been accepted by me as Minister of Education; talk about the consultation process that has been evolved; and discuss the matter of site choice. Then I will go on to a wider area once having dealt with the specific issue relating to this proposal: namely, the educational justification for the proposition or the pedagogy of it; other examples of this kind of educational approach that have been adopted in this State, in other parts of Australia, or overseas; and an examination of the kind of reaction that the proposal has received, especially some of the rather discordant reactions that have been heard from the Opposition since this proposal was first mooted.

Regarding the Aboriginal school proposal, it is important to take it back through its early stages and discuss what has been proposed. Questions have previously been asked why this school should be located at Elizabeth. Some time ago the Education Department received contacts from parents in the northern area, especially a group in the Elizabeth area, who were concerned that their children were not faring well within the school system. All members would accept the objectivity of such a statement as that.

The success rate in the education system for Aboriginal students in South Australia or in any other State has not been notable. In fact, while the participation rate in the age cohort of 17 to 18 years in year 12 is between 47 per cent and 50 per cent (and we have a good percentage on the global average compared to that of other States), the retention rate of Aboriginal students in that age cohort is about 2 per cent. In other words, only about 2 per cent of Aboriginal students in that age cohort are receiving senior secondary education, whereas between 47 per cent and 50 per cent in that age cohort in the community at large are receiving such an education.

Quite clearly, there is something there that needs to be addressed. It could be suggested that it is in fact an incapacity on the part of Aboriginal students to succeed within the education system. I suggest that people drawing that kind of conclusion would be very hard to debate with, because there is just no common talking ground there at all. I totally and absolutely refute that kind of suggestion. Quite clear evidence is available to anyone who searches in any depth at all that suggests that there is no inherent reason why Aboriginal students should not be able to achieve as successfully in the spread of achievement as any other students. Therefore, there must be something else wrong.

The thought which was occurring in the minds of parents in the Elizabeth area was that within the education system itself there was a reason for it being not yet able to meet the needs of certain children, not able to meet the particular concerns of those children, recognising that students have a wide variety of concerns no matter what their background, racial origin, ethnic status, gender, or whatever. They then turned their minds to how to overcome the situation that exists. Indeed, the Education Department has considered how to overcome it, and the Government has been seeking to address this matter by the quite specific means of investing human and physical resources in the education system.

We have created 40 positions of Aboriginal resource teachers who will support the education of Aboriginal students in settings where those students are not in the majority. Of course, we have already put significant resources into Aboriginal schools in other parts of the State. The Government recognises that where Aboriginal students are in a minority within their schools they have quite specific needs. As I have said, the Government has put 40 salaries into that arena, and we hope to perhaps increase that in future budgets.

The question still remained that there was a concern about what was happening to meet the needs of Aboriginal students. The proposition put by the parents involved was, 'Why not try the concept of a retreat educational environment, whereby children are offered extra support that they may need, in an environment where they form the majority community?' In other words, this is not in relation to an absolutely 100 per cent Aboriginal school, but one where the Aboriginal students form the majority of the students of the school.

In raising this issue with the Education Department, those involved pointed to the success of the Aboriginal Kalaja Preschool at Alberton and the junior primary classes that are attached to that preschool, associated with the Alberton Primary School. They also pointed to the success (albeit in the early stages) of the Tukutja Preschool at Elizabeth West and, of course, they mentioned quite clearly, in relation to those at the other end of the age spectrum, the successes that have been achieved over a number of years at the Aboriginal Community College.

That is the genesis of the matters raised by the parents with a concern for the well-being of their children and a belief that maybe some alternative strategies should be examined. The matter was put to the Education Department, and it was thoroughly examined. The matter was put to me, and I was very accepting of the proposition: I believed that it had a lot of merit and was worth considering. After some other processes had been undertaken, I subsequently gave my approval to the implementation of the proposal.

In a moment it might be worth while to go through what some of those other processes were. However, before doing so, I want to refer to what is actually going to happen. What do we mean when we talk about an Aboriginal school at Elizabeth? A number of things have been said, and I accept that they were said in good faith. However, they were not necessarily correct. First, it has been said that this will be a total isolation from the main school system—that is not true. Secondly, this has been referred to as being an example of apartheid—that is not true, and I will provide details of why it is not true. Thirdly, it has been said that what is being offered to Aboriginal students of Elizabeth and surrounding areas is significantly more than is being offered to other students in nearby areas who also have needs. Of

course, one cannot dispute that other students have needs, but I dispute that the people involved in this proposal are being offered more than other students.

Initially a separate primary school will be created adjacent to the Elizabeth High School. The new school will offer an opportunity to a number of students. Initially we hope to have 80 students, increasing to 150. Those students will receive primary education at that site. As they reach secondary grades they will then have the opportunity to have some home basing at that school, but it has always been envisaged that students would work and study within the ambit of Elizabeth High School. This is not an attempt to create a separate high school, with no interface between the two.

On the contrary, it is considered that the kind of supportive environment that should be provided in the primary years should lead to successful participation by students (with home basing at the school), at the Elizabeth High School, leading to their full participation in activities at that school, as they progress through the years.

Another point that must be made is that it is not intended, nor has it ever been intended, that the school will be a 100 per cent Aboriginal school. I have opposed that concept: I need not have even expressed my opposition to that, because it was never proposed in the first place. As with the Kalaja and Tukutja Preschools, it is anticipated that non-Aboriginal students will attend the school; indeed, they will have a right to enrol in that school. Based on the experience the two centres to which I have referred, we believe that there will be students who will take up that opportunity.

In fact, it will be an important element in relation to the success of the school. It will enable all students to have an opportunity to mix and to appreciate the different circumstances that apply in their lives. It will enable Aboriginal students, for the first time for many of them, to be in a majority situation, and in this case that will be within a primary school context. For the other non-Aboriginal students in the school, having lived in a majority situation for the bulk of their lives, it will be a learning experience, when they are not in such a situation. That has not proved to be negative to non-Aboriginal students who have been part of educational situations of a similar kind.

It is proposed to build new facilities at the school. That matter will be considered by the Parliamentary Public Works Standing Committee. Some further details have to be discussed with regard to that matter. I have already indicated to the member for Elizabeth, who, in fact, has raised this matter in this place, that I will keep him briefed as to the progress of these developments and any changes that may occur with respect to the proposed facilities. Suffice to say that the school will be adjacent to the Elizabeth High School.

Many people expressed considerable concerns about the degree of consultation that had taken place. It was mentioned that earlier I had indicated that I wanted to hear the views of people in the community with an interest in this matter and that I would listen to any forthcoming views. However, it has since been suggested that I had not listened to the views of the community and that I had ridden roughshod over any forthcoming views. I make the point at the outset that consultation is a case of asking people to submit their views, giving those views serious consideration, and then making a decision. I believe that successful consultation requires one to seriously listen to what people have to say, to take that into account, but to still adhere to the basic principles of what one wishes to do. While it is true that some people have expressed a view with which I have disagreed, I point out that it is not always possible to achieve an outcome which automatically satisfies everyone who has expressed a view on a matter.

I want to outline what has occurred and the extent to which the significant opinions expressed by the Elizabeth High School Council and other members of the Elizabeth community have indeed been taken into account. I indicated at the outset that I would not automatically decide that the school should be placed adjacent to the Elizabeth High School. I said in fact that we should examine alternative sites—and that was done. I will discuss that further in a moment. I then said that I would listen to the views expressed by interested parties. The views that were expressed were roughly as follows. The Elizabeth City Council opposed the proposal. The Elizabeth High School Council did not initially accept the proposition but rather said there should be much more discussion and consultation about the whole matter—and indeed that took place. The Elizabeth High School staff had an all day staff meeting on 26 April—that was the day between the Anzac holiday and the weekend that followed. The Elizabeth High School forum, comprised of high school students, also discussed the matter. Further, many community groups in the Elizabeth area—
church groups and the like—also discussed the matter within their respective parishes, groups or memberships.

The answers that came back from each of those groups were these: as I said, the Elizabeth City Council has indicated its opposition. I met a deputation from the Elizabeth City Council, and a number of significant points were raised that deserved serious treatment. I believe that I have answered some of those in the letter that I have since written to the member for Elizabeth. The Elizabeth staff supported it. I am advised that the support was unanimous. The Elizabeth School Forum, I am also advised, indicated its strong support for the proposition, and I am told that the Elizabeth Parents and Friends also indicated its support.

Many church groups within the Elizabeth community have written to me and indicated their support. If it is the wish of members for me to canvass the breadth of that, I am certainly happy to do so. Before coming to the Elizabeth High School Council, I point out that a significant number of people, from both within and without the Elizabeth community, have also opposed the proposal and have advanced very cogent reasons in opposition. I do not want it to be thought that I have not received counter viewpoints, because I have received a great number. I am also indicating that suggestions that there has not been support, either generally across the State or within the Elizabeth community itself, are not correct, because there have been quite a number of those viewpoints and, if requested, I can detail those to the House.

I now turn to the Elizabeth High School Council itself. Some months ago the proposition was put to that council at a meeting at which I believe 10 people were present. Some apologies were recorded, and I believe that two of those who recorded apologies indicated that they favoured the proposal. Of those 10 who were present, as I understand it, there was a divided vote—five in favour of the proposition and five against. On a casting vote the decision was then six to five against the proposition. It was at that point that I then made a decision about whether or not we would accept the proposal, and I indicated that we would accept it. The immediate reaction to that was: why are you riding roughshod over the Elizabeth High School Council? My answer to that was that what happened at the Elizabeth High School Council meeting was an equivocal response to the issue.

I say that not in a negative sense but rather as an absolute reflection of the voting pattern that occurred. There was clearly a divided viewpoint, and the council was not unanimously opposed to it. I acknowledge that it was not unanimously in support of it, either, but there was clearly a body of support there. According to advice I have received, there

were also other people who, had they been present, would have voted in favour of it.

It would have been quite a different situation to support the establishment of that school if, for example, the vote had been 10 nil against. In my view, that would clearly have sustained the argument of riding roughshod over the viewpoint of the school community, implying that I had not listened and had invited them to express a viewpoint but done nothing about it and gone against them. That was not the case, especially when taken in the context that the Elizabeth High School staff are so supportive of the proposition: in other words, another significant element of the school community and the students support the proposition; another significant element of the school community and other groups within the school community also support it.

Taken in that context, it seemed to me that it was a reasonable proposition to proceed. There was also one other significant element to take into account, and that related to the choice of the site. I indicated that, as a result of the initial concern expressed by the Elizabeth High School Council, I would examine alternative sites to see whether or not somewhere else could be found. I did that out of courtesy and consideration for the Elizabeth High School Council, believing that other sites deserved to be considered, and serious consideration of that matter took place.

A number of other sites were in fact considered. One of them was within my own electorate. I may say that, whilst there has been a lot of reasonable and rational debate about this matter, there have also been a couple of people who have lowered the level of the debate to a standard which I find quite objectionable, suggesting that there was something quite overtly political in my decision not to have it in my own electorate but instead to place it in the electorate of my Party colleague the member for Elizabeth.

I refute that suggestion. I would have been very keen to see this educational experiment and initiative located within my own electorate, and I would have regarded it as a very exciting venture to have it in the area of Salisbury. As the local member for the area, I would have been quite happy to defend it, knowing full well that many would oppose me and that consequently they would perhaps change their vote away from me. I believe that the public record shows I have never been frightened of supporting issues that I know are not popular in my electorate. I have voted against the casino, which is an issue that I know is more widely supported in my electorate than opposed. I have voted against other issues where, again, I have known that I am perhaps out of step with the feeling in my electorate. That is fine: I have enough respect and faith in the people of my electorate to know that they will give that matter serious consideration and will determine on balance whether or not, even though we may have differences of opinion on some issues, I am worthy of their support at the next election. Any suggestion that I tried to keep it out of my electorate is scurrilous, and I find it absolutely offensive.

I suppose the question could then be asked: why then was it not put within the electorate of Salisbury? The answer is not because of the attitude of the member for Salisbury (myself) and not because of the Education Department's or the local community's attitude (in fact, that matter had never reached the stage of being raised with the local community). The reason it was not located there was that the site deemed to be the most suitable site after the Elizabeth High School site was rejected by those parents who had originally raised the proposition. They had a number of serious objections to it that they felt would have worked against the successful implementation of such an educational proposal. It was they, and not anyone else, who knocked the proposition out. I want that matter put on the record because, as I say, I would have regarded it as a privilege to be a member for an area where such an exciting educational project was taking place, had that opportunity arisen. The position is quite the opposite to suggestions—and I am certainly not referring to my colleague here—that some people in the community have raised.

I want to canvass the more general arguments about the education issues involved, but I want to quickly answer why this is not apartheid. A number of people have said, 'What you are practising is apartheid, and that cannot benefit anybody.' In answer to that, I have said, 'People should not look to the West and South Africa to find examples similar to that involving Elizabeth but, rather, they should look to the East and New Zealand to see what is happening there.' These are the reasons why what will happen at Elizabeth is not apartheid: first, in apartheid there is the compulsory segregation of children by race into schools. It is not a compulsory situation at Elizabeth. Aboriginal students can choose to go wherever they will. They can choose to go to this school, to the other Elizabeth primary schools, or to any other school that happens to be convenient for them. There is no obligation on them to attend the school.

Secondly, in South Africa apartheid is a situation of universality of race in one school—everybody is of the same race. This will not be the situation here. It is designed to be available for people of all races. It is certainly expected that it will be a major Aboriginal school, but it is also equally expected that non-Aboriginal students will attend the school. Thirdly, under apartheid, educational expenditure per child is different according to race. There is no doubt that the amount of money spent per child in black schools, Indian schools or coloured schools is significantly less than the amount of money spent per child in white schools. In the Elizabeth situation, students at that school will receive what is given to students in all the other schools in our State system within the reasonable spread of variation between high and low. Indeed, it will be right within the spectrum of money spent on students in other schools at Elizabeth. They will therefore receive no more and no less than other students in our State receive. They will in fact receive equality of expenditure. Fourthly, apartheid is designed to limit the participation of blacks within the wider society.

It is designed to keep them out of the wider South African society. Quite frankly, this proposal does the opposite: it is designed to encourage and promote their more successful participation in the wider society by virtue of trying to address some of the educational impediments which seem to exist within the established education system for some Aboriginal students. It offers them a choice that will enable them to participate more successfully rather than preventing them from participating in the wider society. I think that all these reasons indicate clearly that the labelling of this project as an example of apartheid is absolutely wrong. It can be sustained only as a call of jingoism; it cannot be sustained as a studied analysis of what is actually proposed at Elizabeth. I seek leave to continue my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

TELEPHONE TAPPING

The Legislative Council transmitted the following resolution in which it requested the concurrence of the House of Assembly:

That in order to fight drug trafficking and to bring offenders to justice, this Parliament expresses to the Prime Minister its desire for the Commonwealth Government to grant South Australian Police the power to tap telephones, subject to judicial supervision.

TRANSPORT SYSTEM

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. D.C. Brown:

That this House deplores the transport policies and performances of the Government and in particular its failure to plan for the long term transport needs of Adelaide residents and its waste of public funds, and condemns both the present and previous Minister of Transport for their lack of ministerial control during the past 2½ years.

(Continued from 11 September. Page 836.)

Mr S.G. EVANS (Fisher): Last week, before seeking leave to continue my remarks, I referred to the dangers that exist with the south-eastern main road. There is a lot of concern about this matter and more people realise how neglectful we have been in relation to the proper provision of a barrier in the middle of the road between the two flows of traffic. I now raise another matter that has been neglected—the provision of money for an important bridge in this State. That bridge is not important because it carries a lot of traffic or has a lot of use. In fact, when I mention where it is most people will have never heard of it, and I could be the only politician who has ever travelled over it; I do not know. It is a bridge that has a lot of significance in relation to tourism and for those people who want to get away from the hustle and bustle of city life or the more popular tourist resorts. More particularly, it is a safety valve or an escape route from bushfires that can occur in the area at any time.

I refer to the Windebanks bridge just below the Mount Bold reservoir. In support of my argument, I refer to a letter from the Happy Valley council to the Hon. Barbara Wiese. Copies of the letter were also sent to the Minister of Transport (Hon. G.F. Keneally), the Minister of Water Resources (Hon. J.W. Slater) and the Minister for Environment, Planning (Hon. Don Hopgood). The letter states:

Dear Minister, Re Windebanks bridge—Scenic Road, Mount Bold.

Windebanks bridge spans the Onkaparinga Scenic Road, Mount Bold and is situated in a lovely picturesque area of this State. Although its use is not heavy, it does carry a reasonable amount of sightseeing/tourist traffic between the city of Happy Valley and the District Council of Stirling and provides an emergency access and evacuation route in case of fire. The bridge has deteriorated to such an extent that it is now considered to be in a dangerous state. It is estimated that to repair the bridge would cost $40 000 and a major upgrading at least $100 000.

However, repairing the bridge would only be a partial solution as it would mean a load limit of three tonnes which would preclude buses and emergency vehicles such as CFS trucks, etc. Council discussed the question of Windebanks bridge on 13 August 1985 and resolved that:

(1) Council's financial position did not enable it to provide funds for either repairs or upgrading of the bridge.
(2) In the interest of public safety the bridge has to be closed.
(3) Other avenues of funding to be sought having regard to the tourism and emergency access aspects of the road.

Staff are currently taking action to close the bridge using locked gates. The CFS will continue to have emergency access by keys to the gates. In accordance with (1) and (2) above, council would appreciate advice as to whether there is any possibility of State or Commonwealth funding sources under the tourism or transport areas. A similar letter has been sent to the Minister of Transport.

I point out that the bridge was built during the Depression of the 1930s. When the Mount Bold reservoir was built, all the other connecting roads between Mount Bold, Bradbury and the western end of Mylor through to the Kuitpo Colony at the back of Echunga and Kangarilla were cut off.

When the connecting roads were cut it became evident that a connecting bridge was required to carry traffic through the area. Funds were made available to employ a few locals to build the bridge. It is mainly of wooden construction with a little bit of steel. It is unsafe, and the council makes that point very well. What use is it giving the CFS keys to a bridge that could not carry its fully laden trucks weighing 12 tonnes plus personnel? We will be placing those seven vehicles (and each one is worth $100 000) and the lives of inviduals at risk every time there is a major fire. We have not been able to find the money to provide a decent bridge.

The route through the area is a tourist road. I suggest to those who have not visited the area that they go there one Sunday and look at the beauty. Just before reaching the bridge there is probably one of the best specimens of weeping red gum in the State: it covers many hundreds of square metres and is a magnificent tree. Travelling through the area one can see native scrub in almost its original state, given that old-timers cut down the larger timber. It is not as infested with noxious weeds as are some other areas. I suggest that honourable members get away from it all and see how important this areas is.

For those who want to get away from the rat-race, it is a nice spot for picnics (although not during summer). The bridge forms part of a vital communication link for Clarendon, Kangarilla, Mount Bold, Stirling, Bradbury and Longwood. It is critical in time of fire. If one has to travel around from that point and cannot cross the bridge, it involves a trip of up to 30 or 40 kilometres back to the same point on the other side of the river. To say that the CFS has the key and that it can open the gate is one thing, but it could only ride a push bike over the bridge. That is how safe it is! It could perhaps use one of its small Toyota units—a four wheel drive—if it was not laden with water, but it could not use its big units.

There was no forewarning given to the community. Council made the decision, and I know it had to do that because of the safety factor. However, I make a plea to the Government. I have written letters, as have other people, asking for money. The Stirling council had to make the same decision. It it agreed to the Happy Valley council is closing the bridge because there is no alternative: councils do not have sort of money. If one vehicle is lost, we will lose $100 000.

The bridge provides a safety valve. If there is an emergency and if people need to get in and out in vehicles, whether to escape from a fire or to fight it, we need the bridge. I ask the Government to treat the matter with urgency. One needs to consider all the other vehicles that tend to turn up at a fire—whether news media vehicles, police vehicles, or ambulances. If they get trapped in that area there is no other way out. People will be locked in, particularly on the Stirling side of the bridge.

The honourable member who moved this resolution talked about some 23 subjects, amongst which he mentioned Reservoir Drive. I want to put the record straight, because I feel a little hurt about this matter. After eight years of my asking for that road to be upgraded, including three years of Liberal government, pleading for something to be done about it, just before the last election both Parties agreed that they would do something about Reservoir Drive as a bypass off Manning Road, giving people better access to Flagstaff Hill Road.

Then came the argument that the alignment interfered with the quality of life of nearby residents to a much greater degree than was appropriate. I did not play Party politics: I went to the member for Brighton. Probably, had that road been fixed earlier, she would not be here now; Dick Glazbrook would still be in the House. However, I told the member for Brighton of the concern: I met in her office on a Saturday morning with people from that area to discuss a strategy for getting the message across.

Government Ministers are aware that there was deep community concern about the matter. Subsequently, the Minister agreed to meet a deputation. He understood the points being made. But both the Minister of Water Resources and the Minister for Environment and Planning were

involved. We reached the point where the Minister agreed that something should be done.

Eventually, the announcement was made. However, it was inferred that that happened because a federal member and a State member of Parliament went to have a look at that area and that it was their action that brought about the change. I was disappointed to hear that, because I know how much work went into that effort and how often I failed to get the message across until a fortnight before those other two members of Parliament went there with television cameras and so on highlighting what they thought was a way of getting publicity. I had been protecting, if you like, the delicate situation: I had to fight it as a member of the Government knowing that money was tight. I know that people in the area understood how much effort I put into fighting that cause.

The other matter relates to the Flagstaff Hill and South Road intersection. It has been going on for years and is one of the biggest humbugs in relation to the centre of my electorate—Mitcham Hills—because it causes much traffic to sneak through the Hills in lieu of taking South Road. We need a north-south corridor quickly, but we all know that that will take a while to complete.

Some four or five years ago I was told that the upgrading of the Flagstaff Hill and South Road junction was a very big job that would take a long time, because of water mains and all the other aspects. At last a decision has been made and I hope the work is completed quickly. There should be some publicity to encourage people to get out of Mitcham Hills and back on to Flagstaff Hill Road and South Road, which is a main corridor. I know that South Road will not carry all the traffic without there being some congestion. However, it is improper that traffic is pushed back through Coromandel Valley and the residential streets trying to find a quick way through to the eastern suburbs. I support my colleague, the mover of this resolution, in his trying to have this north-south corridor established, but 10 years is too long. People will not tolerate the build-up of traffic through Coromandel Valley, especially through the residential area.

So, I make the plea that we speed up the Reservoir Drive project and the Flagstaff Hill and South Road junction: let us have them completed. The member for Brighton makes the point that it has been done. I say, 'Speed it up and get it done quickly.' I do not want the situation that occurred before the last two elections to be repeated, that is, people suggesting that something might happen and immediately after the election the whole process slowing down.

I understand that people have feelings about the matter. I, too, have feelings, because it took a long while to get to this point. There were many rejections and it was argued that it would be too costly and could not be done. Both those projects are now under way. I ask that we get them completed and that a publicity campaign be carried out to encourage people to use those roads instead of going through residential streets in another area. I am conscious that information has been distributed in that area about what is happening and what the future plans and alternatives might be. I am not sure that that has gone far enough.

Many alternatives suggested leave doubts in people's minds, especially those wanting to buy homes. What will happen in the future? People will not want to buy homes because they will be near a new road and that will decrease the value of their properties. We must make clear decisions. I support the resolution. I am deeply concerned about these matters and I hope that the Government will take up the challenge and before the summer find the money to complete the bridge connecting the Clarendon and Kangarilla area with the Stirling district council area just below the Mount Bold reservoir.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD secured the adjournment of the debate.

COUNTRY FIRES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 11 September. Page 837.)

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD (Deputy Premier): I oppose the second reading of this Bill and ask for the support of the House in this matter. The member for Eyre has had a history of involvement in these matters and I in no way question his motivation or desire to represent the interests of his constituents as he sees them in relation to this matter. In that process, however, I believe that he has unwittingly fanned some flames of discontent as they relate to the responsibilities of the National Parks and Wildlife Service and its unit which is involved with fire management, and also some of the general concerns in the community in relation to fire suppression and fire management in areas adjacent to national parks.

The Bill before us broadens that front to encompass the Woods and Forests Department. To put it crudely, the message that the honourable member seems to be trying to get across is that individual landowners are extremely good land managers and do all they possibly can in relation to fire suppression; on the other hand, the National Parks and Wildlife Service—and now by implication the Woods and Forests Department and certain other Government instrumentalities with responsibility for land management—are irresponsible or possibly have allowed their environmental enthusiasm to take over from what he would see as sensible fire management practices. I have tried to be as fair as I can to the honourable member, but that is the clear impression that comes across from what he has said.

Honourable members will recall the unfortunate incident that occurred in relation to the taping of a telephone conversation between the honourable member and a Government officer. I do not want to go further into the matter. I can well understand the concern that the honourable member expressed in relation to it. The way in which the honourable member and I handled the matter in the House in no way contributed to any deterioration in our personal relationship or anything like that. However, that incident illustrates a concern that continues in relation to the set of values which address themselves to the problems of vegetation on parks, and a set of values which address themselves to vegetation in surrounding areas.

The folk myth that the park is responsible should have been dispersed long ago. I will say no more about the honourable member's motivation or intention in the matter except that it seems to me that he is interested in seeking to extend that folk myth. From time to time I have been able to provide the House with statistics which illustrate that, for the most part, where an incident occurs on one side of a boundary leading to the destruction of vegetation and possibly life and property on the other side, the move is from the privately owned land into the national park. Where fires occur on national parks it is usually as a result of some act of nature. The classic example is the Danggali fire, which occurred through a series of lightning strikes. We are aware that fire is part of the ecological system of our parks and our native vegetation. Lightning strikes have led to wildfires throughout the process of evolution of Australian native vegetation.

There is clear evidence that the incidence of such fires has increased considerably since the time of human settlement and even before European settlement, as Aborigines used fire as a land management tool, which may have

altered the ecological balance of our native vegetation in the direction we now understand. European settlement clearly has increased the incidence of fire, leading to some deterioration in our native vegetation: the frequency of those bushfires has been far higher than nature would provide. Various things happen: sparks come off headers, people burn stubble and the fire gets away, irresponsible tourists leave campfires burning at the side of the road, and various other things. In the vast majority of cases the movement is from the surrounding countryside into the parks, and away it goes. These things have to be said because I am challenging the basic assumptions underlying the Bill before us.

The honourable member seeks to place the control of these matters, which lie within the responsibility of the National Parks and Wildlife Service and/or the Woods and Forests Department, with a body or bodies outside those departments. That is wrong. First, it assumes that these people have been less than responsible in their approach to land management. I reject that. I do not believe that anyone can bring forward evidence to show that that is the case.

I partly addressed myself to these matters in relation to the Adelaide Hills and Order of the Day: Other Business No. 4. Of course, I cannot refer to that matter, but what I had to say in relation to the hills face zone can be extended to those areas of the State where there are significant areas of native vegetation, where there is a need for fire tracks, a need for fire management plans for such tracts of land, and where there is a need for some fuel reduction and weed control.

To control weed infestation in every piece of publicly owned land to the extent that we would really like would involve us in an enormous application of public resources. I do not know that honourable members would urge upon me or the Government that that level of public resources be applied, particularly in areas adjacent to urban development where there is a good deal of weed infestation. One does what one possibly can and addresses areas where the problem seems to be at its height.

If the honourable member is arguing for greater coordination in these matters, I do not disagree with him at all. However, I would like to briefly explain the nature of the coordination which has been urged upon and accepted by the Government and which is in the process of development. I seek leave to continue my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

[*Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.45 p.m.*]

ESTIMATES COMMITTEES

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD (Deputy Premier): I move:

That a message be sent to the Legislative Council requesting that the Attorney-General (Hon. C.J. Sumner), the Minister of Health (Hon. J.R. Cornwall), the Minister of Labour (Hon. Frank Blevins) and the Minister of Tourism (Hon. Barbara Wiese), members of the Legislative Council, be permitted to attend and give evidence before the Estimates Committees of the House of Assembly on the Appropriation Bill.

Motion carried.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Consideration in Committee of the Legislative Council's amendment:

Clause 5, page 2, lines 11 and 12—Leave out these lines and insert 'where the agreement was entered into for the purpose of preserving or enhancing native vegetation (whether the agreement was entered into under the Native Vegetation Management Act 1985, or not)—releasing'.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: I move:

That the Legislative Council's amendment be agreed to.

The amendment enables voluntary heritage agreements to be treated consistently with agreements that will be entered into as a result of the new Native Vegetation Management Act in relation to stated local government rates and tax remissions. Although the amendment alters the original intent, I believe that the principle underlying the basic Bill is too important for further disagreement between the Houses. I urge the Committee to accept the amendment.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: The Opposition supports the amendment. I have discussed this matter with my colleagues in another place, and I believe that the amendment supports the principle behind the Bill. I am pleased that the Upper House saw the benefit to be gained from the amendment.

Motion carried.

SUPERANNUATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 29 August. Page 726.)

Mr OLSEN (Leader of the Opposition): The Opposition supports the Bill and the repeal of section 130 of the principal Act.

Bill read a second time and taken through its remaining stages.

POLICE PENSIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 29 August. Page 726.)

Mr OLSEN (Leader of the Opposition): The Opposition supports the Bill. Essentially, it brings the police superannuation scheme into line with other State Government schemes on the question of payment of the Government's contribution into the scheme. I agree that it is desirable that all State funded schemes be run along what is essentially the same lines, and the Bill before us will achieve that objective.

The streamlining of Government accounting procedures is desirable, as it heightens accountability. It is a pity that streamlining and clarity do not occur in many areas of Government accounting. We have seen examples of that before the House recently, and I refer to the State budget strategy, to which the Auditor-General has referred. Nevertheless, in relation to this Bill, the Government supports its intent, as I think it provides for an appropriate and proper accounting procedure, bringing the Police Pensions Act into line with other similar Acts applying to the Public Service.

Bill read a second time and taken through its remaining stages.

GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 10 September. Page 773.)

Mr OLSEN (Leader of the Opposition): This complex Bill is important for all South Australians, as it proposes to change in fundamental ways the management and operations of the State public sector. The Bill, because of its complexity and importance, must be given careful and close scrutiny by this Parliament. It has taken more than two

years of review to reach this stage. I hope, therefore, that the Government will not seek to rush it through the Parliament without adequate opportunity for a full debate.

At the outset, I indicate that my Party will move some important amendments, which we believe will greatly improve the legislation so that it works in the best interests of all public servants. I will foreshadow our amendments later. First, I will say something about my Party's attitude to the need for an efficient, well managed public sector that gives the maximum possible degree of work satisfaction to those employed in it. My Party firmly believes that a politically neutral, efficient and respected Public Service must remain an integral part of our system of government.

A Public Service of high standing and professional competence and integrity has been one of South Australia's strengths for a very long time, but today the public sector faces new challenges. Changing community demands exert pressures for more effective management throughout the public sector in Government departments and statutory authorities alike.

These pressures are both external and internal to the public sector. Externally, there is an expectation, especially while we continue to face economic uncertainty, many people remain out of work and our population is ageing, that certain Government services will be increased and their quality enhanced. At the same time, there is a clear and widespread community desire to limit the level of taxation and, therefore, public sector growth levels and overall Government involvement in the economy.

In a sense, the public wants to have it both ways: less tax, but more Government services. In such circumstances, all members of this House have a responsibility to debate openly and honestly the extent to which these competing demands can be addressed. This is a responsibility from which members on this side of the House—my Party—will not resile. These external pressures have important implications for the internal management of the public sector. Increasingly, public servants are being asked to ensure that the most efficient use is made of available resources, that waste is avoided and that productivity increases to deliver the best and most extensive services possible from available resources.

These are challenges that place demands on the whole structure, organisation and administrative processes of government. They are the challenges of today, which require Ministers and public servants alike to adjust their managerial styles and capacities so that they can be met. This is essential to maintain public confidence in the Public Service. A Public Service deserving of that confidence will be responsive to community needs and able to serve the public efficiently and responsibly, accountable to the Government for performance, and flexible in organising people in their work roles.

They are the basic criteria that my Party has used to assess the provisions of this legislation. They impose significant responsibility on public sector managers: the responsibility to achieve equity in the provision of services, integrity in their administration and the creation of supportive work environments and harmonious employee relationships.

This Parliament has a duty to ensure that public sector managers have the capacity to meet those responsibilities. In some respects, however, my Party believes that this legislation falls short of what is necessary. Our major concerns are with the respective roles and powers of the Government Management Board and the Commissioner for Public Employment.

Before dealing with those specific matters, I first indicate some improvements that we believe should be made to other provisions. The legislation is based on the review reports of the Guerin committee, which rightly placed significant emphasis on serving the public. The Premier has acknowledged the work of that committee and I, too, acknowledge two years of work to bring this legislation before the House. However, this important recognition does not seem to have been translated specifically into this legislation.

The Opposition will be moving amendments to clause 5, relating to the general principles of public administration, to recognise that the public is entitled to and must receive the best Public Service available and the highest standard of financial management of taxpayers' money. A number of the clauses in the Bill deal with reporting procedures for chief executive officers and the Commissioner for Public Employment. It is important that their reports should identify budgetary performance, and it may be necessary for the House to amend the legislation to ensure that this is clearly recognised.

In view of the fact that my Party does not support the Government's move to bring the Electricity Trust under ministerial control, we will move to have ETSA regarded as an exempt organisation for the purposes of this Bill. The matters that I have raised so far are very much ancillary to the core of this legislation that is to be found in the provisions relating to the appointment, role and powers of the board of management and the Commissioner for Public Employment. In considering these provisions I stress that my Party fully supports the need to let the managers manage and to ensure promotion by merit. This is particularly important if we are to overcome some basic problems that have developed over the past 20 years as the public sector has expanded in both its numbers and the scope of its activities.

One particular problem which shows up time and time again to many people and those working with the Public Service is the frustration in middle management streams. That was certainly a factor that was clearly demonstrated to me as a person who has participated in a number of Public Service Board seminars in discussions with middle managers within the Public Service. Some of those middle managers were absolutely frustrated that their ideas, thoughts and suggestions are not able to filter through to the top to be taken into account. It is in that area where initiative and enterprise need to be recognised and encouraged. In the past the system has not given that flexibility and encouragement for people to initiate new ideas. To a large degree I think that that frustration has been to the detriment of the performance of the Public Service.

Officers at that middle management level often have great difficulty in getting their proposals considered at a higher level. That can be debilitating for people who enter the service and look to make it a dynamic and rewarding career. It is an understandable frustration and one which must be addressed in any worthwhile changes to public sector management. Much can be done to overcome it by delegating authority down as far as possible to accompany responsibilities attached to various positions. As many functions as possible ought to be delegated to departments and authorities where executive directors will be held accountable for achieving Government programs within required standards of effectiveness, efficiency and cost.

In this way detailed time consuming controls of day to day matters by the Public Service Board would be a thing of the past. Executive directors would have to manage activities so as to live within allocated budgets whilst achieving changes sought by the Government. Those who cannot manage would be redeployed under the provisions of this legislation, a principle I fully support in the interests of greater efficiency and accountability.

Job redesign and staff development would also be an important feature of a manager's role. Again, this is supported by my Party, because it will facilitate much greater interface between management and other staff in the key areas of staff training and development at all levels which have tended to become neglected. Greater delegation will also ensure more concern for achieving results and for gauging performance on outputs, with consequently less emphasis on doing it by the book and gauging performance by the number of subordinates or the size of the budget. All of these are desirable objectives fully consistent with the principle of letting the managers manage. However, this legislation also embraces a second principle, a conflicting principle, because it would also enable total control of the entire public sector by a single person, the Commissioner for Public Employment.

This will be the inevitable result of the very wide powers proposed by the Government for the Commissioner. Indeed, in the scope of things, the Commissioner would be a monster in the board of management, but very much a toothless tiger in terms of their respective influence on the day to day operations of the public sector. As presented, the board's functions are very much advisory, whilst the Commissioner's role is much more significant in areas such as the appointment of senior management, establishment and implementation of policy, occupational groupings within the service and investigative procedures.

My Party believes that the powers proposed for the Commissioner will be a breeding ground for favouritism—patronage—and that is something that we ought not to encourage. Advancement at senior levels will rest in the hands of a select few to the detriment of promotion on merit. Accordingly, in Committee amendments will be moved to bring the Commissioner under the control and direction of the Government Management Board and to transfer to the board the exercise of some of the more important powers of the Commissioner detailed in clause 25.

We will also propose an amendment to the constitution of the board, which should comprise both full-time and part-time members. The Guerin committee had input from outside the public sector and I am sure that that committee would acknowledge that input from outside the public sector was valuable in the formulation of its report. That situation should remain within the implementation of this legislation. Our amendment will propose two full-time contract appointments and three part-time appointees who, in the opinion of the Government, have appropriate knowledge and experience in the area of management or industrial relations. The Chairman of the board should be a part-time member; the Commissioner should also be a part-time member, although he should not be Chairman of the board.

My Party proposes these changes, because a wholly part-time board would be unable to give sufficient attention to some of the problems which will inevitably arise from the major task of reshaping the service structure. Some continuity at this top level provided by full-time membership would also help prevent political patronage and ensure consistency in the important role the board must fulfil. That role must comprise four key functions: namely, improving public sector management, central recruitment, redeployment and executive officer appointment, ensuring equitable employment policies and practices, and co-ordinating industrial matters.

As these functions relate primarily to manpower management and development and to industrial relations matters, I believe it would be far more appropriate for the board and the Commissioner to be responsible to the Minister of Labour rather than the Premier, and we will move accordingly in Committee.

Beyond these functions, and with the protections established through control and direction of the Commissioner of the board, all other responsibilities of the public sector can, and should, be delegated to departments and authorities. I put forward these proposed amendments in a constructive way, looking for some bipartisan approach and support, because it is important for this legislation to be implemented in an atmosphere of trust and confidence. The considerable anxiety which exists in the Public Service at present—especially at senior levels—about the implications of these aspects of the legislation must be overcome.

I am aware that as recently as 2 August, at a meeting of departmental heads, concern was expressed about the potential this legislation has for a total centralisation of power within the service which would completely override the principle of letting the managers manage. I urge the Premier to consider carefully the very legitimate concerns my Party has on behalf of public servants who will have to implement the legislation and make it work. Successful implementation will give South Australia a better, more efficient, more accountable Public Service, and it will make the service a more challenging and rewarding place of work. More flexible employment opportunities will be created through adherence to the principle of promotion by merit, and this will place greater emphasis on the variety of employment and career experiences available in the service. Public servants will be able to more easily gain experience in a wider range of areas of Government administration.

Too often people are at certain middle and upper level positions for too long. Inevitably, this leads to staleness and frustration, which does not assist the service or the personal development goals of the individual. More flexibility should broaden the outlook of senior managers beyond the confines of their existing employment and develop in them the incentive to take a broader view of Government and community problems. As a result, more initiative will be exercised and more creative solutions developed in response to problems.

In summary, my Party recognises the importance of this legislation. We want to ensure that it works effecitvely in the interests of public servants. We will be moving amendments in Committee to achieve that objective and to ensure that all public sector employees are encouraged and given every opportunity to make the most of their talents and experience in the vital role that they must fulfil on behalf of South Australians.

The Hon. MICHAEL WILSON (Torrens): As the Leader has said, this Bill is based on the recommendations of the Guerin report and I, too, compliment the Guerin committee on the work that it did and the task to which it dedicated itself so assiduously in bringing down that very comprehensive report. The report recommends to the Government a clear path of change and restructuring in the Public Service which in many ways is in accordance with Liberal principles of smaller government and a leaner, more efficient and logically managed Public Service. It is believed that there is a degree of acceptance in both the State Public Service and the general community that any change to management that reduces red tape and allows the managers to manage can only benefit the efficient administration of government and in the longer term, of course, and most importantly, the South Australian taxpayer. Any Government needs to ensure that it makes the most use of the resources available to it in the interests of those taxpayers. Increases in recent years in the size of government and its responsibilities has meant growing demands being placed upon the existing resources and tax base to pay for these resources.

It is certainly part of Liberal Party policy to pursue a clear path of deregulation and reduction in duplication: this will lead to smaller government. To achieve this, the struc-

ture and administration of government must be radically changed to produce a far more accountable system. The Guerin report, in suggesting a large number of alterations to the structure of the existing Public Service, we believe goes a long way to ensuring this. As enumerated by the Leader, the principles upon which the Liberal Party based its view of this particular legislation were promotion by merit, let the managers manage, the question of accountability and performance together with, of course, the highest standards of financial management.

Most importantly, we base our view on the question of service to the public. I suppose it should seem obvious that, as far as public servants are concerned, service to the public should not have to be spelt out in a debate such as this, but it is necessary to do so because, as the Leader so succinctly said, service to the public is not recognised to the extent that it should be in this legislation. I will deal with that in a little more detail later.

The Bill encompasses many of the principles expounded in the Guerin report. As far as those principles agree with the principles laid down by the Liberal Party, we will certainly support the Bill. The Bill repeals the Public Service Act of 1967 and establishes principles governing management and employment in the public sector. It provides criteria for supervision and review of management structures and practices in the public sector. In particular, it abolishes the Public Service Board and replaces it with a Government Management Board which has greatly reduced powers in comparison with those of its predecessor and mainly acts in an advisory role to the Minister concerned. We should not lose sight of that fact.

Furthermore, the Bill sets up a position and office of the Commissioner of Public Employment who is to be, shall we say, an *El Supremo* with enormous powers. The Commissioner is also to be a member of the Government Management Board. The board, as I have said, has mainly a coordinating and investigative role as well as an advisory role, but has very little role in the making of policy.

The Commissioner for Public Employment and chief executive officers will be appointed on renewable contracts for five years. It is very much Liberal Party policy that senior public servants should be appointed on a contract basis. The Bill lays down extensive general principles of public administration, management and conduct, save as I have already mentioned too little is said on the question of service to the public. Stringent reporting obligations are placed on all chief executive officers and the Comissioner.

The Bill includes all Government agencies except the State Government Insurance Commission and the State Bank, which are specifically exempted under clause 4. The following persons are exempted under schedule 2 of the Bill which can be changed by proclamation although, of course, to be more accurate, they cannot be removed from the ambit of the Bill without an alteration to the Act. Those persons are: the Judiciary; the police; the Auditor-General; the Ombudsman; the Police Complaints Authority; the Electoral Commissioner and the Deputy Electoral Commissioner; the holder of any other office or position (not being a chief executive officer) whose remuneration is determined by the Remuneration Tribunal; officers and staff of the Parliament; the teaching service; officers and employees of ETSA; officers and employees who are remunerated solely by fees, allowances or commission; and, finally, hourly, daily or weekly paid employees.

That is a very encapsulated description of the Bill. I now deal with a few specific provisions. My colleagues from Light and Mitcham will deal with other provisions in more detail when I have finished. I mentioned previously, as did the Leader, that service to the public was not referred to in the Bill as we believe the Guerin committee wished it to be. I say that because, if I read three consecutive recommendations of the Guerin committee, it will make plain that that committee itself believed that service to the public should have been a mandatory provision within the aims and objectives of public servants contained within the Bill. The report reads, in part:

> In organising to meet client needs departments should make every effort to devote the maximum proportion of available resources to the provision of services. Overheads need to be kept to a minimum.
>
> Departments will need to give more explicit recognition to the importance of work involving contact with the public. Wherever possible such staff should have more authority and autonomy and have working environments which support, rather than hinder, their service to the public.
>
> Annual plans should identify as clearly as possible the importance of client satisfaction as a key element of departmental operations, with appropriate identification of standards and measures of performance to be reached in service delivery made specific.

Those three extracts (and there are more within the report) show the importance placed by the Guerin committee on the question of service to the public. The Liberal Party believes very strongly that that should be identified in the Bill. As the Leader said, amendments will be introduced in Committee to ensure that that is encapsulated within the Bill, even to the extent of altering the long title so that anybody, on picking up the legislation, will be able to see that service to the public is of paramount importance.

I now turn to the question of the Government Management Board. Concurrently with that one must also deal with the Commissioner for Public Employment. The Government Management Board as set up under this Bill is an emasculated body. There is no question of that: compared with the powers of the present Public Service Board, the Government Management Board is weak. It has no policy making powers and, as I said, it has merely an advisory and investigative role.

However, the Commissioner for Public Employment is to be an officer with the most enormous powers, including policy making powers. Just to make that point more strongly I will refer to clause 25, as follows:

> (1) The functions of the Commissioner are as follows:
>
> *(a)* to establish, and ensure the implementation of, appropriate policies, practices and procedures in relation to personnel management and industrial relations in the Public Service;

Note that the first words are 'to establish, and ensure'. There is no question that the Commissioner for Public Employment must have the power of implementation. No-one would deny the Commissioner that role, but for the power to establish—in other words, the policy making process—to be in the hands of one officer, the Opposition believes is laying too much on one person.

As my Leader has said, that can lead to accusations of nepotism and the like. The powers and functions of the board of management in clause 15 are centred around such things as:

> To keep all aspects of management in the public sector under review . . . to advise the Minister responsible . . . to carry out, or recommend the carrying out, of necessary planning . . . to review, on its own initiative or at the request of the Minister responsible for the administration of this Act or any other Minister, the efficiency and effectiveness of any aspect of public sector operations . . .

The powers of the Government Management Board are the powers of a board that advises, investigates and reviews. What the Liberal Party is saying is that clause 25 (1) *(a)* that I mentioned as being probably the supreme policy making power should be transferred to the Government Management Board, leaving the power of implementation with the Commissioner for Public Employment.

The Liberal Party believes that the Government Management Board should have the power of direction over the

Commissioner for Public Employment. Then of course the Minister responsible for this Act, who, if the Liberal Party has its way with amendments, will be the Minister of Labour, will have the power of direction over the board. Obviously, one has to have a method of implementing Government policy. That is how it should be. No-one denies the need for that.

We believe that the board of management should have the power of direction over the Commissioner for Public Employment, and that the policy making role should revert to the board. As I said, the implementation role should still rest with the Commissioner. Let me now look at the complement of the board. The Bill recommends that there should be a Government Management Board of no more than six persons. It does not say in the Bill—and we will ask questions of the Premier about this in Committee—whether they are part time, full time or some of each. That is important and it is information that we need to know.

The Guerin committee recommends that they should all be part time members—mainly chief executive officers or heads of departments with one, I think, from outside Government service. That is one area where we disagree with the Guerin recommendations.

We believe, and we will be putting amendments to this effect, that there should be two full time members of the Government Management Board and three part time members. The Commissioner for Public Employment would be a part time member of the Board. Also, the Chairman of the board would be a part time member. We also believe (and this is very important) that a number of the members of that board should be drawn from outside the Public Service, from those who have experience in management and industrial relations. We believe that it is necessary to instal new ideas and management practices from outside the Public Service as well as from within.

I will now deal with the way in which we see this structure working. In a large company there is a board of directors with a chairman, who is obviously a part time chairman in most cases. Then there is a chief executive officer, say a managing director, who comes under the board. That manager carries out the instructions of the board. That is what we want to see here.

We want to see a board consisting of experienced people, some from outside the Public Service, with a part time Chairman and with the Commissioner for Public Employment acting as the managing director of the Public Service. That creates a structure and line of command. We believe that that is as it should be. The reason we wish to see a part time Chairman is that too often a situation has arisen where there has been a full time Chairman and, obviously, a full time managing director, which goes without saying. There is often a conflict, whether it be of personalities, on policy, or whatever.

I had an experience of that myself in the State Transport Authority when I was Minister of Transport. There was a full time Chairman of the State Transport Authority and a full time General Manager. There was a bed, shall we say, for inefficiency in that arrangement—a bed for lack of effective decision making because of a potential conflict between the powers of two powerful people. I repeat that what we are saying is tha there should be a Government Managment Board equivalent to a board of directors with a part time Chairman and a chief executive officer directly responsible to them in the field of policy (not in day to day management but in the field of policy).

We believe that that is the way that we will bring into effect the most efficient operation of the Public Service. We believe that that is the way in which the desirable recommendations of the Guerin committee best be implemented. It will ensure protection for middle as well as senior management. My next point relates to the matter of appointments by contract. The Bill states that chief executive officers, the Commissioner for Public Employment and occupants of senior positions shall be appointed by contract for five years with a negotiable right of renewal after that time. We support that principle strongly, because the time is long past when it was necessary to change the present system for senior management.

Contract appointments allow flexibility and new ideas to flow into the Public Service. This is very important. What we question is the fact that in the Bill there is no statement about what the Government regards as senior positions. Is it to be executive officers, their equivalents and above; or is it to be EO3's, their equivalents and above? We do not know, we believe that that should be spelt out, if not in the Bill at least in one of its schedules.

It is important that we all know what we are talking about. It should be enshrined in the legislation rather than by regulation. The Commissioner of Public Employment will still have very large powers, even under the amended legislation and, as a result, we believe that the Commissioner should be allowed to renew his or her contract for one term only, to give a maximum term of 10 years. The Commissioner of Public Employment is a very powerful and responsible position even taking into account our amendments, and it is a position that should change at least once every 10 years, if not more often. Unlike chief executive officers and others who could probably have their contracts extended two or three times, the Commissioner of Public Employment should have his or her contract extended for only one term.

Finally, I refer to the question of delegation. In this Bill there is provision for the board, the Commissioner of Public Employment, chief executive officers and others to delegate their powers. Under this new scheme of allowing the managers to manage, the powers can be very important indeed. As with any question of delegation, it is extremely important that it is undertaken responsibly and that it involves the right people. Obviously, that is exactly what happens 90 per cent of the time. However, we believe that the powers of delegation are so extensive in this legislation that at the very least they should be recorded.

The Bill requires delegation of powers by, say, chief executive officers to be executed as an instrument in writing. We propose amendments to the effect that the instruments in writing be recorded in a register, the location of which will be a matter of detail. The register could then be perused by anyone: be it the Premier, the Minister of Labour, or the Minister responsible for the legislation. Ministers responsible for Government departments or instrumentalities should also have access to a register showing where any delegation of powers has occurred and to whom those powers have been delegated. That is as far as I wish to go at this stage. As foreshadowed by the Leader, extensive amendments will be introduced by the Opposition.

This Bill will be a watershed as far as the future of the Public Service in this State is concerned. The provisions of the Bill must be implemented in a way that ensures that those public servants whose very futures are concerned with the administration of this legislation have their rights protected; at the same time the public must receive an improved, more efficient and accountable service than is the case at the moment.

The Hon. B.C. EASTICK (Light): I am pleased to join with my colleagues in recognition of the importance of this piece of legislation and also to support their view that it should be supported at this juncture for the purpose of debate in a more extensive fashion in Committee. Its very size and complexity makes it very much a Committee Bill.

I assure the Premier and honourable members that there will be a great deal of questioning and support for amendments to bring this Bill up to what we believe is a proper standard. That is by no means a criticism of the reason for the general thrust of the Bill. After consultation with a wide group of people we believe that changes are vital to the legislation which should, under normal circumstances, serve the State for a number of years to come. The Liberal Party does not accept change in this area for the sake of change. The last major rewrite and consideration of the Public Service Act occurred in 1967 (although there have been some amendments since then) which indicates that there has been an element of stability in this area.

The current Act is not up to date with technological changes. It is by no means square with new management practices that have come into being as a result of changes both here and overseas. This legislation is not correctly aligned with current industrial relations or employment practices in Government areas, such as education and nursing. Employees should have an opportunity to particippate in personal improvement programs so that they can benefit from cross-fertilisation with other organisations in the State and the Commonwealth; under certain circumstances they can even gain experience in overseas administration which, if applicable to South Australia, they can bring back into the system.

The Liberal Party does not accept change for the sake of change. It is squarely behind the need to change management principles and styles as we move into the twenty-first century. We believe that it is now time to address those matters. However, in doing so we want to ensure that there is full questioning, debate and participation in the formulation of the final legislation before it passes both Houses of Parliament.

Several areas of the Bill could be regarded as major aspects of the program. I will dwell briefly on some of those aspects—and it is by no means an exhaustive list. The Liberal Party is in accord with the principle put forward in the Guerin report, that not only is the Public Service responsible for delivering a service to Ministers, departments and the State, but also it has a vital role to play in the delivery of services to the public (that is, a direct interface with the public). However, it should not have such an interface with the public that it cannot be and is not seen to be efficient in the managerial skills area. We believe that the aspect of the Guerin report that picked up the importance of a personal service to the community it serves has been left out of the general thrust of the title of the Bill. This matter should be quickly redressed.

The Opposition believes that that is a major aspect in relation to public acceptance of and involvement with this legislation: it is the direct connection between the general public and public sector employment area. The second phase of the proposition relates to the importance of advancement according to merit. This feature is totally acceptable to members of the Liberal Party, as I believe it is to the Government. Advancement simply by seniority in a department or in the service has long since passed. Over the years this matter has not been adequately addressed.

In earlier years this matter caused a great deal of concern in the Public Service. Whilst this may not have been the first occasion when top management was brought in to the Public Service from outside, I recall that one of the very early appointments from outside the service at this level was Dr (now Sir) Allan Callaghan, who was appointed Director of Agriculture, some 30-odd years ago. He had been in charge of the Roseworthy Agricultural College. Previously he had had a vital involvement with the Australian war effort in relation to foodstuffs, and on behalf of the Australian Government he was an agricultural attache in Washington. His breadth of experience was used in his position as Director of Agriculture.

Sir Allan Callaghan brought with him to that position skills which were very beneficial to the administration of that department and the State, and for many years afterwards his work proved to be very valuable. However, when he was appointed to that position in the Department of Agriculture there were squeals, and a great deal of concern was expressed about such an appointment. The merits of the appointee, I am quite sure, won the day, as well as his ability to sell his skills, which subsequently contributed to the development of the Department of Agriculture. It was not that others before him had not done a good job, but he was able to bring new ideas and management and technical skills to the department.

There are other examples of appointments of people from outside the Public Service—and not only at the director level. In the late 1960s and early 1970s a number of contract appointments were made, some of which caused a great deal of concern, mainly because they were seen to be political appointments. With a change of Government suddenly there was the demise of a certain person, who received a fairly handsome golden handshake. Those sorts of problems do exist.

The Hon. J.C. Bannon: Mr Currie.

The Hon. B.C. EASTICK: Yes, he was the person to whom I was referring. He was appointed by the Dunstan Government, but he was stood aside and given a golden handshake by the Hall Government. That is an example of the types of problem that can occur. Human nature being what it is and political circumstances being what they are, I suspect that further problems of that nature will occur in the future. I hope not, but in this regard I welcome the five-year contract period provision, which is a major feature of this legislation. I believe that the State will benefit quite considerably. A person with the necessary skills and able to fulfil a commitment to the department to which he is appointed will have the right of renewal, or that person may move to another department and thus further use his skills for the benefit of the State. Such flexibility is vital to the future, and the Liberal Party is happy to run with it.

There is one variation to the ongoing position of contract appointment for a definite number of renewals to which I would draw attention. I cannot recall either of my colleagues having made mention of it: that is, the provision relating to the Commissioner of Public Employment. The Liberal Party believes that there should be only one extension of five years in relation to that appointment. A very major position within the Public Service of this State, it will be fraught with some difficulties for the incumbent. If the person appointed does the job properly—and I believe that that will happen whoever that person may be—he will obviously cause some upsets within the system. Such a person is not worth his salt unless he is prepared to take hard initiatives and make hard decisions that inevitably will cause some concern to people down the line.

However, for the benefit of the whole Public Service system it is the view of members on this side of the House, as we understand the position at this moment, that the person who fulfils the role of the Commissioner of Public Employment should not have his term extended beyond one five-year renewal. If it is spelled out clearly in the legislation, the persons who apply in the first instance will fully appreciate the situation. They will know the limits of the time that will be available to them and, all other things being equal, they will be able to get in and do that job for the first five years and, on reappointment, for a second five years, but we do not accept at this moment that that extension should go beyond that first renewal period.

There is nothing to stop the person continuing to be employed in the State service if they want to be by applying for a job, with their experience being used in a number of vital ways, but the importance of the position and the very serious and positive part that that person must play would be best achieved by that maximum of a 10-year appointment.

The style and system that have been indicated by the Leader and the member for Torrens in relation to the board and the Commissioner is really a parallel to a board of management and a managing director—the managing director in the sense in which we see the Commissioner as one of the board of management. Although in many respects it might be looked on as a full-time appointment, the reality is that other commitments the Commissioner would have make his a part-time appointment, albeit that in a total sense one might look on it as a full-time commitment. If he or she (let us not be sexist about this) is really doing the task provided, it is a part-time appointment.

That relationship, which has worked well in the private sector and, indeed, in the broader public sector, having regard to a number of management systems that prevail in major Commonwealth, and to a lesser degree State, organisations, fits in well with a system that has been tried and found successful. We make no apologies for drawing the parallel between that being the style and system to apply.

A further failing of the Bill relates to this position of Commissioner and, indeed, may well relate to those who will be members of the management board: there is no provision for them to be contained within the pecuniary interest powers as are other members of the Public Service. That is probably an oversight, which should not be allowed to continue. If it is good enough for the people down the line to have to identify their pecuniary interests, obviously it is right for the Commissioner to be in precisely the same position.

As to the reporting process or the location of the register, that is a matter that needs some consideration. It is a little different from the pecuniary interest records which apply in local government or which, under the terms of this legislation, will apply to people further down the line, but it is one to which we draw attention at this stage and it will certainly be addressed during the course of the committee consideration.

There are some phrases in the Bill which are heartening so long as reality prevails and, in their interpretation, they are seriously recognised (and I am not suggesting that they would not be seriously recognised) and as long as the form of management correctly approaches the provisions. One classic phrase with which I have no difficulty is 'without excessive formality'. That suggests a course of action to be adopted within the whole program of the system that will eliminate the hidebound practices which unnecessarily prevent relatively rapid decisions at times when they are required. In its widest interpretation that phrase allows for the typical decisions which are made in private enterprise to apply to public enterprise. Quite obviously, we understand that that will be an issue which individual managers and executive officers will come to grips with and apply in a balanced fashion.

In relation to work opportunity or employment within the system, another phrase which I found interesting was the reference to a job being 'worthwhile and constructive employment'. We would certainly like to believe that the whole work opportunity within the Public Service will be worthwhile and constructive employment. In the past serious questions have been asked in relation to forms and management styles which sometimes have been in existence for 20, 30 or 40 years, and which have people doing tasks in a manner which has long past been the practice in the private field. The philosophy that, because it was done at the turn of the century it will be done in the future, is wrong. We would like to see the style of management picking up the fact that there will be not change for change's sake, but acceptance of new management practices and style practices which achieve the end result and make it a more worthwhile employment for the person within the system.

I have spoken about the delivery of service to the public being of absolute and paramount importance. Without the proper stress and understanding of that service to the public being comprehended and injected into the system, we will have failed in our consideration of this measure. One thing which members of this House are confronted with fairly frequently in their day by day electorate work is the indifference and the apparent inhumanity, particularly in this age of computers, of departments to the individual person's problems. I am not suggesting that the fault is on one side only, because some people, in their approach to departments, are less than straightforward and considerate and, therefore, it would not be right to believe that what I am referring to is all flowing from the public sector to the public. It can be a two-way effort, but the delivery of service to the public is and must be paramount.

There is another important area which seems to have been missed within the rather voluminous reporting process which is envisaged within this Bill. I do not want to move away from the importance of the reporting process and the handing down in the Parliament of those reports on a regular basis, but nowhere does the Bill spell out definitively that those reports will have an element of financial accountability as part of their form.

It may be expected that a good manager would inject financial accountability into the reports but, as we have seen by the emergence of the Public Accounts Committee, the Ombudsman system, the further attention now being given to public accounts by Auditors-General, and other areas of public criticism of public sector financing and money management, it is extremely important that the managers recognise their responsibility to oversee proper financial accountability. In due course, in a number of the report sections which are contained within the Bill, we will seek to make certain that one of the features is financial accountability. It might be said that the powers within those sections of the Bill which allow for the style of material to be made available in the report to be determined by regulation would address those matters. We believe that financial accountability is so important that it should not be a matter which is left to regulation, but it should be a matter which is spelled out and prescribed within the reporting sector, and action along those lines will be taken.

The next and final comment that I want to make at this stage of the consideration of the Bill relates to delegation. In fact, there is major delegation within the Public Service as it applies at the present moment. There is a very clear indication in a number of sectors of the Bill we are considering where delegation and, in fact, redelegation will be the normal practice. If the Public Service is to function at all, that is an essential line of command. However, we find that there is no clear-cut need to identify that the powers of delegation have necessarily been given in writing, which we believe is essential, as a safeguard for all people in management, or that necessarily those delegations have been recorded.

We will be seeking to inject into the system a power of delegation being given in writing and, further, that that written delegation will be properly registered so that at any time in the future it will be possible to go back and clearly identify what that delegation was, what the terms of the delegation were, and whether, in fact, it has been revoked. It will be equally important to have the revocation—if it

should take place—identified in the register, and then we would overcome a number of possible areas of difference and major confrontation within the system.

We have to make certain, when this Bill finally becomes an Act, that we have sought to take out of it any of those areas of difficulty which have occurred in the past or which conceivably will occur in the future. If it is possible by way of the consultative process that will take place in the Committee stage to clearly identify that the abundance of caution which might be levelled against the financial accountability that I spoke about a short time ago, the delegation and the registration of delegation that I am now talking about is unnecessary, and that could be ably demonstrated, members on this side would look at it on the merits of the argument which is put forward.

There have been deficiencies, and for a long time there have been problems in trying to work out where the buck really does stop: who made the decision, and why and when it was made. The course of action we have suggested will not be laborious: it will be a matter of managerial method which will become second nature and which will provide a permanent principle in these important issues.

Finally, let me say that personally I have found consideration of the Bill to be a very interesting exercise. I believe that those of us in this place who have had any real contact with the Public Service over a number of years will recognise that certain very laborious processes have carried on for too long. Where they can be shown to be necessary, let those processes stay, but, where they are merely continuing as a matter of practice and no-one knows the reason for their continued existence, they should be abandoned. That is the attitude which I and my colleagues have adopted. It may be said that, because of the magnitude of this measure, it may have benefited from consideration by a Select Committee, as it would then perhaps involve a more bipartisan approach. I refute any suggestion that a bipartisan approach will not be taken on this Bill. With the goodwill of the Government, and with proper consideration in Committee, we believe that the opportunity will exist to take a completely bipartisan approach to this important piece of legislation, which I support on the second reading.

Mr BAKER (Mitcham): I am probably one of the few people in this House who can comment with any authority on the operations of the Public Service, both Commonwealth and State, having started at the age of 16 as a teaboy and correspondence clerk in what was then the Department of the Premier and Chief Secretary, doing a lot of things that no-one will do today, reaching the position, when I left the Public Service to stand for Parliament in 1982, of Manager of the Manpower Forecasting Unit in the Department of Industrial Affairs and Employment, since renamed the Department of Labour.

An honorarable member: A most undistinguished career!

Mr BAKER: I can assure the honourable member that I still have many years left to follow such a career.

The SPEAKER: The interjection was totally out of order, and I rebuke the person who interjected.

Mr BAKER: I believe that I did have some distinctions in those levels of the Public Service, having set up certain practices during my period in the Public Service which still apply today albeit possibly in a modified form. I am justifiably proud of some of the changes in which I participated either as part of a team or as the person actually responsible for those changes. I was delighted with the quality of the Guerin report, because it brings together a lot of the feelings expressed by officers in the Public Service.

It identifies a number of frustrations within the public sector and suggests ways and means of improvement. It is important to understand that we are talking here about mechanisms, but unless there is a will those mechanisms will fail in much the same way as the Public Service, as it operates today, leaves a lot to be desired. That is not the fault of public servants: it is the fault of Parliament, Ministers and managers.

The Bill identifies certain problems that need to be considered, although clearly we would not need a Bill if responsible people had taken the initiative in the first place. However, we are now setting in place legislation that will facilitate change and improve operations within the Public Service.

I wholeheartedly endorse our placing in the legislation the term 'service to the public', which I believe is paramount. With this in mind, I shall make a few observations about the Public Service, and in doing so I do not denigrate in any way officers of the Public Service, many of whom are very fine people. However, these observations are symptomatic of some of the difficulties faced over a number of years. Perhaps the answer does not lie in the document before us tonight but in the willingness of people—Ministers and managers—to bring in changes and to effect a change of attitude.

Take a simple budgetary item such as organising money for the year: it is still the practice that when a budget is tabled, if a head of a department is at all responsible—and 95 per cent of them are—he will say, 'We have to watch our dollars and cents carefully.' A program of expenditure is mapped out and resources are allocated, sometimes in very broad brush terms and at other times in fairly definite terms, stating targets for the forthcoming months. That is all very well, but by April of each year certain people suddenly discover that they have money left over. The current system in government is that if one has underspent the budget one receives little thanks. There is a fair chance that the decision makers of the day will determine that not quite as much money is needed in the next year.

In both the Commonwealth and State Governments this has led to a budget splurge from April to June each year for those departments that have managed fairly well until April. In the Commonwealth, one finds people from Canberra suddenly visiting all the States to see how their State officers are getting on, while some State departments will be willing to send people on conferences and take trips that were not necessary before April. There is a syndrome that anyone not rewarded for keeping control on the budget could be less than well served at the time of drawing up the next budget.

That matter has to be addressed seriously. Members must understand that people who manage the budget properly should be rewarded for that. Officers who are incapable of management of that kind should not be in the job. Indeed, I believe that that is one of the great challenges before us.

Another observation stemming from my 20 years in the Public Service concerns the extent to which reports have to go through four or five levels of management. Even as a manager or sub-manager I found that reports I delivered on many aspects of the work for which I was responsible had to go through a number of streams. Each stream would put a note on it recommending that something be adopted, and the report would end up with the Director or Director-General, who would look at the political implications and advise the Minister accordingly.

One matter that upset me considerably during that time was that reports that were basically sound would finish up as less than sound documents. The Director might believe that the Minister could not quite swallow what was written in the report. In fact, some managers or directors decided it would not be good politics to leave the report in that form or, alternatively, they would write a minute on top. Directors who were less sensitive just made changes and

sent them up accordingly, irrespective of the results of the deliberations.

Also, the fact that it took three, four or five weeks for a minute to get from my desk or the desk below me to the top took much pleasure from the work that I did. This report addresses that question. It says that the manager shall manage, and the principle that we are applying to CEOs is a principle that we have to apply at all levels of the Public Service. The amount of inefficiency as a result of that multi-stage reporting process was extensive. The most important fact that the less efficient managers did not understand was that they were taking something away from the people who were the professionals in the field, those who were best able to report on the matter.

I have another observation about the Public Service that is worth putting before the House, and I am talking about end products. Few people over the age of 45 with whom I have spoken within the past five to 10 years do not look forward to retirement. The common terminology is that they are 'waiting out their time'. They have lost their zeal, zest and drive to implement change, whether because of their own inadequacies but more likely because of the system in which they have operated.

If honourable members went down to their local hotel and sat down with some of these people over a drink they would find that the desire of such people to fulfil a higher role with initiative has long been lost. The system has become cumbersome and over bureaucratic. The controls that have been imposed by Ministers who do not know any better or by managers who have been promoted beyond their ability have made the system top heavy and less responsive to change. It means that the managers at each of these levels are less inclined to do the things they have to do.

One of the interesting aspects of that particular syndrome is that there is almost a reversion to type so far as public servants are concerned. Each public servant who starts with the service at the age of 16, 17 or 18 goes through the same system: they are inbred into the system. During that process there is a certain conditioning as to the bureaucratic controls that have to be imposed, the number of papers that have to be filled in, and the lack of appreciation or otherwise which invariably accompanies either a good or bad report. These people have actually been through the system.

After a while, despite the enormous amount of zeal, and the great amount of initiative that certain of these people display, it gets to them. They then do as they have had done to them. I set myself the target that I would no longer be in the Public Service by the age of 40. I am pleased to say that I was elected to Parliament: that was one way out of the system.

I could not see myself quite content at a managerial level at the age of 45. The Premier may laugh, but perhaps if he spent a little time with public servants he would understand his own inadequacies, his lack of ability in the way he treats public servants, that he has little understanding of how the system works, and that he has made no real attempt to communicate his wants and needs to the Public Service from top to bottom. I wonder just how much time the Premier and his Ministers have spent with their staff from the bottom to the top. Perhaps the Premier is an exception.

I recall, for example, that the former Minister, Hugh Hudson, spent time walking the job, as did a number of Liberal Ministers. I remember that Hugh Hudson would walk in during the day, say 'Hello' to the people, and know what they were assigned to do. He was able to provide direction as Minister because of his understanding of the needs and requirements of people on the job. I think that there should be such a thing as a profit motive in the Public Service, because unless there is some motive people become slaves, or become typecast.

Unless one has an aim beyond just the promotional aspect then the quality of the service one delivers must deteriorate. Unless one has some ambition to provide the best service possible then the service that one provides will be second rate. Those are some of the difficulties faced by public servants. As I said previously, they become conditioned by the system and lose their initiative and inner drive.

I know that the Premier commissioned the Guerin report. I recall another report, the Wilenski report, which I think was produced in 1978. It was to change the whole emphasis, structure and accountability of the Public Service. It was an excellent report in its own right, but it failed: it was never introduced; nor were the recommendations of that report treated with the seriousness that they deserved. One of the difficulties in Australia, I suppose, is that politicians are treated as second class citizens, as are public servants.

Neither group rates very highly on the popularity polls: politicians because they never seem to do what people want them to do and public servants because, over a period of time, there has been a growing belief by the public at large that they are not getting value for money. So, we all have to shape up if indeed we want to improve the system.

Mr Mayes: Shape up or ship out!

Mr BAKER: We will be shipping out the honourable member shortly. I am unsure whether it is a particularly Australian characteristic that people knock politicians and public servants. I did not note the same antipathy towards the public sector during my recent visit to Singapore and Hong Kong. I found the standing of those institutions very high in those countries. Perhaps I did not spend enough time to gauge whether that feeling was correct, but it is true in Australia that we suffer from a very poor image. So that the member for Mawson can understand the poor image, from which she also suffers, it would be useful to understand that that in itself places pressures on the public sector. Obviously, if one is not held in high regard one does not perform as well as one should, so a great deal is to be done in that area.

I note that the Guerin reports states that the committee's proposals for change will be ineffective if they do not result in concrete improvements in services, which should be relevant, accessible and prompt. I could not agree more. The very delivery of that service in that way—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! In addressing himself to the question the honourable member got his verbiage a little tangled in such a way that he reflected on the member for Mawson unwittingly, in meaning to reflect on all politicians and the image they might hold in the public eye as well as public servants and the image they might hold in the public eye. I take it that is what the honourable gentleman means.

Mr BAKER: No, Sir, that is not what I meant at all.

The SPEAKER: Was the honourable gentleman reflecting on the member for Mawson?

Mr BAKER: I do not know how you, Sir, interpreted the statement I made. There have been various reflections across the floor on a large number of occasions. I did not think I had said anything untoward in the process of the contribution I was making to this House. If you as Speaker, Sir, can inform me otherwise, I will reflect upon the comments I have made. If I have to withdraw them, I will.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to resume his seat and let us see if we can tidy this up quickly. It is often said in a joking fashion by some and in a serious fashion by others that politicians are about next after child molesters and that members of the civil service are in the same category. If that is said of a whole class of people, it is something we all have to wear, whether it be politicians

or members of the civil service, but if those reflections are directed towards a particular person, it is in gross breach of Standing Orders and will not be tolerated by the Chair. I have given the honourable member a fair go to indicate that he was referring to two classes of persons and the image that the public might have of them. The honourable member.

Mr BAKER: I was principally trying to point out that the image of politicians in the last Morgan gallup poll was just above that of prostitutes. Indeed, politicans have to undergo a great deal of change if we are to live up to the expectations of the community. I made that comment in light of the speech made tonight by the leader of the British parliamentary delegation, who said that we should always be aware of the needs of the people. If our image is not what it should be, we have to do a great deal to repair that damage. That reflects on the Public Service, and that was the connection I was making.

The SPEAKER: Order! So that we are completely clear, the honourable member was reflecting on the whole class of politicians and the whole class of civil servants?

Mr BAKER: Yes.

Mr Mayes interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Mitcham.

Mr BAKER: I was trying to explain to the House some of the problems experienced in the public sector. If members opposite cannot recognise those difficulties, I can understand that, because they are not very bright, anyway. I was saying that what we are dealing with in this Bill tonight is mechanisms and what we should be concerned about is output.

Mr Groom: Why do you have to attack the Public Service?

Mr BAKER: I was not attacking the Public Service.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I thought the matter had been put to rest. The honourable member for Mitcham.

Mr BAKER: My final remarks relate to some of the lesser details of the Bill that have not already been covered by my colleagues in this debate so far. Changes have been made to the original draft Bill, which fairly closely followed the recommendations of of the Guerin report. As we are all aware, a draft Bill was circulated some two or three months ago which attempted to legislate in a form that reflected the outcomes of the Guerin report. Changes were made to the concept of merit, to negotiated conditions under which people can enter the Public Service under contract, and to the operation of grievance appeals, promotions, and classifications.

I do not accept some of the changes that have been made; they detract from the original Bill. I understand that certain negotiations took place on some of these issues when the draft Bill was presented. I believe that the changes that have been made since the draft Bill was released detract from the intent of the Guerin report. We will be taking up some of those matters during the Committee stage so that we can understand why those changes have been made and how they fit into the scheme of the Guerin report. In relation to grievances, promotions and classifications appeals, I have some concern that the system could become overloaded. We do not want conflict in the Public Service or another form of bureaucracy to set itself up to hear grievances and dissatisfactions. We would like the matters resolved. Without detracting from what is now in the Bill the Opposition will be looking at the operation of the new provisions to ensure that justice is done. Justice is not served when matters lay on the table for an inordinate amount of time and when excessive legality is involved in dispensing matters; that could well happen under the new provisions.

While it is not intended to alter some of the new provisions at this stage, it is still worth noting that certain matters must be kept under close scrutiny to ensure that we do not detract from what we want to achieve, namely, an efficient Public Service which can resolve its own internal difficulties with a minimum of fuss and a maximum of justice.

Mr LEWIS (Mallee): Tonight I shall define what I regard as being the framework of the measure before us, which involves the Parliament's determining the kind of structure that we will provide for the administration of the public sector in the future. If this measure in its present form ever sees the light of day, heaven help us by the turn of this century.

By and large, this is a Committee Bill. Because of other commitments I have not had the good fortune to hear the contributions made by other members who have spoken before me, but I dare say that some of them would have made that observation. I do not know whether or not that is so, but indeed I am sure that members on both sides of the Chamber recognise that the Bill is no more nor less than that. The Committee stage will take a considerable time so that clarity of insight, understanding, definition and, ultimately, the function of the Bill is more clearly understood. The Committee stage is an important part of Parliamentary debates to which all of us ought to pay attention. Too often these days the Committee stage of a Bill tends to gloss over the real consequences of the implementation and effective impact of legislation when it is proclaimed and becomes law.

I guess the whole idea of providing an effective Public Service arises from the myth or mistaken belief that Governments can put everything right; that Governments can take control of the lives of individuals and accept responsibility for those lives without really impairing the freedom of individuals to live their own lives and to make their own decisions responsibly, while enjoying the freedom which in the natural course of events people are born with (although having to accept responsibilities relevant to the exercise of that freedom).

That is a fairly bland and broad statement to make, but it is the basis upon which decisions were made at least three-quarters of a century ago in relation to the capacity of governments to assume the role of governing the citizens of the State. Democracy as we know it is a fairly recent innovation in the history of mankind. It is not the form of government by which most people on this planet live at present, despite the fact that more of the total global population live under a democratic Government than has ever been the case or possible before. Recognising that we live in a democracy, we must also bear in mind that Governments will attempt to be popular and, in the process, want to accept responsibility for making decisions on behalf of the citizens of the State.

Citizens are mistaken in the belief that governments are better equipped to make decisions about their collective futures than they themselves are. So, we have seen an expansion of the size of that proportion of the population working for Government in what is euphemistically called the Public Service. The parody on that term and the whole function of the public bureaucracy, which is paraded before us each Monday night these days on the national ABC television network in the form of the program *Yes Minister*, is wholly appropriate in the context of considering this Bill.

We all know, and many members of the public outside this place suspect, that that program is closer to the truth than many of us would feel comfortable in acknowledging publicly. I raise that matter if for no other reason than to allude to the kind of comment just made by the member for Mitcham in that the popularity of politicians, which is relevant to their capacity to cope with and define the way in which the paid, tenured public servants will perform their personal and collective duties in the interests of the

public, is pretty much impaired by the inane desire of most politicians to be more popular than not, minute by minute, rather than responsible, decade by decade, in the way in which they decide to make laws in Australia.

I put the rhetorical question: what is the difference between the collision of an Australian motorist with a possum at night on the road and a collision between an Australian motorist and a politician? To which I would answer, reasonably, that in the case of the possum one would find skid marks on the road. That is a fair estimation of the measure of esteem with which most of the public regard politicians in their ability to control the way in which taxes collected from them are applied in the so-called public interest. It is more about ensuring the retention of political power, but only in so far as it is sanctioned by the approval of the life-tenured Public Service.

We can see a variety of combinations in the relationships between the Public Service and the Ministers, especially those public servants at the head of departments and their respective Ministers. Where there is a strong head of a Public Service department and a weak Minister, certainly the needs of the bureaucracy beneath the strong head are more served than the interests of the public that the Minister is supposed to advocate and protect; where we have a weak, compliant head of a Public Service department and a stronger Minister, we find that the Minister's view as expressed by the collective opinion of the Party to which he belongs is largely put into policy effect. However, when there is a strong Minister and a strong head of a department, backed up by an equally strong bunch of mandarins beneath that head, they do either do a snow job on the Minister in the first instance (as Sir Humphrey does so very well) or, alternatively, they simply lay traps for the Minister and in due course recognise that he will not last for ever, anyway, even though the Government to which he or she belongs may be more enduring than his or her tenure in office.

It is important to get our genders right because some of the other remarks that I will make shortly relate to gender and the way in which it is treated in a contradictory fashion in the Bill. It is not good enough for us to believe that we can solve the problems of the Public Service by appointing a Commissioner, a commissar, a Fuhrer, an almighty all powerful public servant such as this measure proposes. I cannot accept that is in any sense a legitimate proposition. There is not sufficient devolution of power to enable that to happen, as it must if a democracy is to be capable of retaining sufficient public respect to enable it to survive in perpetuity.

Let us look at what the Public Service really is. Since the turn of this century the word 'bureaucracy' has been applied, to an increasing degree, to describe the public sector in democratic governments, or in governments other than in democracies where autocrats may rule in one form or another with a retinue of paid administrators. It has its origins in the model which was drawn up by a German sociologist called Weber earlier this century. I suppose his views were based on the experience of the church going back to Christian beginnings, or indeed to the Roman military, if not to Alexander the Great's perceptions of military organisation and the way in which officers were required to be responsible for the actions of their subordinates, and the subordinates were required to be obedient to their superior officers.

Consequently, we find that the contempory bureaucracy is two things, each in conflict with the other. It is at once a chain of command and a sequence of reporting, heirarchical postings engaged in the purpose of administering policy determined by the rulers (in our case a democractically elected Government), as well as being a career path for every public servant and every member of that bureaucracy engaged in its functions. As free citizens we are entitled, we say, to seek out careers for ourselves according to our own likes, inclinations, competence and qualifications, so that, when any of us as citizens choose to join such an organisation, we find that we are confronted with this conflict of interest. Do we rock the boat and, in the public interest, disturb those people above us, failing to report the things reported to us by our subordinates, or do we as public servants choose to pursue the goals of collective corporatism in that bureaucracy?

Far too often these days the organisation of the particular bureaucracy, the department, indeed the total Public Service, is more concerned with the advancement of the career of the individual, who is participating in the judgments that he or she makes about the things done each day, than about achieving what the public and the taxpayer really want to see achieved. From my cursory reading of the report produced by Mr Guerin, I see that he has ignored that fundamental conflict in assessing how best to provide for administration of the bureaucracy in this legislative measure. I therefore reject the proposition that he has stated that there needs to be a super guru Fuhrer, which this measure in its present form would produce.

Let me now turn to some of the aspects of the Bill that disturb me. The definition of 'effective service' has nothing to do with effectiveness as the taxpayer would see it. It concerns an assessment of the length of time in which the public servant has been engaged in that office. On the other hand, when looking at the definition of the term 'merit', there is a delineation in an explicit way (and in the way suggested by Weber) of the kinds of qualifications that should be sought from each person filling each office in that hierarchy, if it is to serve the ideal needs that the organisation is set up to provide for the public at large. That is important, because parts of clause 6 completely ignore 'merit'. Indeed, there is a conflict in clause 6, as I am sure other members will have said.

Subclause (1) provides that appointment shall be made on the basis of merit alone, but in subclause (3) the Minister may, in an equal employment opportunity program, make provision for the according of preference to people other than on the basis of merit. How the hell can you do both? It is utterly impossible.

Therefore, I find that it will be necessary for me to participate to a considerable degree in the discussion of the clauses of the Bill as we proceed through them in three weeks time in Committee. Without taking any further time in the course of this debate, I will leave it at that and ensure that, if my contribution is worth anything at all, 'Sir Humphrey' will not emerge with the upper hand.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON (Premier and Treasurer): The contributions tonight have been quite interesting, and Opposition members have foreshadowed amendments, which we can explore thoroughly at the Committee stage. I want to make some general remarks in reply, and I begin by thanking members for their support of the overall principles of the Bill. It is pleasing indeed that we can go into the Committee stage with support of the second reading of what is a very fundamental and far-reaching reform of our Public Service legislation. It is certainly a tribute to the work of the Guerin committee, and the extent of its consultation. As members have said, there is no question that there are modifications and changes made in the Bill.

When we deal with matters such as this, there are obviously philosophical questions that have to be raised in terms of the nature and purpose of the Public Service and how that can be expressed, both in legislative and administrative terms.

I must admit that the member for Mallee had me a little puzzled, because in extrapolating on his theme of the *Yes*

Minister theory of public administration, he said, first, that, if there is the combination of a weak Minister and a strong permanent head, we get the worst of all possible worlds—the administrative and other requirements simply override a lot of the public responsibilities. We have a classic *Yes Minister* situation, with the public sector manipulating the Minister very directly. A strong Minister and a weak permanent head means that the Party and its policies will overcome the proper considerations of public administration. Finally, a strong Minister and a strong permanent head apparently means that everyone finds a way around the Minister and his policies.

Apparently, all those combinations have some terrible ramifications, which leaves us with the only combination the honourary member did not mention, that of a weak Minister and a weak permanent head. Apparently, that is the ideal situation. I suggest that his analysis is pretty defective, because checks and balances are built into the system. Surely the fundamental point is that in terms of policy it must be the Minister and Cabinet and the Government that are, in fact, setting the parameters. In terms of the detailed administration, personnel and industrial matters, obviously the administrators in the Public Service, have the chief and prime responsibility.

In relation to the member for Mitcham, who has spent his life in the Public Service and therefore can claim some fairly long and direct experience there, it is interesting that he made mention of that tonight in the context of a Bill on Public Service management. In most of his other addresses to this Chamber he is very keen to talk about small business and free enterprise and other things of which he has had no direct experience whatsoever. Nonetheless, I was pleased to see him revert to the actual areas in which he has a background and skills.

I must admit that he was quite puzzling in the way in which he approached this topic, particularly when he was dealing with what he said was the public antipathy to the Public Service: it is not held in high regard. He was deploring this and saying that overseas he found different attitudes and that this perhaps was an Australian characteristic. I would suggest that he ought to examine the public record of both himself and many of his colleagues who spend much of their time denigrating the public sector, public sector skills, and public sector activities. How many times in this Chamber have we on this side of the House had to stand up for the high level of expertise that we have in our public sector, for its ability to compete directly and to service and provide the infrastructre for the private sector? All that is dismissed normally on the other side.

In other debates, in other contexts, all we hear is that govenment must be made smaller, government must get out of the way, and that everything that the public sector does is somehow putting red tape and regulation around private sector activity. Now we know that that is nonsense, Mr Speaker; it is absolute nonsense. We also know that considerable skills, talents and energies lie within our public sector. I would have thought that, rather than be puzzled over it, the honourable member for Mitcham ought to look to himself and his own Party, because they have set a public climate consistently over many years that denigrates and downplays the role of the public sector. It is about time that he realised that, if that continues, indeed this antipathy will be prevalent and the public sector will indeed by unable to fulfil its vital, fundamental part in our economic development.

We have had other contributions. The member for Light and the member for Torrens both spoke on particular aspects of the Bill that can be dealt with more comprehensively in the Committee stage. I am pleased to see the support that the member for Light gave to outside recruitment and experience and contract appointments at the upper levels of the public sector. I think that that is an important principle. It is embodied in the Bill. There must be a mix between experienced Public Service managers and the new blood that can be brought into an organisation from outside recruitment for limited terms. I think that that mix will work only to the benefit of the public sector, and I am pleased to see that those principles are supported.

In relation to the member for Torrens talking about changes that have been made from the original recommendations of the Guerin report, let me make it clear that the committee was a representative committee. It had Public Service union interests involved and consulted strongly with them. It had private sector involvement, but nonetheless it reported as a committee to the Governemnt. It was then up to the Government to process the recommendations and to make the policy decisions to put it into legislation. There were quite clearly a number of recommendations which were not seen as acceptable or appropriate. This must be so in any such situation.

In particular, the Public Service Association negotiated a number of changes to propositions that had been circulated. It had some fundamental objections to particular areas. It had some minor modifications that it wished to be made, but the process itself was conducted productively, and the consultation was extensive. Those involved on the committee were prepared to debate and argue their propositions and make modifications as required. So, of course, the Bill as it comes before us is not, in exact and precise form, that which would have been proposed by the committee if it simply had had an unfettered discretion to produce a Bill and put it into Parliament. That is as it should be. Therefore, I do not think that in attempting to modify or criticise one picks and chooses and looks at the Guerin report and says, 'That was there, so it must be in the Bill.'

There may well be good reasons why it is not. Those reasons may be because, for instance, the industrial organisations which are vital to the proper working of the Public Service have had some very valid objections to particular provisions, have asked for changes or modifications, and the Government has been prepared to negotiate those and embody them in the Bill. That is as it should be. That is why I think we have a workable piece of legislation which has broad support.

The Leader of the Opposition foreshadowed, as I said earlier, a number of amendments, and went through some provisions of the Bill. I thought that one of his most extraordinary statements was contained in his opening when he talked about the feeling that the community would not be prepared to tolerate tax increases or other revenue raising measures of the Government yet, on the other hand, it demanded more services and a more appropriate response from the public sector.

He said, 'You know, the funny thing is they want to have it both ways.' I was staggered to hear that coming from the Leader of the Opposition, because day after day and time after time in this place that is exactly what he and his Party do. He has certainly put his finger on it: one of the great dilemmas of public administration is how to respond appropriately to the demand for services while at the same time finding the means to do it.

If tonight's address on this Bill by the Leader of the Opposition indicates that at last he has seen the light, that we have some sort of Pauline conversion to the truth, I am very glad to welcome it. However, I fear that tomorrow he will be up on his feet, indicating again that he wants it both ways on this matter.

I conclude on a fundamental point. We have heard tonight about the Commissioner for Public Employment, who has been described as a monster by the Leader of the Opposi-

tion, as *El Supremo* by the member for Torrens, as a dictator and autocrat by the member for Mallee, and so on.

Mr Lewis: Fuhrer and Commissar.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: I am sorry, I missed 'Fuhrer' and the honourable member has added 'Commissar'. It goes from bad to worse. All I can say is that this suggests a very simplistic and false understanding of public sector administration. The analogy of the Commissioner for Public Employment and the Government Management Board as being a board of directors with its executive officer is wrong. We are talking about government: Cabinet lays down the policy and Cabinet is the policy directive—that is the board of management. The Commissioner for Public Employment is dealing with those personnel and industrial areas which the present Public Service Board deals with, but not in the same way as the Public Service Board. Many powers have been transferred elsewhere. These matters will be dealt with in detail in Committee.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! We are dealing with the Bill before the House; we are not dealing with Fuhrers and other things.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clause 1 passed.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD (Deputy Premier): I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD (Chaffey): In recent weeks the ecological decline of the Aldinga reef aquatic reserve has been highlighted in the South Australian media. This problem has been with us for some time and, on the evidence that is available, much of it can be attributed to the stormwater drains in that area. I am not trying to apportion the blame to anyone—this problem has developed over recent years and is one that the State Government has a clear responsibility to do something about.

It is not a problem that any of the existing State Government departments can effectively come to grips with: it is a problem that needs to be looked at by a totally independent authority, and perhaps such an authority could be the James Cook Oceanographic Institute in Queensland. It may be possible for the State Government to obtain an appropriate person or persons to investigate the problem in a totally independent manner. The problem has developed because the government of the day allowed stormwater drains to go into the area. Certainly, it is not my intention to apportion blame for the problem that has resulted.

I am saying that the Government has a responsibility to protect the heritage of this State, and the Aldinga reef aquatic reserve is an important heritage item in South Australia. It is recognised worldwide as being of considerable significance, and it is one of the few aquatic reserves of its type in such close proximity to a major city such as Adelaide. As long as arguments continue about whose fault it is that this situation has been allowed to develop, little progress will be made in solving the problem.

Therefore, I earnestly suggest to the Government and particularly the Minister for Environment and Planning (whom I imagine would have a keen interest in this subject) that serious consideration should be given to seeking the advice of the James Cook Oceanographic Institute. A totally independent body would then assess the situation, and an interim report could be provided, possibly within 12 months, to indicate whether or not stormwater drains that have presently been blamed for the rapid deterioration of the reef are in fact the real problem.

I do not profess to be an expert on this subject at all. In fact, I know little about it but I do recognise that it is an extremely important part of South Australia's heritage and that we will be doing ourselves and future generations a great disservice if we allow this great heritage item to be destroyed. Once it is destroyed, it is gone for ever. Obviously, it has been there for millions of years, but the deterioration has occurred in a matter of five or six years.

Obviously, some action has been taken to precipitate the problem. I believe the problem is even wider than the Aldinga reef aquatic reserve. In fact, the whole of the Gulf of St Vincent is confronted with a deteriorating situation that has been highlighted by abalone divers, who pointed out recently that there is a real deterioration in the abalone beds in the Gulf of St Vincent, particularly on the western shores.

Whether this pollution is a result of stormwater runoff, or possibly Bolivar works, I do not know. However, it is a problem that must be closely examined. The type of pollution occurring today did not occur prior to the development of metropolitan Adelaide because today's pollution involves street runoff rather than natural stream and river runoff into the Gulf. There is much more than turbidity flowing into the Gulf; there are many other problems which come from a developed area, including oil as a result of people changing the oil in their cars in the streets. Some developing suburbs are not sewered and septic effluent overflows into the stormwater drains and runs out to sea. None of us knows exactly what is happening to the ecology as a result of the million or so people living on the peninsula within 20 or 30 miles either side of Adelaide.

Mr Hamilton: What sort of research has been done?

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: I am not sure that much research has been done, but we have in South Australia a unique situation about which I am sure the Minister for Environment and Planning is aware. The Gulfs are unique in that there is no great changeover of the water in them. There is an inflow and an outflow of the tide, but the water is not changing, merely ebbing and flowing. This is not a high energy coastline, so it is a fragile environment.

We now have in excess of a million people living on the peninsula within 20 or 30 miles either side of Adelaide. Those people have dramatically changed the situation which has existed for the past million years in relation to runoff from this area into the Gulf of St Vincent. I believe that the concern expressed by the Scuba Divers Association and professional abalone divers needs to be examined as a matter of urgency. This matter was raised in the Legislative Council on 20 August 1985 in a question about the abalone industry asked by the Hon. Peter Dunn, as follows:

> In view of the fact that the huge tracts of once productive abalone beds have died on the western side of St Vincent Gulf, and in view of the fact that the department was warned six years ago of the imminent ecological disaster that has now occurred, will he immediately send a research team into this area to assess the damage?

I believe that that is an extremely responsible question asked of the Minister of Fisheries. However, I was extremely concerned by the arrogance of the Minister's answer to Mr Dunn: in fact, I think that that answer was absolutely appalling.

The Minister of Fisheries did not create this problem, but he should have a real concern about it. This concern has been expressed for a number of years. This is a deteriorating situation. I believe that the Minister of Fisheries, to show good faith, ought to acknowledge that there is a problem;

and he should be prepared to bring in an independent consultant, an expert who has no preconceived ideas about the problem here in South Australia. He should let that independent expert assess the situation for the benefit of all of us.

I suggest that the James Cook Oceanographic Institute in Queensland might be a place from which we could obtain a suitable expert—a professional in this field—to independently assess this problem and to possibly give us a lead as to what we ought to be doing about this problem. At the moment, the argument will continue to pass back and forward between the various scuba diving interests in St Vincent Gulf.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's time has expired. The honourable member for Albert Park.

Mr HAMILTON (Albert Park): I rise tonight to address a couple of questions, if time permits. I am concerned that in previous debates that have taken place in this House comments have been made in relation to public servants and those people who serve in semi-government instrumentalities. Statements like 'dictatorial public servants', 'Fuhrers' and the like do no credit to any member of this Parliament when they start reflecting in that way on public servants. One could say quite clearly and honestly that people who make such statements are only trying to make a political point. I will not take the issue any further than that, but I will elaborate at some other time.

I have been in this Parliament for six years. On 15 September, that is, last Sunday—my daughter's birthday—I celebrated six years in this Parliament. I believe that I will be here for much longer, much to the dismay of members opposite.

Mr Becker interjecting:

Mr HAMILTON: That view is not shared by my constituents in the District of Albert Park. I refer to a serious matter, namely, the many criticisms that have been made of Government and semi-government instrumentalities. Over the years we have heard criticism of the Electricity Trust of South Australia. From my dealings, as a member of Parliament, with ETSA and from the dealings of my secretary, on many occasions, of which I am fully aware, I know that the attitude of the people at ETSA to members of Parliament and their secretaries is such that I can only sing their praises. Their compassion, understanding and desire to assist members of Parliament is equal to anything that I have encountered in South Australia. I know that members on both sides of the Chamber can speak about the assistance that has been provided to many constituents. The ETSA board, the administration, the people handling constituents' inquiries and, indeed, the rank and file members of ETSA should be applauded.

I have been informed of the activities of the Victorian equivalent of ETSA. I understand that that organisation has set up a customer relations scheme, which I believe is highly desirable in South Australia, to provide an opportunity for all ETSA consumers—whether they be people such as myself, the average Joe Bloggs in the community or business people—to go direct to a customer relations officer within the department. I will refer later to what I perceive to be a need for a similar type of officer in other Government departments.

I now refer to customers' requirements. It is very important to have such a scheme. I have spoken to the Minister about it and look forward to receiving further responses from him in relation to this matter. I hope that he will be susceptible to the idea as I believe it will do much to enhance further the good name of the Electricity Trust of South Australia.

Another matter that has concerned me since before I was elected to this Parliament is the question of crime in South Australia. When I was a candidate for the seat of Albert Park back in 1979 I was subjected to what I considered to be an outrageous series of advertisements in the news media. I considered some of those advertisements to be filthy, and I am on record in this Parliament as saying that the person who paid for them was lower than shark's droppings at the bottom of the ocean. Fouler connotations could be expressed.

When I was elected as the member for Albert Park I questioned the then Government of the day which, I believe, supported many of those advertisements which the 'gentleman'—if I can use that word—from Kangaroo Island paid for. I was outraged by them and closely questioned the Government of the day about crime in South Australia. I heard very little from the then Government about these issues. It is interesting that when the then Government became the Opposition we suddenly heard a great deal about the incidence of crime, vandalism, rape, incest, abuse of children, etc., in the community. It is worth recording a comparison, which I will do later, hopefully during this session, regarding the number of questions asked by the then Government backbenchers about the problems of crime and vandalism *vis-a-vis* their period in Opposition. It was pleasing to see that the Premier recently went out on patrol—as reported in the *Advertiser*—and observed the activities of police officers. I commend him for that.

Mr Lewis interjecting:

Mr HAMILTON: That is the cynicism of that fool opposite. When I was elected as the member for Albert Park I took it upon myself to contact the local C1 division at the Port Adelaide police station. I wanted to understand what was taking place in the Police Force. I hoped to be able to learn from my experience and stand up in this Parliament and speak with some authority about the activities of the boys in blue. It was a very enlightening experience, as I have related in this Parliament on a number of occasions, to see the activities of the rank and file police officers—the grass roots—and what they have to contend with.

Indeed, I learnt a great deal during my period in Opposition about the role of the Police Force. I saw how members were briefed, the changeover of shifts and activities occurring in the electorate. I recall one day going to the Parks Community Centre with an inspector and seeing a young lad high as a kite, whether on drugs or hallucinogens. I saw the way in which he was handled. He was taken to the Port Adelaide police station where he was searched and certain procedures were followed. The officer in charge tried to contact the parents, whom they eventually found in a local hotel. To the dismay of that officer the response from the parent was, 'Leave the little bastard there. We will pick him up in the morning.'

That was very enlightening to me and it is an indication of many of the things that the Police Force has to contend with. I commend the Premier. I am not of the cynical view of members opposite that the Premier's going on patrol was a political gimmick. I commend that action to any member. I urge other honourable members to look at what the Police Force has to contend with. It is not an easy life. One might almost suggest it is analogous to the role of a politician. It is a difficult and hard life, full of abuse, and is not appreciated by the majority of people in the electorate. However, when they have a problem the first people they come to are politicians or members of the Police Force.

Mr BECKER (Hanson): Time devoted to the grievance debate is usually taken up with general grievances, and we have had quite a bit of that over the past few months, particularly in this session. However, I think that it is

appropriate to use this as an opportunity to sing the praises of those people in the community who are fulfilling a worthwhile role. Tonight I want to speak about the Training and Placement Service (TAPS), part of the Epilepsy Association of South Australia. This program is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Employment and Industrial Relations, and has been operating in South Australia for just on two years. Very little has been said about it because we were not allowed to say very much. Under the terms of the Commonwealth Government funding, recipients of funds must wait for at least two years for an evaluation of the program, after which time recipients are told whether or not the program will continue.

I brought back details of this program from my first parliamentary study trip overseas. We often hear criticism in the media and by various people of politicians and their lurks, perks and trips overseas, but we never hear of the results of any such trips. We never hear details of something good for the State resulting from an overseas trip.

The Training and Placement Service provides psychological testing and assessment of people with epilepsy or with various forms of epilepsy which are very difficult to control and contain. The program is to assess their living skills and their personal habits, to identify the type of epilepsy. It was found that on many occasions people with epilepsy did not even know what it looked like until they saw someone having a seizure. Therefore, the service has filled a huge gap in the community. It is hard enough to sell the acceptance of people with epilepsy let alone trying to sell to employers the need to employ these people.

Within the past two years 70 people have gone through the program, which lasts for 16 weeks. During that 16 week course there are two periods of two weeks work experience, and the trainees receive payment for the work that they do, as well as being paid to attend the course. There is no cost whatsoeover to an employer; there is no increased cost of worker's compensation; and insurance cover is supplied by the Epilepsy Association, which is sponsoring the program in conjunction with the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations.

During that two year period some 50 young people have been placed in full-time employment. This is a record in relation to any type of placement within Australia. Never before have any more than about six or seven people with epilepsy been placed in worthwhile employment, let alone full time employment, by the Commonwealth Employment Service or any other Government agency. So, at last we have a program which is fulfilling the needs of one group of disabled people.

Of course, this has been a spin-off from the International Year of the Disabled, as well. It is fair to say that the program is extensive. It employs six people—a program director, a psychologist, a group worker, a job development officer, a social worker, and a program assistant. The program costs about $140 000 per annum. Therefore, in two years the Commonwealth Government has spent some $290 000 to assess and train 70 trainees. But for every person we place in employment, we save the Commonwealth Government about $11 000 per annum, as the Government is not required to pay the costs of providing invalid or sickness pensions, or unemployment benefits. Further, it means that the health benefits of these people are then covered by their own payments, whether through Medicare, or whatever. Also they contribute to taxation, and they can provide their own insurance, etc.

So we assess that in two years this program has saved the Commonwealth Government well in excess of $800 000. Whilst it has cost the Commonwealth Government only $290 000, there is a considerable saving of some $510 000 to the Commonwealth Government in two years. Those figures will compound as time progresses.

I want to mention this particularly because the six staff who are involved in this program have done an excellent job. It has been very difficult to retain the staff for this type of work. It requires basic skills, and then the expert training is developed on the job. We find that the staff whom we are training are becoming so skilled that they are then sought by other agencies, Government or voluntary, to work in other fields. The competititon is very great and makes it difficult to retain their services. One cannot blame them for taking the opportunity to seek higher promotion and the opportunity to work in other areas of the disabled.

So, the training and placement service, as I said, funded by the Commonwealth Government, fulfils a worthwhile role within the community. It provides the opportunity for a group of people to go out and find the employers who will employ people with epilepsy in the categories that they are capable of handling. Doing that and putting these people into full-time employment cannot be measured in human terms. Whilst the financial cost can be coldly stated, the human benefits cannot be measured.

However, we know that the incidence of seizures and epilepsy has improved dramatically in those 50 who have been placed in employment over the past two years and who have retained their employment, proving that, if we treat disabled people as normal human beings and give them the opportunity to be part of the workforce and to make a contribution within that workforce and the productivity levels, if we encourage them, give them the basic education and keep them on on a continuing basis, the incidence of those disabilities improves dramatically because of the psychological benefit.

There is the real human benefit to society in all directions. It takes the pressure off the family and is also of tremendous assistance to the community. This area of the disabled has worried me for many years. We are particularly proud in South Australia that we have been able to take a program, modify it to Australian conditions, further reduce it and improve it to meet South Australian conditions, because we have had very difficult periods of unemployment. The job opportunities that are available are not always in the unskilled or semi-skilled areas, so it has been very difficult to find the right job for the right person, but we have been able to do it.

The program is based in the city, and this makes it difficult for the country trainees, but in the past 12 months we have been able to negotiate with the Commonwealth Government and the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations the opportunity for young people in the country to come to the city. They are given an additional allowance, which covers their board or any other accommodation expenses, and they are also compensated for travelling expenses to and from their homes three times during the program, so that they are not totally isolated. It has been of tremendous benefit to the young country people as well. We hope that this program can continue.

When we look at a program such as this and see what can be done with effort, combining the help of volunteers and professionals, we see that a worthwhile contribution can be made. Perhaps this is one area which State and Federal Governments should continue to monitor very closely and in which they should consider providing training programs along the same lines for those who do not have any disabilities. The biggest problem in this community today is youth unemployment, and any programs that are initiated by any Government must receive the full support not only of the Parliament but of the taxpayers of the State.

Motion carried.

At 10.30 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday 19 September at 2 p.m.