HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 3 March 1988

The SPEAKER (Hon. J.P. Trainer) took the Chair at 11 a.m. and read prayers.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 3 December. Page 2484.)

Mr De LAINE (Price): The Government is aware of, and understands, the concern which prompted the introduction of this Bill, but cannot support its second reading. There are two important reasons why the Government is not in favour of the proposal: the first relates to the rationale behind the introduction for local government elections of optional preferential voting counted from the bottom up; and the second is the Government's conviction that the alternative system proposed by the member for Victoria is inequitable when used to fill more than one vacancy and that is the key point.

Intense debate took place in 1984 when Parliament amended the Local Government Act and replaced the simple majority system with the two preferential systems, namely, an optional preferential system counted from the bottom up, and the proportional representation system. The proportional representation (PR) system was initially an option available only to council areas without wards or subdivisions but, by amendment made prior to the 1985 local government elections, the option was made available to all councils. The optional preferential method which was put forward by the Government at that time was carefully chosen in consultation with the Electoral Commissioner to meet the following specifications:

1. A system of optional preferential voting designed to promote consistency in voter responsibility at Federal, State and local government elections.
2. A system which is simple and easy to administer, in the light of the varying administrative capacities of councils.
3. A system which would promote broader community representation on councils.
4. A system which would not promote, or facilitate, overt factionalism or the entry of Party politics into local government.

I think that that is a desirable element. As my colleague the Hon. Gavin Keneally, the then Minister of Local Government, pointed out on several occasions in response to criticism in 1984 that the system was undemocratic (the same criticism now being made by the member for Victoria), the fact that minority candidates do not, under this system, have their candidacy overwhelmed by the weight of second preferences flowing from the most favoured candidates ensures that the third and fourth objectives that I mentioned (the broader community representation and the elimination of factionalism in Party politics) can be achieved.

The bottom-up counting system proceeds by excluding the least preferred candidates and transferring their votes to continuing candidates according to the next preference expressed, until the number of candidates remaining equals the number of vacancies. Under this system the size of a candidate's winning margin is not important. That, in itself, is important. True, in multi-member electorates popular candidates may gain large numbers of votes while less popular candidates may also be elected with a small number of votes, as in the member for Victoria's extreme example. However, even in that extreme example, whether one approves of the result or not, the system produces the outcome that it was designed to produce.

The majority of voters have the candidate of their first preference elected, and the candidates elected have the majority of the first preference votes cast. Broad representation is achieved and the dominance of a strong faction is avoided. The optional preferential system specifically discourages 'ticketing' or 'coat-tailing', something that was undesirable in past years under the old system.

This system requires individuals to stand on their merits and obtain first preference votes. It was specifically chosen to cater to the view that Parties and factions have no place in local government, a view consistently expressed by representatives of local government, the Local Government Association, and successive Lord Mayors during the consultation process leading up to its introduction.

It also became evident during and subsequent to the 1984 debate that, notwithstanding this view, there was support in local government circles for a system that would allow the preferences of the most popular candidates to carry and would ensure that the major interests of the electorate were represented roughly in proportion to the voting strengths of those interests. The proportional representation method of voting and counting, which does precisely that, is now an option available to all councils. The rationale of PR is that each successful candidate should represent the same number of electors. This is achieved by use of a quota. A candidate must win a quota of votes to get elected.

The quota is calculated so that the number of quotas available is equal to the number of vacancies to be filled. With two vacancies the quota (the electoral support required to be elected) is about 33 per cent, with three vacancies about 25 per cent, with four vacancies about 20 per cent, and so on. As in the optional preferential system, each vote is used to elect a maximum of one candidate, whereas under proportional representation the surplus votes of any candidate elected are distributed to the continuing candidates in order of preference. I repeat that each council in the State is presently able to make a choice between two systems.

This is important: councils have a choice. If the majority preferential system is not working, or the councils deem it not to be working, they have the option of adopting either the preferential system or the proportional representation system. Councils whose main concern is to encourage broad community representation, discourage ticketing, and employ a system which is simple to count will choose optional preferential, as most councils do, whereas councils whose main concern is to ensure that the major interests of the electorate are reflected proportionately in the membership of the council will choose the more complex proportional representation system.

The Bill removes this important flexibility by replacing the optional preferential method with a method which, in the assessment of this and other Governments, has grave problems when used in multi-member electorates. Once again, I stress 'multi-member' electorates. Prior to the 1985 local government election, my colleague, the then Minister of Local Government, undertook to review the operation of the new counting system following the conclusion of the election. A working party consisting of representatives of the Local Government Association, the Department of Local Government, the Municipal Officers Association, the Institute of Municipal Management and the State Electoral Department examined the effects of the two methods of

counting and, as far as was possible, compared their outcomes with several other available systems.

The working party considered the majority preferential system now proposed by the member for Victoria and, although it was not possible to field test the system using actual voting papers from the election (because voters are not required under the optional system to indicate preferences for all candidates), the report of the working party cites with approval the conclusions contained in a Victorian Local Government Department Information Service paper entitled 'An Analysis of Current Municipal Practices in Australia and New Zealand' prepared for the Victorian Electoral Procedures Review Committee. That paper concluded:

> The inequity of the majority preferential system when used to fill more than one vacancy is that it strongly favours the Party or group ticket, often out of all proportion to voter support. Additionally, the people who cast their vote for the candidate who happens to be elected have in reality two votes, or even three. In brief, the majority preferential system, when used in contests where more than one—

and I stress 'more than one'—

> candidate is to be elected, does not adequately provide for representation in proportion to popular support.

The report of the working party sets out a worked example based on a Victorian case which I need not go through in detail here since the effects of the system proposed by the member for Victoria are well known, and members will no doubt be aware that it has been widely criticised in Parliament, in the press and in academic spheres. It was replaced as a method of election to the Australian Senate in 1946 by the Chifley Labor Government which introduced the quota-preferential method of proportional representation. It has not been used for election to the South Australian Legislative Council since 1973.

On the basis of the Victorian paper (which I mentioned earlier) the Victorian Parliament now has before it a local government Bill which provides for the use of the quota-preferential proportional representation method in local government elections where two or more members are to be elected. The majority preferential system flies in the face of local government's express wish that Party politics be kept out of South Australian local government.

I am aware that the member for Victoria has received some support for this move from a small minority of councils whose experience with the optional preferential system has led them to conclude that it is unsatisfactory. Criticism of the system following the 1987 periodical elections came mainly from councils in the South-East of the State which were holding their first contested elections since the new counting systems were introduced and perhaps may not have fully appreciated the differences between the two systems available to local government and the different advantages that can be obtained.

Certainly, of the small number of complaints which were received from electors, most refer to the optional preferential system and to the disappointment of electors on discovering that their second preferences carried no weight. The remedy is for those councils now using the optional preferential system to reconsider the use of the proportional representation method which the 1985 election review working party considered to be the fairest and most equitable system where two or more candidates are required to be elected.

In summary, although the Government does not make light of any dissatisfaction which still remains with the local government voting system, it cannot support the majority preferential system. Both the systems now available achieve a greater degree of representation in local government elections than ever before—a degree of representation which the majority preferential system does not provide. A system is not unrepresentative simply because one member may be elected with a considerably greater or lesser margin than others. The purpose behind multi-member electorates is that the wishes of minority groups, as well as the majority groups, can be expressed in the candidates elected, and this principle is vitally important for local government, which is the level of government closest to the community. I oppose the second reading.

Mr BLACKER secured the adjournment of the debate.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC RECORD

Adjourned debate on motion of Mr Meier:

That this House congratulates the former Labor Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, for condemning the present Hawke Government for its abysmal economic record and thanks Mr Whitlam for pointing out that Treasurer Keating has got it wrong and should stop making his scathing criticisms.

(Continued from 18 February. Page 2872.)

Mr MEIER (Goyder): I am very pleased that I have the opportunity to continue my remarks on this motion. As I indicated when last I spoke on this matter, I have not agreed with Gough Whitlam on many things in past years. Certainly he absolutely wrecked this country's economy in the 1970s. However, comparing Gough Whitlam's time in office with the Hawke Government's record shows Whitlam up in a very positive light and Hawke in an even more negative light.

All members who have supported the Labor Party in past years should take note of what Mr Whitlam, a Labor Leader and a recognised world leader of the Labor Party, said, namely, that Mr Keating had got it wrong. Well, we certainly have known that for a long time. Remember also that Mr Whitlam said that he would not cop 'smart arse comments' about his Government. In fact, Mr Whitlam went on to say, 'An official ranking of world economies had Australia in a better position at the end of 1975 than now.' That again is not difficult to understand.

Mr Whitlam also said that for five years the Hawke Government had failed to tackle issues such as constitutional reform, uniform companies laws and injuries compensation. We all know that the list could go on and on with things to which the Hawke Government has failed to direct attention and on which it has failed the people of Australia—and certainly the people of South Australia. It does not really matter what one looks at. I have before me a graph (and it is a pity that I cannot have it incorporated in *Hansard*) which shows interest rates on housing loans from the period 1950 to 1986. Certainly, we saw a significant increase in housing loan interest rates during the Whitlam era, when they went up to close to 10 per cent and held there during much of the Fraser time; then, they just reached 11 per cent at the end of the Fraser era.

However, what has happened since? Those people who have taken out a loan certainly know. In the early part of the Hawke Government, interest rates went up to 13.5 per cent, then to 15.5 per cent, and, although my graph ran out after 15.5 per cent, they went higher than that. Thankfully, they have come down a little now to 13.5 per cent or 14 per cent, but they are nothing like the figure of 10 per cent that obtained at the end of the Fraser period and, we must acknowledge, nothing like the 8 per cent or 9 per cent that applied in the Whitlam era. So, Gough has got it right for once, and he recognises how the Hawke Government, with

Keating as Treasurer, has mucked things up. It was not unusual to see Gough Whitlam coming out, because Senator Walsh, the Minister for Finance, Paul Keating's right-hand man, also attacked the Government's budget policies at the time of the last budget. He echoed Treasurer Keating's famous banana republic comments and claimed that Australia was going down the Argentinian road. So, it is the members of the Hawke Government who have been illustrating how the Hawke Government is wrong. I guess we could take that right through to the recent Adelaide by-election, where it was illustrated throughout the electorate by a 12 per cent swing against Labor, that Hawke definitely had got it wrong, and that Keating, his right-hand man and economic adviser, certainly had made tragic errors.

But what about Paul Keating? One has to give him full credit for trying to gloss over the situation and say that things are perhaps not as bad as they really are. I will refer to some of his comments a little later. He keeps saying that the J curve will turn soon and that we should simply give it time. However, after some five years that J curve must be the oldest and most outmoded J curve that any country has ever seen. I refer to some newspaper headlines and comments in this respect. On 5 October a headline stated '"Ignore dollar speculation", says Keating'; he was commenting on the crisis facing the Australian dollar at that time. Before that, though, in August, he said 'June accounts show economy on track'. He went on to make some comments on the modest improvement that the Government had shown in the figures for the 1986-87 financial year. In July, he said 'Economy on the way up', and the first paragraph of the article stated:

Australia's latest trade figures vindicate the Federal Government's economic strategy, according to the Treasurer, Mr Keating.

Mr Keating would have to win any award for being an optimist. He is probably the ultimate optimist. The latest thing we have heard is that he is seeking to take over as Prime Minister. I wish him all the best, but soon the Government will be out of office quick smart. I think the public can see through Mr Keating, the fellow who has had some very questionable economic dealings, I think we could say—but I will not go into any of those things at present.

So, how do we tie up those comments made by Mr Keating with those made by other people? At the time in July when Mr Keating said 'Economy on way up' a major article in the *Australian*, in July, was headed 'Why the worst is yet to come' and went on to look at some of the very worrying facts and statistics. That did not exactly agree with comments made by our Treasurer. Also in July of last year the *Australian* carried a major article headed 'Less than prosperous new year forecast'. The first paragraph of that article stated:

The leaders of five prominent Australian companies, BHP, Shell Australia Limited, Nissan Australia Limited, Western Mining Corporation Holdings Limited and Woolworths Limited are united in their predictions of limited investment, a sluggish tight economy with high inflation, volatility in interest rates and the dollar, and a long way to go with the nation's balance of payments problem.

The article is certainly very detailed and cites various examples and comments from people. So, Mr Keating is trying to say one thing but the business community and Australia as a whole are saying another thing. Again, I must congratulate Mr Whitlam on recognising that the Labor Government of the 1980s is a 'destroying government', that it just does not see reality, and that it is a government that is bashing its way through, with its charismatic leader, Bob Hawke, managing to persuade people to his way of thinking, because of his good television presentation, his interest in sport and association with the right type of people, such as the Shark. He also likes to show people that he keeps company with such people as Alan Bond, Kerry Packer, and the like.

Of course the average Australian, the little man, has lost confidence in Bob Hawke because he has thrown them off and said, 'Look, the truth is going to come out—my real friends are the big business people of Australia.' Again, the Adelaide by-election clearly showed the situation. Gough Whitlam is supported in his comments condemning the Hawke Government for its abysmal economic record in press article after press article. I went through some of the articles over the past six to nine months. I do not have time to go through the articles for the past four years, but at a quick glance they also indicate the same type of headlines. Let us look at some of them.

To take the latest period, on 12 February this year the *News* carried the headline 'Decline on way' and the article stated:

A leading indicator of Australian economic activity points to a fall in economic growth in the coming months.

We have been seeing a fall for so long. Another Government Minister is quoted in an article of 12 February in the *News*, headed 'Button sounds debt alarm', as follows:

We'll be the poor whites. Australia had to move to get itself out of debt or we would become a poor white country in the South Pacific, Industry and Commerce Minister, Senator Button, has warned.

Senator Button has an idea of what is supposed to be going on. Sometimes I think that he is on the wrong side of politics. His ideas have a lot of truth in them, but Hawke and Keating ignore them. Whitlam recognises also what is going on, as do other members of the Hawke ministry. I refer again to the Minister of Finance, Senator Walsh, who recognises it, but Hawke and Keating plod on regardless, bringing the country closer and closer to economic doom.

I do not have that article in which Keating made the statement that overseas people should ignore what Ministers other than the Prime Minister and himself as Treasurer say on Australia's economic record. He obviously did not like Senator Button saying that Australia could become a poor white country. He did not like the comments about going down the Argentinian road by Senator Walsh. Of course it was Keating who said that we were heading towards banana republic status. It is a great worry when Ministers echo Keating's comments time after time. Senator Button is reported in February in the *Advertiser*, under the heading 'Stop handouts, Minister warns', as follows:

A key Federal Minister says the Government has to ditch its give-away mentality and stop bowing to pressure groups.

Another senior Minister recognises the problems! Not only senior Minsters but also Mr Rupert Murdoch, another friend of Bob Hawke, was reported in November 1987 in the *Advertiser* under the heading 'Murdoch predicts tough times ahead' as follows:

News Corporation chief executive, Mr Rupert Murdoch, has predicted tougher times for Australia in the next few months as it enters a recession.

Time after time people see it. I will race through some other headlines. In January 1988 a spokesman from the Chamber of Commerce stated 'Outlook not too bright'. The heading for a News editorial stated, 'Advance Australia—expect less, give more'. The article stated:

Australia's prospects at the start of its third century look to be as forbidding as the hot and hostile land which greeted the first settlers in 1788.

What indictments! Another article is headed, 'Economic problems home grown', while yet another is headed, 'Prime Minister's attack a classic cop-out, says Howard.' That article goes on to detail how Hawke was trying to blame the

rest of the world for Australia's problems. We have learnt that Hawke is completely out of touch. Another article is headed, 'Third world status upon us: Spalvins.' Mr Spalvins, the Managing Director of Adelaide Steamship Company, says in the first paragraph of that article:

Australia's balance of trade situation is threatening to pull the nation down to third world status.

That article is as recent as November last year. Another article also in November last year is headed, 'No coincidence share crash hit Australia hard'—and neither it was. Another article from last year is headed, 'Bank warns of economy plunge'. I have many more articles with similar headlines that I could go on reading to the House.

Gough Whitlam has got it right, perhaps for the first time. I hope that the Hawke Government and Keating will now see that they have got it wrong. Certainly the people of South Australia now recognise that. It will be very interesting to see the result of the New South Wales general election, which I am sure will reflect some of the dissatisfaction being felt throughout the country; and it will be interesting to see the result of the Port Adelaide by-election, because the South Australian branch of the Labor Party is trying to keep its act together by smiling at the left wing, looking at the centre left and keeping in mind the unity faction and all the others that have been left way out. I ask the House to support the motion.

Mr GREGORY secured the adjournment of the debate.

HOUSING TRUST RENTS

Adjourned debate on motion of Mr Meier:

That this House urges the South Australian Housing Trust to reassess the method by which rents are assessed for persons on a service pension whereby child allowances are taken into consideration by the trust, thereby forcing the service pensioners' child or children to pay a share of the rent.

(Continued from 25 February. Page 3115.)

Ms LENEHAN (Mawson): I move:

That this motion be postponed and taken into consideration on Thursday 24 March.

Motion carried.

Mr S.G. EVANS: Mr Speaker, can I ask a question on that?

The SPEAKER: Order! Is the honourable member taking a point of order?

Mr S.G. EVANS: Yes, Sir. I am raising a point of order as to whether the honourable member has the right to postpone this motion.

The SPEAKER: Order! It is the House that just made that collective decision by agreeing to the motion put by the honourable member. The Chair can only assume that some degree of concurrence was reached beforehand.

Mr MEIER: On a point of order, Sir. There was prior discussion between the member for Mawson and me as to the timing of the debate on this issue, and some agreement was reached.

Mr S.G. EVANS: I would like this issue cleared up once and for all. Can a member move that a motion be postponed straight off like that when it is under someone else's name, and without first moving that it be further adjourned?

The SPEAKER: Order! Rather than hold up the deliberations of the Chamber I think that there should be private discussions on this matter.

COMMISSIONER FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Adjourned debate on motion of Ms Lenehan:

That this House deplores the public attacks of the member for Davenport on the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity and expresses its support for the Commissioner's efforts in giving effect to the policies of the Parliament as expressed through the Equal Opportunity Act 1984.

(Continued from 25 February. Page 3118.)

Ms LENEHAN (Mawson): Mr Speaker, I understand that if I speak I close the debate.

The SPEAKER: That is correct: if the honourable member speaks she closes the debate.

Ms LENEHAN: Mr Speaker—

The SPEAKER: Order! In making that comment the Chair normally pauses for a second or so to give any other member an opportunity to rise. As no other member has risen I call the honourable member for Mawson.

Ms LENEHAN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise to speak in support of my motion and, in so doing, to refute some of the claims made by the member for Davenport when he spoke to this motion last week. The member for Davenport said that he was not talking about either the rights or wrongs of equal opportunity. In fact, he said that Ms Tiddy had threatened employers by saying, 'If you do not abide by the law you will be either named in Parliament or prosecuted in the courts.'

That is not a valid comment. Ms Tiddy was approached by a journalist and asked, 'What are the penalties for people who do not abide by the affirmative action legislation?'—which, I might remind the House, I clearly explained was a Federal Act. Ms Tiddy strongly advised the journalist to contact the affirmative action agency in Sydney to clarify the matter. However, because she is charged with the responsibility of knowing that particular law, she did say that it was her understanding that, if a company failed to lodge a report or if the report it was required under the legislation to lodge was not lodged in a manner that was acceptable, then the Federal Minister—and let me emphasise this for the member for Davenport—and only the Federal Minister could name that company in the Federal Parliament.

To suggest, therefore, that the Commissioner was threatening and blackmailing the employers of this State is quite inaccurate and very misleading. She did not at any point say that she would be doing that. With respect to the term 'prosecution', the only matter in which the Commissioner has any responsibility regarding any kind of legal action is in the area of civil action under the Equal Opportunity Act of this Parliament. I might remind the House that the Commissioner made it very clear to the media that there is always a first step, which is a conciliation process, before any matter raised with the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity is ever acted on. If, in fact, that conciliation process breaks down, the Commissioner can summon the parties to a hearing of the Equal Opportunity Tribunal and, in a very small number of cases, some penalties are available under that part of the legislation.

However, I am informed that the Commissioner never on any occasion mentioned the word 'prosecution'. It is not within her ambit to suggest prosecution, and she has not done so. I believe that that clarifies the point. I also believe that it would have been the correct thing for the member for Davenport to contact the Commissioner and clarify that position for himself, rather than rushing out to the media and claiming that the Commissioner was trying to blackmail employers and saying in the Parliament last week that she was trying to threaten employers.

Having clarified that point, I would like to move to this area of male and female fitters. It is very interesting that the honourable member has chosen to raise the matter that, under the Equal Opportunity Act, women will be forced to have male members of the retail industry fitting them with clothes and, conversely, that male members of the community will be forced to have female shop assistants fitting their clothes. Let me once and for all put this matter to rest. If in a matter of personal privacy and dignity there is a requirement for a fitting of garments, a member of the public is entitled—and would be totally supported by the commission—to request a member of his or her own sex to do the fitting of garments.

However, in the real world, about 90 per cent of garments tried on by male or female members of the community occurs in the privacy of a cubicle where the curtains are drawn or the door is closed—and no shop assistants are present. In most cases, one takes the garments into the fitting room oneself and is given a token to indicate the number of garments taken.

Who would question whether it was a male or female performing that role? There is little actual fitting of garments in the retail clothing area. Once again, that is a red herring. The honourable member in fact accused me of telling lies: he said that I accused him of suggesting that he had attacked other senior female Government officials. He called my supposed attack an untruth. At no time did I ever accuse the member for Davenport of attacking other women members who have been appointed to either Public Service or senior statutory authority positions. What I did say was that members of the Opposition had done that and that, in fact, the member for Davenport was getting on the band wagon. One need only read what I said to see that his comments are quite inaccurate.

Another matter that I found interesting was that the honourable member made much of who bears children in our community. He went on to say that the day would come when men would be able to bear children. Frankly, I do not believe that that has any bearing at all on the matter that I raised in this Parliament. He seemed incapable of making the distinction between who does the bearing and the rearing, as if one has automatically to do both. That is not only irrelevant but a red herring.

The member for Davenport suggested that I suggested he was calling for a decrease in women's services. After re-reading my speech carefully, I pointed out at no time did I suggest that the honourable member was suggesting that there should be a decrease in women's services. In fact, I support totally the provision of services for all people in our community who are in any way disadvantaged and I think, once again, that the honourable member has made that point into a red herring. The member for Davenport made yet another vicious attack on the Commissioner; under the headline 'Tiddy should go' he states:

> What was so terrible about that? The Commissioner's headline 'Jobs for the boys over'—

He goes on to say:

> What about jobs for the girls?

I would like to put on the public record that, in her comments to the media, Ms Tiddy actually said that jobs for the boys and jobs for the girls are over. In fact, the media chose to leave out reference to jobs for the girls, and that is a matter that the media must take up and look at. It is blatant misquoting. I do not want to take up the time of the House any longer, but I want to remind members from both sides of Parliament what this motion seeks to do. The motion, which was moved last week, states:

> That this House deplores—

it does nothing more than deplores—

> the public attacks of the member for Davenport on the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity and expresses its support for the Commissioner's efforts in giving effect to the policies of the Parliament as expressed through the Equal Opportunity Act 1984.

In asking members to support the motion, I am merely seeking the support of Parliament for the function and role of the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity in administering the legislation that has been passed by this Parliament. It is imperative that, if we are to move forward and address the inequalities that exist in our community in a responsible, mature and sensible way, we must support the commission in its work—we must support the Commissioner. Therefore, to engage in the kind of personalised attacks that show a complete lack of understanding of the Acts that the Commissioner is charged with implementing is really to denigrate not just women but the whole community. It is also to denigrate the parliamentary process because, in fact, the statutory officer we are talking about has been charged with the responsibility of carrying out her work by this Parliament. I call on all members to support this motion.

Motion carried.

KALYRA HOSPITAL

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

> That, in the opinion of this House, the Government's recent decision on Kalyra Hospital is unjustified and should be reversed.

(Continued from 25 February. Page 3124.)

Ms LENEHAN (Mawson): In re-reading my concluding remarks in opposition to the motion of the member for Davenport last week, I noted that there had been an error in reporting the last sentence. What I had said—

Mr S.G. Evans interjecting:

Ms LENEHAN: Yes, well I missed that last word. I had checked it but I missed the last word. I said that the Department of Veterans Affairs has appointed Dr Ian Maddox as interim Director of the hospice unit and that one of the responsibilties that Dr Maddox was charged with was to work closely with the officers of the commission, the Repatriation General Hospital and other interested parties 'in the resolution' (that was in fact what I said) of any issues which might arise and also in promoting and overseeing the development of the unit. I do not think it was reported quite like that; therefore, I repeat that last sentence.

In relation to Kalyra's future role, I believe it is important to have on the public record that, as a result of negotiations by the Health Commission, the Department of Community Services and Health has offered the James Brown Memorial Trust 40 nursing home beds. I think that is something that should be added to the debate and put on the public record.

I believe that we as a Parliament must look at the ramifications of the motion of the member for Davenport. If, in fact, we were to support the motion, and if the Government were to carry it through, what would it mean? To reverse the decision at this stage would jeopardise the following (and I ask members to consider exactly what that would mean): the $100 000 per annum recurrent funding for public hospice beds at the Mary Potter Hospice at Calvary Hospital; the $160 000 recurrent funding for public hospice beds at the Phillip Kennedy Centre; the funding of Australia's first professor of palliative care (I think a most significant move forward in terms of addressing the issues and problems in this area); and the extension of hospice services based at the Lyell McEwin Health Service and the Modbury Hospital.

It would also place in doubt the extension of the services provided by the Pain Clinic at the Flinders Medical Centre. These will affect a large number of people in the community. As I pointed out in my speech last week, the amount of money that can be saved through the Government's decision will be put to excellent use within the community. I oppose the motion.

Mr S.G. EVANS (Davenport): The member for Mawson amazes me. It is so easy to make statements about what a Government intends to say as opposed to what it will say, and I will refer to that again later. In the future, when we ask how much it is costing to upgrade facilities at Daws Road and other areas as a result of action taken by the Health Commission which had to try to accommodate a pig-headed decision by Dr Cornwall, I wonder whether we will get a straight answer, or whether we have now reached a point in public affairs where Government departments are so big and powerful that they can hide the actual costs of certain projects and exclude from the total cost the overheads and supervision work that goes towards achieving a particular change. I give the warning now, and I hope that, in the future, when the question is asked how much it costs to upgrade Daws Road to bring it to a standard equal to that of Kalyra, we will get a straight answer. I say that now so that the Health Commission will understand that skulduggery cannot be condoned.

In the end the Minister has to take the responsibility but, in current circumstances, when Ministers do not have to tell the truth in Parliament anymore, it is almost impossible for a member of Parliament to find out how much it costs to run any particular part of the State or to implement a change. I refer to the change that has taken place because of the Government's attempt to close Kalyra. The member for Mawson made one of her weakest speeches on this subject, and I will speak about that in more detail later.

The closing of that hospital was a very important issue for the community. Over 20 000 people signed a petition, but not one member of the Ministry was prepared to state the Government's case on that issue. An also-ran backbencher made the statement—and it was a weak one at that. We know when an argument is right because, when an action of the Government is attacked, the Ministers duck for cover and will not respond. The Government gets a backbencher to respond to such attacks or criticisms, so that the matter will not seem so significant. That practice has developed during this Parliament and in the one immediately preceding it. In the past, a Minister always stood and took the responsibility on a private member's matter of significance such as this. I believe that it is a deliberate tactic by this Government to try to play down the matter a little and to say that it is not an issue.

One thing is certain: 20 000 or more people signed that petition with feeling and with respect for an institution and the staff, but they had no respect for a commission that really did not state the true facts in the beginning. The Minister presented those untruthful matters, one of which was that $1 million would be saved. However, in a short period, we are now talking about $100 000. I am disgusted that the Government chose to take up the challenge by getting a front bencher to answer the accusations. The Kalyra Hospital is a semi-private organisation that is run by a trust. Unfortunately, the Hon. Dr Cornwall has no real faith in that sort of institution. As far as he is concerned, as many institutions as possible have to be public. If Kalyra was a public hospital run by the Health Commission, it would still be operating. It seems to be an attitude of getting them wherever they can. The Mary Potter Hospice and other institutions want to remember that, as long as Dr Cornwall is Minister, their positions are in danger also. Dr Cornwall has practised this philosophy all along: take one at a time and whittle them down, and you will not get much opposition. However, he struck a snag with Kalyra, which embarrassed, and indeed still embarrasses, the Government.

Because of a technicality, I was unable to present another petition signed by 2 000 people, but members can be assured that all those people are being constantly reminded (and will be reminded until the next election) that the Government erred by accepting advice from a commission headed by a pig-headed Minister who says, 'The commission must be right: I will not do my own research.' I seek leave to continue my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Adjourned debate on motion of Mr Meier:

That this House expresses alarm at moves to slash hospital services in South Australia including suggestions to close hospitals to save on asset replacement costs and to axe up to 100 beds in the Mid-North area and possibly other areas of the State as part of a rationalisation of assets program and calls on the Government to stop scaling down and progressively decreasing hospital facilities.

(Continued from 18 February. Page 2868.)

Ms LENEHAN (Mawson): I oppose this motion on the grounds—

An honourable member interjecting:

Ms LENEHAN: Perhaps if the member for Eyre would listen to what I have to say, he might even support me.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Ms LENEHAN: —that it is totally misleading and inaccurate and that it is based on misinformation. I do not intend to dwell on the fact that, in moving the motion, the member for Goyder ranted and raved and talked in violent terms about pelting the Minister of Health with eggs and generally made wild and outrageous claims. Rather, I will outline the actual intentions of the Government and, in particular, the Minister of Health, with respect to country hospitals. First, I will restate what the Minister of Health has said categorically on a number of public occasions, that is, that within the life of this Parliament there is no plan whatsoever to close any South Australian hospital.

Mr Oswald: That's pedantic.

Ms LENEHAN: It is not pedantic. One can only make claims for the life of a particular Parliament, because one does not know whether or not one will be here next time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Interjections are out of order, and I ask the honourable member to address the Chair.

Ms LENEHAN: Thank you for your guidance, Sir. Secondly, there are no plans whatsoever to change the status of any hospital on the West Coast or Eyre Peninsula. What is being proposed is a change in status for three small country hospitals, namely, Laura, Blyth and Tailem Bend, which respectively are 20 minutes, 12 minutes and 13 minutes from the nearest district hospital. I also remind my colleagues that in many places around Adelaide people are in excess of 12, 13 and 20 minutes away from a major public hospital—

Mr Tyler interjecting:

Ms LENEHAN:—or from any hospital, as the member for Fisher so rightly points out. There is no proposal to close these hospitals. I will restate that for the benefit of

the member for Goyder—there is absolutely no proposal to close the three hospitals to which I have referred.

The present strategy of the Country Health Service Division is to improve the range and scope of health services that are available to country communities. To label these moves as 'cost slashing,' as the member for Goyder has done, is grossly incorrect, as any savings will be used to fund additional services to country residents. Indeed, I believe that the Minister of Health should be congratulated in relation to this matter. I wish to make a number of other points but, in the interests of other members being able to debate their motions, I seek leave to continue my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

MITCHAM MOTOR REGISTRATION DIVISION

Adjourned debate on motion of Mr S.J. Baker:

That this House condemns the decision by the Minister of Transport to close the motor vehicle registration office at Mitcham shopping centre.

(Continued from 18 February. Page 2872.)

Mr ROBERTSON (Bright): I oppose this motion. It is reasonably clear from the available facts and figures that the Motor Registration Division's office at the Mitcham shopping centre was not heavily patronised. I am informed that as a result of budgetary constraints—

Mr S.J. Baker interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Mitcham will get a chance to reply.

Mr ROBERTSON:—the Motor Registration Division has been required to review certain services and costs. In the process of the review of various metropolitan branch offices it was decided by the division that two offices needed to be closed, and officers in the department have to live with that decision.

In coming to that decision a number of considerations were taken into account. I refer, first, to the distance between the various offices and the distance that users of the services would have to travel to find an alternative venue; secondly, the flow on effect that those closures might have had on adjacent offices and the workload that might be transferred as a result of those closures; and thirdly, the saving of costs to the department with the closure of those offices. In addition, the department was required to look at the suitability of accommodation at the various offices and, presumably, to reject those offices that were deemed to be less suitable for the purposes but to continue occupying those offices that were deemed to be more suitable for the purpose, either geographically or in any other way.

Computerisation was also considered, and I am led to believe that certain offices were deemed to be more able than others to cope with on-line equipment. In addition, factors such as car parking facilities for members of the general public, access to the offices, and staffing were considered. The department has always considered its staff in these matters and, if minimal inconvenience is to be caused by the closure of one office as against another, clearly that is a preferable option.

Another factor that was considered was that the offices needed to be placed in such a way as to provide a reasonably even coverage throughout the metropolitan area. As the Mitcham office was deemed to be relatively close to alternative venues, it was one of the offices chosen to close. I understand that a decision to close the Mitcham and Lockleys offices was made in December on the basis that they were considerably less patronised than other offices. As I understand it, the Lockleys office received an average 512 cash transactions daily, and the Mitcham office was slightly greater at 531 transactions. Members opposite cannot, on the one hand, say that we need to cut costs and run a slimmer and more effective Government and, on the other hand, complain and carry on when something that affects them personally is closed. Either one is going to have an office on every street corner or have the department run effectively. It is clear that the member for Mitcham favours the ineffective long road rather than the more effective short and efficient road that the department has chosen to take.

An honourable member interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member for Bright to take his seat. The honourable member for Mitcham, who is the author of this motion, will have an opportunity to answer all the points that have been made by the honourable member for Bright. I would prefer that he does it when he gets his chance to answer the debate.

Mr ROBERTSON: Thank you for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker. The member for Mitcham may be interested in a comparison of offices in the metropolitan area and I point out that other offices have a better geographical distribution than offices in his part of town. A survey that was undertaken indicated that the daily average number of cash transactions at the Port Adelaide office was 659; at Modbury it was 662; at Noarlunga it was 672; at Tranmere it was 684; at Prospect it was 797; at Elizabeth it was 884; and at Marion it was 953. I can testify to the amount of traffic that goes through the Marion office, because I patronise that office myself. I regard it as an outlet that could use additional space, staff and facilities because the demand on it is extremely heavy. The employees who work at that Marion office have to put up with crowded conditions and clearly face tremendous pressures and workloads from day to day. However, the employees at the Mitcham office, with 531 cash transactions every day, are having it rather easy by comparison.

The estimated savings to be gained from the closure of the Lockleys and Mitcham offices are: in the case of Lockleys, approximately $58 000 per year, with an additional saving of $52 000 for accommodation and operating expenses, giving a total all up saving of $110 000 per year. In the case of Mitcham, the saving is approximately $58 000 per year in salaries, with an additional saving of $42 000 per year (somewhat lower than Lockleys), giving a total saving of $100 000 per year. With that $100 000 per year, presumably the facilities at the more heavily trafficked offices and at those offices which are in greater demand and which are more popular to the surrounding population, such as Marion, Elizabeth and Prospect, can be upgraded. Anyone who has been to the Marion office, even in the middle of the afternoon (which is supposedly a low period), stood in the queue for many minutes and watched the staff working under enormous pressure would realise that those offices required upgrading. If that comes as a result of the closure of inefficient offices that do not handle very much traffic, then so be it.

For the benefit of the member opposite, it might be interesting to compare several other outlets. Closure of the Tranmere office would have saved $97 000, but the Tranmere office handles much more traffic than the Mitcham office did. On the figures available, on balance, the Lockleys and Mitcham offices cost more to run than any of the others and actually service fewer patrons. So, on that basis of closing an office, they are the offices that have to go. I oppose the motion and I urge other members of the House to do likewise.

Mr OSWALD secured the adjournment of the debate.

FIREARMS LICENCE FEES

Adjourned debate on motion of Mr Meier:

That this House deplores the duplicity of the Government in raising firearms licence fees by up to 150 per cent when such action will have no effect in alleviating major crime, is a ruse to raise revenue and merely penalises honest citizens.

(Continued from 3 December. Page 2488.)

Mr MEIER (Goyder): It has been quite some time since this motion was put to the House. I am pleased to have this opportunity to make a few more remarks on this issue, as it has become a lot more controversial in recent times. Over the past few months it has become even clearer that the Government's intention at the time of raising these fees was quite clear. It was not interested in public safety at all; it wanted to get more revenue without raising the ire of the community at large; and it determined that it would hit on an emotional issue about which people would not jump up and down too much, namely, the licence fees for firearms. The measure was snuck in virtually without anyone saying a thing.

Mr Tyler interjecting:

Mr MEIER: What a comment from the member for Fisher; he shows his absolute ignorance, and I am surprised—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Interjections are out of order but, notwithstanding, the honourable member ought not rise to those interjections. I ask the honourable member to address the Chair.

Mr MEIER: I am surprised that a member of this House would make such an inane interjection. One must appreciate that the honest people of this State, those who are prepared to say that they have registered firearms, are not the ones who have caused any harm to the rest of the community. It would be interesting to look at statistics on gun crimes: I think we would find that probably none of those crimes had been committed by people with registered firearms. Certainly, registered firearms were not used in the brutal slayings that have occurred from time to time, both in this State and in other States—and one remembers the incidents that occurred in Victoria and the Northern Territory around Christmas time.

However, in its lack of wisdom the Government has decided that the honest people will pay, and we well know the consequences of such action; people who can hardly afford to pay for their weapons, used for sporting reasons or for use on a farm out of necessity, to eliminate vermin or to be able to put stock down if necessary, will have to go underground with their weapons. Surely that is the last thing that the Government should be trying to promote. Yet, by increasing the fees by as much as 150 per cent that is all that can happen.

It is blatantly clear that the Government does not know which way to turn on firearms issues generally. It has increased the fees out of all proportion to what is reasonable. Registration of firearms was an issue during the recent Adelaide by-election campaign, and a public meeting was held at that time. New South Wales firearms legislation is a big matter right now, and I feel that that is a reason why the Government here is scared to act. It is probably waiting to see what the New South Wales election result will be and to ascertain just how the public really feel. However, I think that is a foregone conclusion anyway, although I never like to take these things for granted. I know that various meetings in relation to firearms provisions will continue to occur around this State.

Some time ago the Premier gave a commitment that increases in fees would be within the CPI range, so why has the Deputy Premier now imposed such an outrageous increase on the honest people of this State? Only the Premier and the Deputy Premier can answer that question. When looking at the matter of fees generally—firearms and others—it is obvious that the CPI increases are far outstripping any wage rises that people in this State are getting and that people are being crippled more and more with increasing charges. In relation to firearms licence fees the Government has taken the opportunity to increase the fees way beyond the CPI increase. This is to be deplored.

I can well understand that the Premier and members opposite are concerned about the outcome of the next State election. This will become increasingly obvious and we will see any controversial issues swept under the carpet. If there is any sign that an issue could ripple the water or create waves it will be put aside until after the election. I daresay that the Premier is seriously considering perhaps trying to call an election early.

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MEIER: It is interesting that the member for Adelaide should interject, because he would be the first to go. Whilst I acknowledge that it has been very interesting to have him in this House—not because of his contributions but because of day-to-day conversation—he will certainly be out and so will the member for Bright, who sits next to him, and the member for Fisher, who sits next to him—and probably many others will go, too. But I must not be sidetracked by interjections.

Suffice it to say, this increase in registration fees is just another example of how the Government has treated the people of South Australia, the small people who can least afford to pay these fees. The Government's judgment day is coming and certainly every day that passes brings it a day closer. The Government still has time to reverse these fees and bring in realistic fees, get its head out of the sand and come back to reality in the way it governs this State, not only with respect to increasing these fees but in respect to its general mismanagement of the economy. I ask all members to support the motion.

Mr GREGORY (Florey): I have listened with amazement to the member for Goyder and sometimes I fail to understand how he could ever run anything. Yesterday I looked at the fee increases in the regulations. While someone can get an increase of 150 per cent in relation to the fees, it still bears no relationship to the costs involved in ensuring that we have a credible and effective firearm registration system.

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr GREGORY: The member for Goyder, who just sat down, appears to be sorry that he did because he wants to keep on talking. He had the chance to continue speaking, but he sat down and now wants to talk again. It amazes me that a person who claims to know what he is doing wants to get up and yap again.

Mr MEIER: On a point of order. When the member for Florey makes untrue statements I feel it is my right to interject, put it into perspective and make sure that the truth is maintained.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The honourable member will resume his seat. The member for Florey.

Mr GREGORY: The member for Goyder—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for Florey to address his remarks through the Chair and to return to the subject before the Chair.

Mr GREGORY: —is making spurious comments and taking points of order just to soak up the short time that is available to me. He made some comments about the current furore that is raging throughout our State, forced along by a few people who fail to appreciate or understand that there should be a proper registration system for firearms. We have been very fortunate in this State that we have a firearm registration system which ensures that law abiding people who register their firearms can be traced. For the information of the member for Goyder it is not something that runs on fresh air or costs nothing. A considerable cost is involved in maintaining that system, and the fees reflect those costs.

When the member for Goyder talked about a 150 per cent increase he did not, to my recollection, detail the money involved because, if he did, he would have had to say that the increase for some fees amounted to $1. I know of organisations that claimed two years ago in relation to their accounting system that an account would have to be over $26 before the accounting system was viable, even with the modern accounting machinery now available.

Mr D.S. Baker interjecting:

Mr GREGORY: Of course, that was in the private enterprise system, which the member for Victoria so fondly refers to and tells us is so efficient. However, he refuses to accept that governments can also run an efficient workforce and various systems which private enterprise often copies. When private enterprise wants to get those systems going it approaches the Government and asks for help in the form of a handout. The member for Victoria cannot even get the name of companies right (and we had an example of that yesterday).

There is one other thing about the member for Goyder that I cannot let pass, and in that regard I refer to the former member for Todd who used to sit just in front of the member for Victoria. In the last 12 months of the former member for Todd's presence in this House he continually informed members on this side that we would not be in the House after the next election. The peculiar thing is that he is no longer here. The only advice I have for the member for Goyder in relation to his inane remarks about the future of members on this side is that he should read what the former member for Todd had to say in *Hansard*. I am sure that if he does that he will keep quiet because he may not be here after the next election if he continues in this vein. I deplore the member for Goyder's motion because it illustrates his lack of knowledge and understanding as to how business systems work. If ever members opposite were lucky enough to achieve Government and the member for Goyder was lucky enough to become a Minister, we would have one hell of a mess because he just does not know how to cost anything.

Mr S.G. EVANS secured the adjournment of the debate.

HOUSING TRUST

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

That in the opinion of this House the South Australian Housing Trust is neglecting the opportunity to recover in excess of $10 million annually which could be used to provide proper shelter for many of the disadvantaged of our society.

(Continued from 26 November. Page 2184.)

Ms LENEHAN (Mawson): I move:

That this matter be adjourned.

The House divided on the motion:

Ayes (27)—Mr Abbott, Mrs Appleby, Messrs L.M.F. Arnold, Bannon, Blevins, Crafter, De Laine, Duigan, M.J. Evans, and Ferguson, Ms Gayler, Messrs Gregory, Groom, Hamilton, Hopgood, Keneally, and Klunder, Ms Lenehan (teller), Messrs McRae, Mayes, Payne, Peterson, Plunkett, Rann, Robertson, Slater, and Tyler.

Noes (18)—Messrs Allison, P.B. Arnold, D.S. Baker, S.J. Baker, Becker, and Blacker, Ms Cashmore, Messrs Chapman, Eastick, S.G. Evans (teller), Goldsworthy, Gunn, Ingerson, Lewis, Meier, Olsen, Oswald, and Wotton.

Majority of 9 for the Ayes.

Motion thus carried.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 26 November. Page 2189.)

Mr GUNN (Eyre): I oppose this Bill because, unfortunately, it defeats all the objects that the honourable member and those other members of the community who have a concern to reduce the size of government have expressed. In a modern parliamentary democracy it is essential that there are sufficient members of Parliament, both on the Government and the Opposition benches, to allow for an effective committee system and to allow the various and integrated operations of government to be properly understood. It would be of no benefit to the public at large in South Australia if we were to reduce the size of the Parliament.

We have per head of population the smallest Parliament in Australia, from the limited research that I have done on this matter. Of recent times the Parliament has been increased in Queensland and New South Wales, and within the past few years has been increased in Victoria. The desire to reduce the size of Parliament is, in my view, a misguided one that does not reflect the needs of a modern parliamentary democracy. The public at large, unfortunately, does not understand, and equates small government with smaller Parliaments, whereas those people putting forward the argument for smaller Parliaments often deliberately confuse the issue. In most cases, if we were to reduce the size of Parliament we would have less say and less influence over government operations and government bureaucracies.

It is only a few years ago that the Northern Territory Government increased the size of its House of Assembly at the request of the Opposition, because the Opposition in that Parliament said that, because of its numbers, it could not effectively carry out the functions of an efficient Opposition and there were not enough non-government members to take their place on the various committees. That is the most recent experience we have had of legislative bodies that are too small. Another most important feature which should be clearly understood is that people should have access to their representatives, and the more you burden someone the less effective he or she will be and the less opportunity he or she will have to effectively consider the representations or the matters put through the Parliament.

In my view, what has taken place in Queensland, where there is executive government, is clear and should not be misunderstood by the community at large. I and most people realise that Queensland has a one House Chamber, a course of action that I hope would be rejected by all thinking Australians, not only because it is proved so throughout the

world but the Queensland experience has ably demonstrated that that is not an effective parliamentary arrangement.

The smaller the Parliament, the more opportunity to have executive control and the more opportunities there are for the larger political groups in the community to completely dominate the Parliament. It is a nonsense for the honourable member to continue down this track. The savings in revenue are minimal, and I am one of those who believe that the time is fast approaching—if it is not here now—when there ought to be a reasonable increase in the size of the Parliament.

I have held that view for a considerable time. I believe that the arguments advanced in favour of a decrease in the number of members do not stand up to proper analysis and scrutiny, both as to the financial aspect and as to the efficient operation of government. Indeed, the only way in which South Australian citizens can be sure that the Government, the Public Service, and statutory authorities are operating successfully is to have an informed Parliament. When a question is asked in this place about the administration of the Government, we know that action will ensue because the Government must respond. For Opposition members and indeed members generally to be effective in carrying out their most responsible duties, they must have the time to conduct research and be able to get to know their electorate and the organisations and industries therein. To continue to increase drastically the number of constituents to each member is not in the interests of South Australians generally.

Unfortunately, many South Australians are timid in relation to the matters to which I have referred and to related matters. Indeed, the committee system seems to be timid, whereas we should take the public into our confidence and explain these things to them so that there will be no problem. Many people are timid because journalists in this State do not understand the effective operation of parliamentary democracy. They keep on talking about smaller government and a smaller Parliament, but they do not understand the arguments involved. Those journalists have been, deliberately or otherwise, pulling the wool over the eyes of the public because smaller government has nothing at all to do with a smaller Parliament. I sincerely hope that the member for Davenport will drop his proposal once and for all.

I believe that Parliament should insist on its proper role, and the only way in which that can happen is by having a more effective and enlarged committee system in all Australian Parliaments. Unfortunately, when a Government is elected some backbenchers just miss out on a position in the Ministry and such people will not buck the system lest they fall out of favour with the heirarchy. Because such members fear that they will miss out on a Cabinet position when the next vacancy occurs, we have timid members and timid Parliaments. Opposition members can be expected to force an issue with the Government, but Government backbenchers will not press a point with the Government because they do not want to become unpopular with the Party leadership or the Ministry. This is unlike the British Parliament where, sitting in the Commonwealth gallery, I have seen Government backbenchers ask their Minister difficult and aggressive questions.

In order to have an effective committee system there must be a reasonable number of members in Parliament, because members should not be expected to have to serve on more than one committee and thus reduce their effectiveness. I strongly believe that an effective committee system in this Parliament and in other Australian Parliaments can benefit the community at large, especially the taxpayers, and improve Government administration in this State and elsewhere in Australia.

I am a strong advocate of that concept and the only way that it can take place effectively is to have sufficient members of Parliament to allow it to operate in a constructive manner. As a result of my experience in serving on a number of committees I believe that they are a most worthwhile exercise for members of Parliament. Therefore, I strongly oppose this proposition.

Mr DUIGAN (Adelaide): I find myself at one with the sentiments expressed in this debate by the member for Flinders and the member for Eyre. I believe that it is extremely important for us, in terms of reforming the Parliament in order to make it work more effectively, to look at both the quality of representation that we can provide for the people through this Parliament, and to effect some improvements in the way in which it is conducted.

I do not believe that reform should start on the basic proposition of simply reducing the numbers in the Parliament. The proposition that we have before us does that. It says, 'Let's reform Parliament; let's reduce the number of Parliamentarians.' It seems to me that there is no relationship between those two propositions. In this private member's Bill we are asked to reduce by four the number of members in the House of Assembly and to reduce by two the number of members in the other place. It does not seem to me that simply reducing the number of members will necessarily improve the operation of the Parliament or the quality of members being returned on either side.

We must address ourselves to the nature of the institution, and I find myself very much in agreement with the sentiments that have been expressed by the member for Eyre about the need to improve and reform the committee structure of the Parliament. Certainly, a number of attempts have been made by the Government as a result of the commitments given at both the 1982 and 1985 elections. Indeed, select committees were set up to look at those ideas for reforming Parliament. Unfortunately, there was a deafening silence from members opposite with regard to a committee looking at the committee structure. There was no response to a discussion paper prepared by the office of the Attorney-General for that committee. I hope that that position has changed and that the member for Eyre will take a leading role in ensuring that when the debate comes before this House again for renewing and reinvigorating the committee structure, we will have his support and that of his Party for giving more strength to backbenchers on both sides to participate in a scrutiny of a variety of Government actions. This is the appropriate and proper role for Parliament.

It is also important to take up the point by the member for Eyre in terms of the remuneration package for members of Parliament. It is extremely important to look at that in terms of the issue he raised about the quality of representation that is necessary in the Parliament. Comparisons have been made on a number of occasions between members of Parliament here and members of Parliament elsewhere, and South Australia's representatives have not come out particularly well. There is a recognition by most members of the community of the effort that all members of Parliament put in to representing their constituencies, and that needs to be matched with a package that duly acknowledges and takes into account the time and effort that members devote to that task.

The issue of representation and the quality of the representation, the time and effort that members put in, has been raised also by the member for Flinders, who has also raised

the issue of the tolerance that might be allowed in terms of the size of each of the electorates. Currently, there is an expectation that there would be about 20 000 to 21 000 electors for each electorate in South Australia. It was expected that that would hold through the period from the last redistribution to the next one.

Some three years after the last distribution, we are now in a position where the size of electorates is already getting out of kilter and, under the current Constitution, there will not be a redistribution for another eight or nine years. At the moment we have representation from a high of 26 500 electors in Fisher, which is what I think the member for Fisher told me the other day, to about 15 500 electors in Elizabeth.

Mr S.G. Evans: It is just over 15 000.

Mr DUIGAN: Just over 15 000 electors in Elizabeth. Certainly, that variance is much greater than that expected by the commission, and greater than the tolerance level incorporated in the Constitution Act for the size of electorates. Obviously, there will have to be some way of addressing the issue of the size of electorates before the time at which under current circumstances the next redistribution is due.

Certainly, the proposition put forward by the member for Davenport to reduce the number of members of the House is one device by which an earlier redistribution could be brought on. However, I do not necessarily agree that that is the most appropriate device to use, particularly when his solution is to reduce the number of electorates. The member for Eyre suggested that there may be even a case for increasing the number of electorates and that in itself would trigger the necessity for a redistribution to ensure that that equality of voters in electorates was able to be achieved, notwithstanding that I recognise that the member for Flinders has suggested that there ought to be a greater degree of tolerance, particularly in country electorates.

A number of interesting issues have been raised in the debate. Some of those issues will not go away: for example, the issue of the reform of Parliament, the better use of the committee structure, a better way in which members are able to contribute to a scrutiny of Government actions, the need for a better or more sensitive trigger to the redistribution of electorates and the very issue of the size of the House. These are important issues and, to a large extent, they are issues that should be the subject of a decision of the electorate at election time and they may well be. For the moment, the arguments advanced by colleagues on the other side in respect of the proposal of the member for Davenport to reduce the size of both Houses are ones that I endorse and, therefore, I oppose the Bill at the second reading.

Mr S.G. EVANS (Davenport): I am surprised in one way, but not in another. I note that some members kept describing me as the member for the wrong electorate. That is a sign of nervousness of course, and I can understand that nervousness. Members see my Bill as a personal attack. It is not intended in that way. Members see it as a cause for fear that they will lose their seat, and we should not have that fear. The member for Flinders raised a point about tolerance. I included that matter in the Bill and it is a sound proposition to go to a 15 per cent tolerance as against 10 per cent because we are practising a tolerance already to a greater extent than 10 per cent.

We knew that when the last redistribution came down. If members claim that they did not know when the last redistribution was submitted that, by the time of the next election, numbers would be out of kilter, either they lack knowledge of metropolitan and country areas or they are being a little dishonest.

It was obvious, when we put Fisher virtually line-ball on the mean, that it would go over by about 12 000 people by the next election. There will be near 30 000 people in the electorate. When I came into this Parliament some members represented electorates of 4 000 people with others of 45 000 people. Mr Jennings and Mrs Byrne represented electorates of about 40 000 people. The number of electors we represent is not a problem. Any one of us could represent three of the ordinary electorates we have now when it comes to serving electors. Let us forget about that. In the country areas, however, that would be difficult but in the metropolitan area it is no problem. Electorates such as Victoria, Kavel and other country electorates have far surpassed the metropolitan and urban electorates, around which one can ride a pushbike. I do not hear any complaints from country electors that they do not get fair representation from their members.

Under my proposition the country electorates would not grow in number at all if we use the tolerance as it should have been used. It is a dishonest redistribution to tie areas such as Stirling and Crafers to Old Noarlunga and that sort of skulduggery. Where is the common interest there? It also tied Clarendon to Mount Osmond.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: And divided Mount Barker and Littlehampton.

Mr S.G. EVANS: Yes, that is the sort of skulduggery that has gone on under the existing system. Nobody would argue that we use the tolerance fairly. No-one wanted an Act put through Parliament to ensure that the Party that polled on average more than 50 per cent would govern. That would not be accepted, although it takes into account community interest. It is a lot of hogwash. We never took that into consideration, nor did we consider existing electorates.

Why do Parliamentarians not want a Bill that states that we have to take into consideration existing electorates? They do it to protect themselves. I am asking for a decrease in the number of politicians. The members for Eyre and Adelaide suggest setting up a committee system, and I agree with that. Mr Nankivell raised that matter in this Parliament years ago. Has it been done? No, because Governments of the day do not want it unless it is all their way. The member for Eyre said that we can challenge Ministers and get answers. We get no answers in the Parliament—it is just a political attack and the information is not given. If it happens that you do get a bit of information, it is either inaccurate (deliberately or otherwise) or of no benefit.

We have the Ombudsman Office and other advisory offices and community services in the community doing work that parliamentarians used to do. It is all being done by public servants now and members of Parliament never say, 'Get rid of those things and we will go back to what we used to do, without electorate offices or secretaries.' We have all those services doing the work that MPs used to do when I came into this place, yet we say that we are overloaded. We have members of Parliament running their own legal practices and their own businesses, yet we say that we are overloaded. The argument does not stand. If we are to reduce the size of government, we have to start at the top. It is not a major shift and if four of us were taken from here and two from the other place (I would fight to stay) the people in the street would not notice one iota of difference in the service they receive or the type of government they get. We now have government by Executive and that will not change. Backbenchers are just dirt as far as Ministers are concerned in the real sense of running a Parliament. I ask members to support the Bill.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr S.G. Evans: Divide!

While the division was being held:

The SPEAKER: Order! There being only one member on the side of the Ayes, I declare that the Noes have it.

Second reading thus negatived.

WORKCOVER

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

That in the opinion of this House the new workers rehabilitation and compensation scheme known as WorkCover is seriously disadvantaging many small businesses, welfare agencies, charities and sporting organisations.

(Continued from 12 November. Page 1881.)

Mr GREGORY (Florey): When this matter was last debated I said that I had never before heard an address to this House that better illustrated a person's lack of knowledge than that of the member for Davenport. On that occasion the member for Davenport excelled himself. He talked about the rates charged on an organisation for WorkCover. However, he failed to appreciate that in reality WorkCover is a form of insurance to ensure that persons who are injured at work are fairly, adequately, and properly compensated for their injury and, more importantly, that they are rehabilitated and are able to continue to work. He read a list of classes of occupations and the percentage cost to the payroll for those people. Again, it illustrated his lack of knowledge.

At the time of the introduction of WorkCover, about 34 companies offered workers compensation insurance in this State. In my own experience, a Committee of Inquiry into Rehabilitation and Compensation for persons injured at work was conducted and we could not get any insurance company to give a straight answer. When the then General Manager of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry undertook to see people in the industry, even he qualified his comments by saying, 'I think these are right, but I am not sure.' I seek leave to continue my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

[*Sitting suspended from 1 to 2 p.m.*]

TOBACCO PRODUCTS CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT BILL

His Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended to the House of Assembly the appropriation of such amounts of money as might be required for the purposes mentioned in the Bill.

PETITION: TOBACCO PRODUCTS

A petition signed by 107 residents of South Australia praying that the House urge the Government not to increase taxes on tobacco products in order to fund anti-smoking campaigns was presented by Mr Rann.

Petition received.

QUESTIONS

The SPEAKER: I direct that the following answer to a question without notice be distributed and printed in *Hansard.*

DEFENCE MARKETING PLAN

In reply to the **Hon. H. ALLISON** (24 September 1987).

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: The following is an update of information supplied in the Estimates Committee on 24 September 1987.

The present position on the LADS project is that tenders close with the Department of Defence at the end of April for the $32 million (estimated) production contract.

There is a South Australian consortium which is bidding for this contract and with which the Department of State Development and Technology has made an agreement for the preparation of a LADS marketing plan agreement.

I can advise that the consortium has placed the order for the marketing plan on the Elton Mayo School of Management, and the Marketing Plan for LADS will be presented to the South Australian group of companies and representatives from the Department of State Development and Technology on 10 March. From that presentation the department will be in a position to develop its approach to supporting the development of an industry capability based on laser hydrography.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT: NEW DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF TAFE

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD (Minister of Employment and Further Education): I seek leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: I would like to take this opportunity to inform the House that a senior educator with extensive experience in education, training and employment matters has accepted the position as the new head of TAFE in South Australia.

Peter Kirby will be appointed Director-General, Department of TAFE, replacing Lyall Fricker, who retired earlier this month. Mr Kirby is extremely well qualified and nationally respected. He is clearly an ideal person to continue the work of Lyall Fricker in strengthening TAFE's role in skills development in this State. Mr Kirby has extensive experience at the State, Federal and international levels, including being head of TAFE in Victoria from 1983 to 1985. Most recently, he has been General Manager, Portfolio Policy Co-ordination, in the Victorian Ministry of Education, which oversees policy development in all education, including TAFE.

In 1984, Mr Kirby chaired the Commonwealth Inquiry into Labour Market Programs; in 1985-86 he was a member of the Victorian Blackburn inquiry into post compulsory education and the Commonwealth Government's Karmel inquiry into the quality of education; and last year he was appointed by the Commonwealth Heads of Government to chair the Group of Experts on Youth Unemployment. I am sure Mr Kirby will provide TAFE with the leadership and impetus to continue its forward-looking response to the changing economic and social needs of South Australia.

In welcoming Mr Kirby to lead TAFE in South Australia, I also take this opportunity to publicly thank Lyall Fricker for his work, not only as Director-General of TAFE, but for education generally. Lyall has been a tireless and dedicated worker for the ideals of TAFE, and the need to develop the skills of Australia. I wish him well in his retirement, knowing that he will continue to be involved in education issues. for many years to come. Personally, I thank him for the support and counsel that he gave to me when he was Director-General of the Department of Technical and Further Education, for which as Minister of Employment and Further Education I am responsible.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT: WORKCOVER

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS (Minister of Labour): I seek leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: In Question Time yesterday the member for Mitcham raised a question concerning the alleged late payment by WorkCover of a claim lodged by a nurse. In respect to this case I am advised that there has been some delay in processing this matter, but this was largely due to the employer disputing the validity of the claim. The claim was investigated as a result of the concerns raised by the employer, and it was ultimately determined that there were insufficient grounds to substantiate a dispute. The investigations took longer than normal because of the worker's absence on annual leave during January.

Following completion of the investigation the employer and the worker were separately advised that the employer was authorised to make payments of income maintenance in a letter dated 18 February 1988. While there was some delay in paying the nurse after the investigation was completed, the prime cause of the delay was the need for an investigation to be undertaken as a result of the employer's concerns over the validity of the claim.

Section 35 (5) of the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act provides that, where a worker is incapacitated, weekly payments of compensation are to be continued until such time as the worker obtains the age at which the person is entitled to the age pension or the normal retiring age for that kind of employment, whichever is the later. Thus in the case cited by the member for Morphett the worker's entitlement to continued benefits would depend on the normal practice adopted in the industry. If the normal practice is to allow women to work to age 65, then the worker would be entitled to continuing workers compensation payments.

It should also be pointed out that, if the worker feels aggrieved over the termination of benefits, there are review and appeal mechanisms available to have the matter reviewed. The information I have supplied is of a very general nature because the member for Morphett has not yet supplied me with the name of the woman, even though he undertook to do so yesterday. When the member for Morphett gives me the name I will be in a position to answer his claims in greater detail.

QUESTION TIME

The SPEAKER: Before calling on questions I advise that questions that would otherwise be directed to the Minister of Housing and Construction will be taken by the Premier.

CHILDREN'S COURT

Mr OLSEN: Will the Premier order an immediate review of the operations of the Adelaide Children's Court in light of considerable anger and frustration being expressed by police officers, prosecutors, legal practitioners, and members of the magistracy about its sentencing of juvenile criminals? I refer to concerns raised by a member of the magistracy in a letter which I have in my possession. He claims:

> The contributing adverse influence of the Children's Court system and its administration is leading to massive public and private loss as a result of juvenile crime and to anger and frustration of all people in the area.

I wish to quote briefly from that letter, as follows:

> The Children's Court system and some of its personnel—

The Hon. J.C. Bannon interjecting:

Mr OLSEN: A magistrate wrote this.

The Hon. J.C. Bannon interjecting:

Mr OLSEN: I have the letter, and it will be made available to the Premier.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.C. Bannon interjecting:

Mr OLSEN: It is a letter.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable Leader will resume his seat. Regardless of the status of the two members concerned, the Chair cannot tolerate a dialogue of that nature between the Leader of the Opposition and the Premier. The honourable Leader.

Mr OLSEN: I would be more than pleased to make available to the Premier the magistrate's letter. I wish to quote briefly from that letter. It states:

> The Children's Court system and some of its personnel . . . have not only failed to curb juvenile crime but have seriously contributed to it through the lack of a balanced commonsense approach . . . Virtually on a daily basis for many years the Children's Court has released offenders repeatedly found guilty of serious crimes without any penalty at all or on bonds of negligible duration . . . Youths may commit dozens of offences without ever having a conviction recorded against them . . . Seventeen year old hooligans are often handled as if they were mischievous seven year olds.
>
> On a regular basis court staff report that young offenders exit the doors of the Adelaide Children's Court laughing at their 'penalties' and sneering at the activities of some of those who have 'penalised' them or the gullibility of those who have prepared reports on them. The same court staff express a lack of respect for some members of the Children's Court bench. Police officers have expressed their utter frustration at repeatedly arresting young hooligans and equally repeatedly seeing them released without any appropriate punishment and thumbing their noses at the police.

The magistrate continues:

> The public pays for the cost of their offending through direct loss or increased taxes, insurance premiums and school fees; the public pays for the cost of their repeated investigation and arrest; the public pays for the cost of their legal aid; the public pays for the cost of their re-offending, and the cycle continues.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: It would have helped if the Leader of the Opposition could have told me a little more about the letter: first, the name—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: Why? Because I would have thought it quite relevant. He could have told me the name of the magistrate concerned and whether it is a magistrate involved in the Children's Court or a magistrate in some other part of the judiciary. Secondly, he could have told me who the letter was directed to, because I would have thought that, if a magistrate has concerns of this kind, the appropriate person to whom to direct such problems would be the Attorney-General. That, I would have thought, was relevant. Thirdly, I make the point that I would have thought that this issue was far too important—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: Three months old, is that letter? I see.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: Referring to three or four year old complaints. I would have thought that—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! At the moment the Premier has leave of the House to answer the question. No-one else has the floor, and I ask all other members—including the member for Adelaide and the Leader of the Opposition—to cease interjecting.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: I thought the matter would have been a little more important and the issues raised a

little more fundamental than to merit the treatment the Leader of the Opposition has accorded it—jumping up here with a question without notice, and a sort of unattributed letter from which he quotes giving no proper details, purporting to give an explanation. Let me say, Mr Speaker, that in fact the issue of the administration of justice in children's courts is indeed an important issue and ought to be dealt with properly.

The legislation under which those children's Courts operate has been established over quite a long period of time, much of it with the support of the Liberal Party, whether in Opposition or in Government. So, if we are talking about the whole system being fundamentally wrong, I would have thought that members opposite also would have cause to examine what actions have been taken by Parliament as a whole in the past. I do not see this as some sort of partisan game to be played or something that one should keep secret in terms of concerns or remain coy about who wrote what letters and when. If the Leader of the Opposition is serious about this matter, then I am seriously prepared to refer it to my colleague the Attorney-General, who no doubt will provide an appropriate report.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the Leader of the Opposition to order. I call the member for Mount Gambier to order. The honourable member for Bright.

ABORIGINES

Mr ROBERTSON: Is the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs aware of a recent article in the *Advertiser* in which Aboriginal activist Burnum Burnum described South Australia as 'a bright spot for race relations in Australia'? Burnum Burnum went on to say:

> It is far out in front of other States in its attitude to Aborigines . . . there's not the kind of hostility you feel in other places when you walk down Rundle Mall. There is more of a gentle, British influence.

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER: I thank the honourable member for his question, which gives me an opportunity to acknowledge the work that has gone on in this State for the past 20 years or more in respect of a whole range of programs to minimise discrimination against Aborigines in our community. It began in the 1960s in this State with the first anti-discrimination legislation in Australia. Then we had the legislation with respect to the establishment of the Aboriginal Lands Trust, which was the first lands legislation of its type in Australia. During the 1970s there was a whole range of administrative procedures set up for the establishment of human services programs in this State which were unparalleled in this country and which have served our country very well, especially as regards relations between this State and the Commonwealth.

Then, in the late 1970s work began on the preparation of the Pitjantjatjara land rights legislation and here I acknowledge the considerable amount of bipartisan work done in this Parliament and in the community on the establishment of Aboriginal land rights in this State, especially the continuation of that work by the then Tonkin Government which was one of the highlights of that premiership, as the former Premier has said many times. It is disappointing to see that some members opposite have withdrawn somewhat from the stand taken at that time.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Chair is having difficulty hearing the Minister. I call the honourable member for Hanson to order. Will the Minister resume his seat for a moment. Prior to calling the honourable member for Hanson to order, the Chair was about to draw to the attention of the honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the honourable member for Hayward the fact that the Chair was having great difficulty in hearing the Minister's reply because of the dialogue being conducted across the Chamber by those two members. The honourable Minister.

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER: During the period of the first Bannon Government, the Maralinga land rights legislation was passed by this Parliament and later substantial amendments to the Pitjantjatjara land rights legislation were passed. Only this week we saw the passage of the Aboriginal heritage legislation, which is also very important. I suggest that Aboriginal persons in our community will not receive the status of equality with all other citizens until the community as a whole has an understanding of and respect for Aboriginal culture, and I believe that we in South Australia have made a significant contribution to establishing that sense of understanding in the community. However, we would all acknowledge that we still have a long way to go.

MAGISTRATE'S ALLEGATION

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Will the Premier investigate as a matter of extreme urgency a magistrate's allegation that some magistrates have been appointed to the judiciary as a consequence of having made donations to Labor Party campaign funds—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable Deputy Leader.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY:—donations solicited by the State's first law officer, the Attorney-General? The Opposition has in its possession a letter dated 7 October 1987 written to the Attorney-General by a magistrate—

The Hon. J.C. Bannon: Whose name is?

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: We will make the letter available to the Premier and he will know the name.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Let the Government name him. The first paragraph of the letter—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Albert Park to order. The honourable Deputy Leader.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: You will get the letter. We know you name—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader will direct his question through the Chair or he will not direct any more of it.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The first paragraph of the letter makes the following allegation about the conduct of the Attorney-General, as chief law officer of this State. I quote that paragraph:

> I wrote to you on 4 July 1985 in relation to your impropriety in attempting to solicit from magistrates donations for the Labor Party and your subsequent appointing some of those magistrates to the judiciary.

Further on in his letter to the Attorney-General the author describes a magistrate, whom he names, as lazy and incompetent, and refers to him as 'your political appointee'.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: That is pretty disgraceful behaviour on the part of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I just wonder whether indeed all members opposite have actually been let in on the secret of these new tactics, which is to try to create some sort of smear. It will be interesting to see how this unfolds.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: First, I would like to put on the record my total confidence in our Attorney-General,

who is the senior Attorney-General in Australia at the moment, universally respected, a major influence in law reform in this country and someone of impeccable character and credentials. I am very interested that members opposite in this place—not in front of the Attorney himself, unless you are asking the same questions up there—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: I see. Members opposite in this place want to make those allegations. I suggest that in this State and in politics in this State you are getting on to very shaky ground and, as I say, I wonder whether there has been a wide-ranging discussion on this, about the tactic. Is it something to do with yesterday's debacle showing how divided and useless they were in terms of policy that has resulted in this kind of question today? I will leave that to one side: the matter will certainly be looked at. But let me say in relation to the magistracy in this State, far from magistrates' jobs being conferred for political favour, it has in fact proved extremely difficult to get lawyers competent and willing to act as magistrates.

That is the fact of the matter. It has been very difficult to get people to serve as magistrates in this State, so I suggest that the question of political favours, and so on, is absolute nonsense, anyway. I would be happy to look at the letter. It is extraordinary that, this matter having been put before the House, Parliament is not entitled to know who wrote it. There is some secret, apparently, about that. What is going on over here? If this signals a new approach to political tactics here, we are very happy indeed to be part of it.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Henley Beach.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I caution the Deputy Leader of the Opposition against his persistent attempts to get the last word in. It may well prove to be his last word for the day.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Mr Speaker—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Does the honourable the Deputy Leader of the Opposition have a point of order?

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Yes, Mr Speaker, I have. I was responding to an allegation from the Deputy Premier in relation to my conduct in the House. It seems strange to me that he is not admonished.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member for Henley Beach.

WORKCOVER

Mr FERGUSON: Can the Minister of Labour inform the House of the situation in regard to WorkCover volunteer labour with local councils and other volunteer organisations? Some confusion has arisen in respect of WorkCover for volunteer labour when used by councils and other organisations. It is my understanding that councils and other organisations are not committed to paying a WorkCover levy for these people, but there is confusion as to whether these people can claim on WorkCover if they are injured.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: I thank the member for Henley Beach for his question. Volunteer workers with local councils and other volunteer organisations are not 'workers' for the purposes of WorkCover because they do not work under a 'contract of service' as defined in the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act. A simple explanation of that term is that there is no employer/employee relationship between the volunteer and the particular organisation. This was also the position under the former legislation.

Many community organisations and Government departments, such as the Education Department, have taken out a form of insurance (not workers compensation) to cover their volunteer workers should they incur an injury while performing a voluntary service.

However, section 3 (2) of the Act provides for volunteers working for State Government organisations, such as the CFS and SES, to be covered by the Act where those groups have been prescribed by the regulations as falling within a class of people who voluntarily perform work of benefit to the State. I think it is important that any organisation, whether local council or any other body which has the benefit of the labour of volunteers, contact an insurance company and take out some insurance to ensure that those volunteers are not disadvantaged should any injury occur.

It may well be that the organisation itself requires protection from a possible claim for negligence or something of that nature. While we are very much in favour of the practice of volunteers working in appropriate areas, it is not appropriate for WorkCover to cover them.

An honourable member: What about the SGIC?

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: You will have to ask the SGIC. It is not appropriate for WorkCover to cover them, because they are not employees, but out of common decency, good business practice and prudence, I think that the organisations that use volunteers ought to care enough for them to approach an insurance company and to get some insurance for the volunteers.

NEW AGE SPIRITUALIST MISSION

The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE: My question is directed to the Minister for Environment and Planning. On what grounds did the Government agree to the request by the Minister of Agriculture for Executive Council to use its powers under the Planning Act to prohibit construction of a church in the Minister of Agriculture's suburban street in Unley by a group known as the New Age Spiritualist Mission, and does the Minister consider that this project constitutes 'development of major social, economic or environmental importance to the State?'

The New Age Spiritualist Mission is a religious group described to me as small and peaceful, having a similar charter to the better known Quakers Religious Society of Friends. I understand that the mission has been in existence for 56 years and has less than 30 members. In May last year the mission purchased a property in Palmerson Road, Unley, and subsequently received permission from the City of Unley to build on that property a small church. This mission has already spent in excess of $185 000 in order to pursue that objective.

The Minister of Agriculture has claimed that a school would be set up on the site. This is incorrect. He has also referred to office accommodation, but the plans submitted to the council reveal nothing more than an eight foot by ten foot room which would have contained a desk and filing cabinet. The Minister of Agriculture has been reported as saying—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE: He wanted section 50 of the Planning Act invoked to protect his, and I quote 'cherished habitat'. What the Minister did not say is that section 50 of the Act was established in order to provide

ultimate powers for major projects such as petrochemical plants and nuclear power stations among others.

On Tuesday, Executive Council invoked this section of the Act, which gives the Government power to obtain adequate control of development of major social, economic or environmental importance. The mission has now been ordered to provide an environmental impact statement.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: I am sorry, but I missed the last bit of the comment made by the honourable member. First, let me say, as the honourable member should know, that the nature of the group proposing the development is quite irrelevant to the issue. Whether the group happens to be the New Age Spiritualist Mission, the Catholic Church, some Marxist revolutionary movement or whatever, that is quite irrelevant to the issue before us.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I caution members on both sides who are interjecting and making it difficult for other members to hear the reply.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is a serious question and I think honourable members should give attention to a serious answer. The second point that I want to make is that, in fact, section 50 of the Planning Act has been invoked at least six times, not all of which have related to petro-chemical plants or to places like Roxby Downs, and so on. So, there is considerable precedent. I now turn to the specifics of the honourable member's question, having, I hope, corrected her on those two misapprehensions that she has displayed. She asked for the reasons for the action that has been taken. First, the Government has been petitioned by numerous members of the Unley council about this matter.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: I do not have the letters with me but I can provide them.

Mr S.J. Baker interjecting:

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: I am coming to that—the member for Mitcham is jumping in a little too soon. I think about seven letters came to my attention, each signed by a councillor and member of the Unley council. We are talking not about seven letters from local householders but about a serious request from, as I recall, at least seven members of the Unley council asking that the Government take this action.

Why did they ask that the Government take this action? The councillors obviously believe that this decision which was taken by a planning officer on delegation to the council without reference to council was an incorrect one. I am not commenting on that at all; I simply say that we have been asked that this matter be reviewed in the light of the fact that the decision was taken on delegation. In any event, there is a legal argument that the application was wrong in the way in which it described the amount of parking that would be involved in relation to the number of people who would be using this site and that in fact it should have been treated as a consent application and not as a permitted development. In those circumstances, obviously the councillors believed that an honest mistake had been made within their administration and that the matter should be reviewed. The Government has decided that the requests from those councillors are not unreasonable and that indeed the matter should be reviewed at this point in time.

Mr Gunn interjecting:

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: The honourable member does not know what he is talking about. If he wants to take me on in relation to this, I will be happy to oblige. I have done him over in the House a few times. In those circumstances the only mechanism that was available was section 50. We have used it in the past and we are using it this time. It is consistent with all that I have said in the past that I am making absolutely no commitment as to the outcome in this matter. That is something which will follow proper examination of the merits of the case, an examination which numerous Unley councillors believe did not take place in the first instance.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Heysen.

ACTS AND REGULATIONS CONSOLIDATION

Mr GROOM: Will the Minister of Education ask the Attorney-General to explain either what is the present position or what is contemplated with regard to the consolidation of Acts and regulations of this Parliament? The last wholesale consolidation took place in 1975 when Acts were brought up to date and, as a consequence, various amendments were incorporated in the consolidation making it easier for citizens to read Acts of Parliament.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr GROOM: Very easy for us but very hard for the Opposition. My question was prompted by a constituent who recently sought to purchase the Land Agents, Brokers and Valuers Act and found it almost impossible to comprehend the various amendments to the principal Act comprising something like 107 clauses in the principal Act of 1975. Since that time there have been something like 103 amendments to the various clauses, not to mention the myriad changes under the regulations. There are many other Acts in the same situation including the Criminal Law Consolidation Act, the Evidence Act, the Electoral Act, the Planning Act, and the Motor Vehicles Act (just to mention a few), all of which have had wholesale changes both to the principal Act and to succeeding amending legislation.

There is an obligation placed by the law on citizens to know the law. This is very difficult to comply with when consolidations are not readily available. With today's computer technology the task of providing consolidated Acts of Parliament and regulations following wholesale amendments should not be very difficult.

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER: I thank the honourable member for Hartley for his interest in this area. I place on record my appreciation and that of all honourable members of the work that was done to consolidate our statutes by Mr Edward Ludovici, a former Parliamentary Counsel who, following his retirement, worked in this area for many years. Recently he has been of ill-health, but he has done an enormous amount of work for Parliament and indeed for the community in this area. I will refer the matter to my colleague in another place for his consideration.

TROUBRIDGE

Mr S.J. BAKER: Will the Minister of Transport report to the House on the costs incurred to this date by the Government as a result of its failure to complete negotiations for the sale of the *Troubridge*, and does the Government still intend to finalise this matter by the end of this month as has been reported? The Government agreed in November to the sale of the vessel to a Queensland-based company at a price of $405 000. However, the Minister was forced to admit in December that the amount the Government would receive for selling the *Troubridge* would in fact be reduced by $110 000 as a result of the vessel being kept in service beyond her official date of delivery owing to problems with its replacement, the *Island Seaway*.

In addition to this effective loss to the Government of 27.4 per cent of its asking price for the vessel, I understand a further amount of up to $25 000 has been spent in providing around-the-clock security men to guard the vessel,

which has been lying idle since early November due to industrial action. Further questions have also been raised about the Government's liability to pay massive charges which have been incurred over more than 100 days, and which we know total more than $10 000 per quarter in lieu of normal wharfage payment. Also to be taken into consideration is the revenue foregone by the Government in interest.

The Hon. G.F. KENEALLY: I will obtain the figures for the honourable member but, in general detail, the information that he has given the House is correct: we paid about $110 000 to rent the *Troubridge* from the owners.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. G.F. KENEALLY: They thought they were the owners because they rented the *Troubridge* to us, so obviously that is not in question. As I said, it was $110 000. It would have been much more than that if we had had to rent another vessel of the same dimension had the *Troubridge* not been available to us in South Australian waters: in fact, it was a very good deal. Incidentally, that $110 000 was paid to service the good people of Kangaroo Island, and I would have thought that members opposite would have been delighted to see us do that.

Members opposite may want to cut the umbilical cord between the mainland and Kangaroo Island but the Government is certainly not prepared to do that. If it cost us $110 000 to provide that service to the people of Kangaroo Island over that period, it was a very cheap price indeed for those people who are an essential part of the South Australian community. I am sure they will be surprised to find out that members opposite do not agree with that. Some percentage of the charges of the *Troubridge* are still being met by the Government.

I think that the owners are meeting in excess of 81 per cent of the charges for the security of the vessel, but I will get the details for the honourable member and report them to the House.

FINANCE RATING

Mr RANN: Can the Premier explain to the House the significance of the recent rating by the New York based Moody's Investment Services of a recent bond issue by the South Australian Financing Authority? It seems that the Leader of the Opposition is a little confused about finances. It has been put to me that the rating of AAA is starkly at odds with the recent statements made by members opposite, including the Leader of the Opposition, on the state of the South Australian economy and the conduct of South Australian Government finances.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: Considering the time that the Leader of the Opposition spent in debate in this place talking down the South Australian economy, trying to draw the worst possible conclusions and putting the worst gloss possible on economic conditions, I would have thought that this is quite a relevant question for the honourable member to ask in order for the relevant information to be put before the House. It is all very well to hear the Leader of the Opposition's selective assessment. It is quite another thing to hear the assessment of those who have to judge the creditworthiness of South Australia in relation to international markets.

It is extraordinary that, within just a few days of the Leader of the Opposition telling us that the South Australian economy was on its knees, was in a state as bad as during the Great Depression, and was about to collapse in a total heap, Moody's Investment Services of New York rated us AAA, the highest rating possible in terms of our credit on a loan to be guaranteed by the State Government.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: That AAA rating is the same as given to Australian dollar denominated debt issue. In fact, it backs up a rating of AA1, the second-highest possible, which had been assigned to SAFA's earlier $US100 million bond issue raised in February 1986. So, I think that if there were indeed things fundamentally wrong with our economy and with our State, there is no way that we could get that sort of rating. We must have a sound financial position before it happens. It is interesting to quote from the Moody's assessment which, in making that rating, stated:

> Among the six States, South Australia carries the second lowest burden of debt and one of the lowest rates of gross borrowings as a percentage of gross State product.

Those ratings will permit the raising of funds on world capital markets on very fine terms by SAFA and other bodies, all of which benefit from the State Government's guarantee. I thank the honourable member for his question and for the opportunity to put before the House those facts based on an independent assessment of our economic situation.

WOODVILLE SPASTIC CENTRE

Mr BECKER: Will the Premier immediately investigate funding levels to the Woodville Spastic Centre, which has an agreement with the Government to become a major service provider for multiple-disabled people, but which has, through Government failure to adequately fund its programmes for physically and disabled adults and children, been forced to increase its fees by up to 300 per cent? Parents of children at the centre have just been informed that day attendance rates have now risen by 100 per cent; respite charges have increased by 200 per cent; and residential charges are up 300 per cent. This is despite the fact that 22 per cent of the Woodville Spastic Centre's current income is actually derived from its own fundraising efforts. These charges were only reluctantly implemented by the centre in an effort to address a critical deficit situation. The centre's recent annual report states:

> Financial assistance provided by Commonwealth and State Governments is acknowledged: however, increased support from those sources is seen as being essential if Spastic Centres is to continue its level of service.

The report further states:

> Spastic Centres of South Australia is in a critical financial situation. Deficits in aggregate exceeding $2 million have been absorbed over the past five years.

One parent has pointed out to the Opposition that it is now cheaper to send a child to a public school than to send him or her to the highly acclaimed spastic centre. The Premier should be aware that many parents of children at the centre are already struggling to pay existing charges, on top of their regular pharmaceutical and costly specialised equipment such as wheelchairs and motor vehicles adapted for the transport of such children.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: I am happy to refer that question to my colleague in another place and bring down a report.

SHIPPING

Mr PETERSON: Can the Minister of Marine say whether there will be an increase in the cost of moving cargo on the

Adelaide to Tasmania trade now that Union Shipping has decided to stop the ship run, and will the berths made idle by the non-calling of the ship be considered for use by the *Island Seaway*? A report in the *Australian* of 25 February 1988, under the heading 'Union Shipping quits Tasmania-Adelaide run', states in part:

> Cargo will instead be shipped via Melbourne, including centralisation to and from Adelaide. Northern Tasmanian imports and exports to and from Adelaide similarly can be shipped via Melbourne, but require further centralisation through Hobart.

The need now to centralise in Melbourne and Hobart some Tasmanian cargo raises the question of increased costs to that run. As the cessation of this sea trade now leaves No. 11 and No. 25 berths in Port Adelaide idle, either of those berths could be considered as a possible alternative location for the *Island Seaway* terminal and so eliminate the trip through the Birkenhead bridge with consequent benefits both to the ship and to the road traffic flow.

The Hon. R.K. ABBOTT: We were advised that the Union Holyman service would cease calling at Port Adelaide on 22 February, and I understand that that has been brought about by the loss by the Australian National line of its major cargo on the service out of Tasmania. However, we have now asked State Ships, the Western Australian Coastal Shipping Commission, to consider calling at Port Adelaide on the east-west run. State Ships is at present considering that request and we expect to have its response within a few weeks. If we are not successful in that approach, it may well mean increased costs to importers and exporters for transporting their cargo via Melbourne if those operations are centralised in Victoria.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. R.K. ABBOTT: Yes. If berth No. 25 becomes available, we will consider berthing the *Island Seaway* at that wharf, but that would become a budgetary consideration because considerable costs would be involved in altering the gates and ramps for loading purposes. However, we would seriously consider that.

ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE

The Hon. B.C. EASTICK: Can the Premier report on the current status of planning for the promised entertainment centre? Following the Premier's announcement seven months ago that the entertainment centre that he had promised prior to the last State election was to be scrapped, he said that the Grand Prix Board would investigate other ways to develop such a centre, but we have heard nothing to date about how those investigations are proceeding.

The Hon. J.C. BANNON: Those investigations are in fact proceeding. A project brief has been sent by me to the board and formally accepted. The brief asks the board to report by the end of April on the form, scale and approach for an affordable multi-mode centre or separate centres for staging a range of entertainment, sports and other events for Adelaide. In other words, it is a fairly open brief. That investigation is proceeding, and I have left it to the board to undertake the work as it thinks fit.

I would hope that that deadline will be met. It accords with the timetable that I discussed when making my press release on 25 August in the budget context in which I said that we hoped to have at least a clear idea by the time of the formation of the 1988-89 budget of just what would be involved in the entertainment centre project. At this stage I am quite happy with the progress being made on that investigation, and I am looking forward to receiving the report from the Grand Prix Board.

COMPUTER GAMES

Mr De LAINE: Can the Minister of Education, representing the Attorney-General in another place, say whether there is any way in which the quality of computer games can be controlled? At the moment all media material in Australia, except computer games, is subject to Government regulation and control. However, there are no classification systems, no censorship or regulations regarding distribution and delivery of computer games to people of any age. This situation allows all sorts of undesirable computer material to be freely viewed by children of all ages.

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER: I shall be pleased to convey the honourable member's question to the Attorney-General for his consideration. I might say that, as Minister of Education, I have made representations to the Attorney on this matter. The provision of this material in the community is covered by the general provisions of the criminal law, which are substantial in this area, and it must not contravene those provisions. Nevertheless, the specific matter of regulation and control is of importance and I will have the question conveyed to the Minister.

ACCESS CABS

Mr INGERSON: Can the Minister of Transport advise the House of the reasons causing delays with the supply of a further 10 Access Cabs promised for the end of December by the Premier during Estimates Committee? The Access Cab scheme is very successful. However, it cannot take urgent bookings for disabled persons as there is a built-in delay of 1½ hours because of demand. I understand that 10 Ford XF Falcons were purchased late last year and arrived in early December at the Netley Depot, where they have been sitting ever since, untouched.

Because of the Premier's promise, Access Cabs has inquired through the Department of Transport about the reasons for the delay. The program for conversion of these cars is financed under the HACC (Home and Community Care) scheme administered by the Health Commission in South Australia. I am informed that the delay is not in Canberra, but here in South Australia. I am also advised that, because of this delay, it will be up to six months before any conversions can take place, as the company in New South Wales that does these conversions has 27 confirmed orders now and can produce only six cars per month. It has no orders from the South Australian Government. The disabled are being disadvantaged by this poor administration.

The Hon. G.F. KENEALLY: I would like to reply immediately to the last statement of the honourable member. This Government has put into place a system of transport for handicapped people in South Australia that the honourable member, in explaining his question, has praised. On the one hand, he praises what the Government does and, on the other hand, he talks about poor administration. He cannot have it both ways.

What we have done for the transport of handicapped people in South Australia is an initiative that has brought wide support and praise from the community, and appreciation from that section of the community which hitherto did not have access to the city's facilities in the way that it has access now. The Access Cab scheme has been an outstanding success and the growth in the number of people registered to participate has been heartening, so that we have to purchase more Access Cabs.

The Department of Transport took the initiative of securing Ford vehicles that could be converted into Access Cabs

when Home and Community Care funds were available. That matter is being addressed by the Government now and, as soon as this application is completed and the funds are made available, we will proceed with meeting the demand that is growing as a result of the initiative that the Bannon Government has undertaken.

TOBACCO ADVERTISING

Ms LENEHAN: Will the Minister for Environment and Planning, in his capacity as Deputy Premier, seek the support of other State Ministers at the National Drug Summit next week to request the Federal Government to no longer allow tobacco companies to claim a tax deduction for tobacco product advertising? At present millions of dollars are spent and claimed as allowable deductions for the advertising and promotion of cigarette smoking. It has been put to me that, under the present tax system, ordinary taxpayers are subsidising tobacco companies so that they can promote their products.

The Hon. D.J. HOPGOOD: The honourable member would know that certain forms of promotion of cigarette advertising are illegal under Federal law, but that is not the case with all forms of promotion. I think it is worthwhile raising this subject in the context of the national drug strategy, which has sought initiatives in various areas, both in terms of promotion of healthier lifestyles and providing greater assistance to the States for policing and generally getting right at the core of illicit drug trafficking.

I point out also that a good deal of the thrust of the national drug strategy has been in relation to those substances which are not prohibited under the law, because it is clear that, whatever we may think about illicit drugs, and however important that should be, we should apply the full force of the law to those elements within our community who seek to live off the misfortune of others in relation to these drugs. Nonetheless, the major health problems remain with the somewhat socially sanctioned drugs—nicotine and alcohol. I would be happy to take up with other Ministers and the Commonwealth in Alice Springs next week the matter raised by the honourable member.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member for Flinders.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

RURAL CRISIS

Mr BLACKER: I direct my question to the Minister of Agriculture. Has an assessment been made of the extent and number of farmers who have been seriously affected financially by the rural crisis? Could the Minister outline how many are assessed at being at risk, how many are in serious financial difficulties and how many farmers are expected to be forced from the industry in the next few months? Further, could the Minister advise whether the Government has any plans to assist those in serious trouble and whether the Government has given any further consideration to a crop planting scheme along the lines of the Victorian crop planting schemes which were introduced in the Mallee areas?

The Hon. M.K. MAYES: At this stage the figures are reasonably flexible because, as I am sure the honourable member would appreciate, we are still maintaining assessments after the season. I think I informed the House late last year that we had had discussions with the banks. I held discussions with representatives of all banks, stock firms and some finance houses. National and State representatives of the banks attended those meetings. We endeavoured to obtain a global view of what was happening, particularly in terms of Eyre Peninsula.

The picture is not good and the figure varies, depending on how banks grade their clients. In total, I would say that we are looking at about 120 farmers being in what the banks would call the dangerous category, or those people who are in dire financial difficulties. Our figures, which are based on the department's assessment through the Rural Assistance Branch, would perhaps be more than that, and I think that the banks are being conservative in that area. However, I understand the basis of their analysis and why they have reached that figure. At its worst, the situation could be that around 200 people are in a very serious position. In terms of overall numbers of farmers on Eyre Peninsula—2 100 farmers are recognised as operating on Eyre Peninsula—it is about 10 per cent.

That is a figure slightly above what we were estimating two years ago in this regard—about 7 or 8 per cent of farms being in the dangerous category. We are continuing to monitor and assess the situation. As the honourable member would know, we have exhausted our rural assistance funds—that is, our debt support funds. Negotiations are under way. The Premier and I have had discussions with the Federal Government and the Federal Minister. The Premier has raised the matter with EPAC and has had individual discussions with the Federal Treasurer and the Prime Minister on this issue.

We are reasonably confident that things are proceeding successfully, although it may not work out as money coming indirectly for rural assistance. We have been requesting about $1 million to offer interest subsidies through our scheme, whereby we would actually be the lender, as compared with the situation in other States which, of course, go through the process of lending out the money for individual borrowers to borrow from private lenders, being a bank or a finance house. I think that our system is better, as we then have a direct interest in it. It is complicated and makes the system more complex, but I think it provides the farmer with an assurance that there is a third party involved in this, with a very definite and extensive interest in what is happening in terms of the farm unit. That $1 million would in fact give us a lending capacity of about $10 million to $11 million. We believe that that would assist us greatly and probably see us through the demands that we have for additional low interest loans in order to provide the present debt structuring.

In relation to the rural adjustment scheme, in 1985 we had a total of 583 applications, and in 1985-86 we processed those applications, and went through to 1986 with 997 applications. That is a significant increase, as the honourable member would appreciate. We have had a rapid growth in that demand over the past few months as well. I am sure that the honourable member is aware of the situation as far as additional money is concerned. The Government is reasonably confident that we will get some avenue of relief from the Federal Government. There is a Federal Government scheme. It may involve some arrangement with the State in relation to funding although, fundamentally, it would be a Federal Government arrangement. We need that in order to continue our lending program, without which many of our younger farmers would not be able to survive, and it would be a tragedy to see that happen. They are the people we need to keep on the land. They are our future farming community. As I am sure the member for Flinders appreciates, and certainly the Federal Minister does, we

need to keep these people based on the land. This money is our obvious avenue.

In relation to the other parts of the question, first, the matter of household support is still under consideration. As the honourable member knows, we are endeavouring to get that up. In relation to the up-front payment that is available for people who make the decision to depart from the land, we want to get a triple amount to put in there so that, with more working capital when they leave, they will be better able to set up with their families in a better situation. That matter is still under debate. There is some problem with the Federal Treasury in relation to this matter, but we are still pursuing it. The ministerial council in Perth has reiterated its request to the Federal Government for those funds, as we see that as being an essential part of our being able to provide people with an opportunity to redirect their employment and to relocate.

We know that in areas such as Eyre Peninsula job opportunities are presenting themselves. Although it means a continuation of employment in isolated circumstances, many people who live in that area enjoy that type of life. However, there is some employment available. There are various levels and types of employment for farmers who leave their land. I am not pointing this out as an encouragement to people to leave the land but simply indicating that there is some hope at the end of the channel. Certainly, I can assure the honourable member that we are doing everything we can in the matter of additional funding so that we can continue with services that we believe are essential in supporting our farming community, particularly on Eyre Peninsula, although we know that there are other pockets in other parts of the State. I thank the honourable member for his question and I will keep him and the House informed on the progress of this matter. However, I hope that in the next week or so we will see some breakthrough in this area.

LEAD CONTAMINATION

Mr PLUNKETT: My question is directed to the Minister of Transport, representing the Minister of Health in another place. Is there a health risk to the residents of Thebarton from drinking stored rainwater which might contain high levels of lead? This matter was referred to recently in an article published in the *Westside* Messenger. What provisions are there to protect people from this and related problems?

The Hon. G.F. KENEALLY: I thank the honourable member for his question, which is an important one and which once again signifies the honourable member's concern for the well-being of his constituents. I thank the honourable member for showing me a copy of the article to which he alluded in the explanation to his question. A resident of the Thebarton council complained that she had not been advised that high lead levels had been detected in the council tank. By way of background to this matter, the Thebarton council arranged for testing of the council tank to be carried out by the State Government analysts in the Chemistry Division of the Department of Services and Supply. The test showed a result of .062 milligrams of lead per litre. The matter was then discussed with officers of the South Australian Health Commission.

In answer to the honourable member's question, I point out that the South Australian and international guidelines recommend that lead levels in drinking water should not exceed .05 milligrams per litre. It is possible that the rainwater collected from roofs close to busy roads may exceed this limit due to emissions from cars using lead based petrol. As the honourable member would know, the Thebarton council tank is right alongside one of the busiest intersections in Adelaide, namely that of South and Henley Beach Roads.

The main reason for concern about lead levels is the possibility of the adverse effect on the development of children during the first few years of life. The Thebarton council rainwater tank is likely to be the most heavily contaminated within that region because of its location, as I have already pointed out, being close to a very busy intersection. Given that the measured level was about .01 milligrams per litre above the recommended maximum, it is highly unlikely that tanks elsewhere in the area would present any health risk.

Thus, since action was taken to prevent further use of council rainwater, it was considered unnecessary to issue warnings to the general community. Advice was provided to council and through the Messenger press and 5DN that the E&WS Department carries out free water tests for private residents. It is understood that further tests have been carried out for local residents, but the results are not yet available. While local councils have a responsibility under health legislation to minimise public health risks in their areas, the Health Commission also has a similar responsibility statewide. In this instance, the Thebarton council has sought further advice from the Health Commission on the matter.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. G.F. KENEALLY: Frankly, I am quite surprised that, although I am talking about a health matter of great concern to children who live in the Thebarton council area, some members opposite who represent the people in the western suburbs of metropolitan Adelaide do not seem to share my concern about this matter. However, to give him credit, the member for Hanson has been listening intently to my remarks. In this instance the Thebarton council has sought further advice from the Health Commission on the matter.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. G.F. KENEALLY: I am having a great deal of difficulty even hearing myself above the braying of the member for Heysen. I am sure that the honourable member and all other members would want me to finish my reply to this very important question. In this instance the Thebarton council has sought further advice from the Health Commission on the matter, as officers of the Public and Environmental Health Division of the commission have a great deal of expertise on the health effects of lead.

The SPEAKER: Order! Call on the business of the day.

SITTINGS AND BUSINESS

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

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, 22 March at 2 p.m.

Motion carried.

MOTOR VEHICLES ACT AMENDMENT BILL (1988)

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 25 February. Page 3133.)

Mr MEIER (Goyder): At the outset I thank the Minister for allowing this Bill to proceed before the Wrongs Act

Amendment Bill, because I think it is much more relevant to speak to this Bill first. As was indicated in the second reading explanation, the Wrongs Act Amendment Bill is simply consequential to this Bill. Undoubtedly members will be aware that the Motor Vehicles Act was amended in 1986 when a more restrictive interpretation was placed on the words 'arising out of the use of a motor vehicle'. As members would recall, the reason given at the time was because the pay-outs for third party claims had become quite exhorbitant. I think there was every good reason to place a limitation on the pay-outs to claimants. Unfortunately, those amendments (and this is often the case) meant that quite a few situations were not covered, including a cyclist riding along a road at a time when a motorist was alighting from his car, causing the cyclist to run into the car door. In that situation the cyclist is not eligible to make a third party claim and cannot be reimbursed.

The Insurance Council of Australia has picked this up, and I think it was mentioned during the debate back in 1986. This amendment therefore seeks to correct that problem. I think it is worth considering whether this amendment is sufficient in itself and perhaps whether other amendments should go further. I will be interested to hear from the Minister how the Government thinks on this whole matter. Members will recall that back in 1986 amendments limited the scope of compulsory third party insurance and excluded accidents caused by or arising out of the use of a motor vehicle if it was not a consequence of the driving or parking of the vehicle or the vehicle running out of control. I draw to the attention of the House a few comments from the Insurance Council of Australia in relation to its thinking on this amendment and whether other matters should be considered.

Certainly it is a positive move to cover an accident caused when a cyclist rides into an open car door. However, what about the closing of a car door and a person being injured in that way? It could be said that, technically, there is not much difference in some cases between a person having their fingers jammed in a car door and another door—they are just in the wrong place at the wrong time. However, the Insurance Council of Australia points out that in the past some people have injured their fingers in one way or another and have then made a claim under the Act saying that it occurred when their fingers were jammed in a car door. Obviously if people make that sort of claim it is fraudulent, and certainly I do not want to see fraudulent claims promoted. Nevertheless, I think it is something that we should consider for those people who are genuinely injured in that way.

The Insurance Council of Australia has been looking at the use of the terms 'entry' and 'alighting' with respect to motor vehicles and vehicles on the road generally. I believe that the thinking is that the use of the terms 'entry' and 'alighting' are not satisfactory because accidents have apparently occurred for a variety of reasons when people have got into or out of a vehicle. For example, you can trip over the bottom of a car door; you can become caught up in a seat belt and fall out of a car; or you can be unlucky enough to step onto a broken bottle, and so on. Therefore, the question remains: should these things be covered under compulsory third party insurance? It appears that they are not covered under that insurance. There are many injuries that were formerly covered by the old phrase 'arising out of the use of a motor vehicle' that are no longer covered by third party insurance. Examples include a vehicle rolling off a jack; the use of a faulty jack; a car bonnet or car boot dropping onto a person's head—

The Hon. Ted Chapman: You're drawing a wide bow on this Bill.

Mr MEIER: I think it is important that these points are canvassed while we are looking at rectifying this particular anomaly. I want to determine how the Government thinks about this and whether it will address other problems and, in fact, whether it sees these things as problems.

The Hon. Ted Chapman: You want to be careful not to create any more.

Mr MEIER: I think we should keep the people of South Australia in mind and make sure that they are adequately protected under the third party property legislation. As I was saying, there is also the possibility of a person having their fingers jammed in a radiator belt. Modern cars have a variety of belts for airconditioning and other items—

Ms Lenehan interjecting:

Mr MEIER: This all comes under third party claims. If the honourable member had been listening earlier—

Ms Lenehan interjecting:

Mr MEIER: I am referring to radiator belts which drive the fan. I am very disappointed that Government members are not showing more interest in this Bill. It is members opposite who will have to wear the can later when they come into this House and bring up problems from their constituents who have been left stranded after an accident occurred, and then found that third party insurance did not cover it. I am describing the problem but members opposite are not particularly interested. I hope that they will pay a little more attention. Generally, the public are not aware of the limitation of cover provided by third party property insurance these days, and I think that is borne out by the reaction from Government members.

I say again that that is blatantly obvious from the reaction of members opposite. I hope that the Government will ensure that adequate publicity is undertaken so that people are quite clear as to what points are or are not covered by third party cover in 1988—remembering that 1988 is very different from the situation back in 1986. Additionally, I bring to your attention and that of the House concerns expressed by the Bus and Coach Association and/or members of that association with respect to the operation of omnibuses. The bus firms are very concerned about what compensation passengers will have if they happen to fall when alighting from or entering a bus; if they fall as a result of having got off the bus; or if they fall in the bus. Those matters are no longer covered.

One might say that public liability insurance will cover people in these circumstances. However, I wish to point out that public liability policies exclude claims arising from the use of motor vehicles, therefore people who find themselves in this situation may be faced with a problem, the only solution to which is to sue the bus company or, in a similar situation with a person getting into or out of a car, sue the driver of the car. In the case of a bus company one can perhaps understand that the company would have sufficient finance to make due compensation, but in the case of the owner of a car it does not take much imagination to appreciate that, in many cases, owners of cars are not wealthy people.

So, what is a person's recourse where the owner of a car virtually does not have any money other than the value of the car? There is not much point in suing that person for damages because one would get nothing out of that person. If one sues, it will take many, many years. Again, it is a further problem, and I wonder what the Government is doing to address these particular problems. I think that the bus companies are somewhat concerned (and one letter that I have here is dated December 1987, so it is only two or

three months ago) as to what sort of insurance they can take out until these matters have been addressed by the Attorney-General.

I hope that the Government is not putting the matter to one side and saying, 'We'll do the bit about opening of doors and cyclists running into them and just hope that the others will go away.' Many thousands of people who will possibly not be covered by the appropriate insurance are using buses today and every other day in 1988.

Mr Ferguson interjecting:

Mr MEIER: It is very interesting that the member for Henley Beach asked what would be our policy on this. I had hoped that I was getting across the point that these matters have arisen as a result of the amendments to the Act back in 1986. If my memory serves me correctly, the Opposition supported the Government on that measure, mainly because we also recognised that the pay-out fees for third party insurance had to be tackled, as they were having a negative effect on people driving motor cars and who had to pay the compulsory third party insurance, so we fully agreed that, in order to get this down, one has to limit the scope of the insurance.

At the same time, however, being a member of a caring Party, we are concerned that members of the public are adequately protected. I wish that the same sympathies were shown by members of the Government.

Members interjecting:

Mr MEIER: From the sort of interjection that I had, that is the only inference that I can make. I will not pursue that matter further if the members of the Government do not take it further. I thought I was making my point quite clearly there. Additionally, we have the problem where a vehicle may be parked with no door open, and I think especially of a vehicle which could be on one of our major highways; the driver pulls over for a rest or simply for a call of nature, whether the vehicle be a truck, a heavy vehicle or a motor car. What happens when another vehicle ploughs into the back of that vehicle at a very high speed, perhaps because the first vehicle was not parked off the road appropriately? Again, is proper cover available to any such person because of the amendments in this case?

I acknowledge that if the vehicle was incorrectly parked one could sue the owner of that vehicle for negligence, but I do not think we are particularly concerned with that problem so much as with the general area where we are covering the case of a door opening and someone running into the door. But what if a vehicle is parked in such a way that someone runs into the vehicle? This amendment seems to me not to cover that and I am not suggesting that it does, but does the Minister think that this matter also needs to be addressed? I think that it does. If so, what are the proposals of the Government in the future?

I think that I have covered the additional points of concern that need to be mentioned at this time rather than swept under the carpet and left for someone else to work out. I am very pleased—and I speak on behalf of the Opposition—that this amendment is being addressed in this Bill. It has our full support, but there are much wider implications, and I will be seeking further information from the Minister in due course.

Mr OSWALD (Morphett): I support the Bill, and support the remarks made by the member for Goyder. Whenever we extend the net under which insurance is paid—and in this case we are extending it out to the occasion when a cyclist impacts on a motor vehicle when a driver opens his car door and an accident claim is made—it results in more payouts. I support this in principle and I certainly do not want to see anyone getting up in the House and not supporting this move, but I raise the question (for the Minister to answer during the Committee stage or in his second reading reply) of the impact that this legislation might have. It allows me in this debate to canvass the whole question of the potential for further increases in premiums in the compulsory third party area. I suggest that many members of this Chamber and of the public are vitally concerned that SGIC does not increase the compulsory third party premiums.

In January of this year Mr Gerschwitz confirmed that the SGIC would soon have to take measures to reduce a deficit of more than $119 million in third party funds. In fairness, it was hoped by Mr Gerschwitz that it might be resolved within the SGIC. I notice that SGIC made a small, first time profit this year of $500 000 on third party insurance. That was the first time it made a profit, (it says here) for 10 years. There is, however, a nagging concern in the community that, despite the 2.5 per cent increase SGIC received back in May, at some time in the future we will see another increase.

I caution the Government against it: the public will not tolerate it. This matter must be resolved from within the resources of the State Government Insurance Commission. It is not a matter of going into the public arena and asking the Government to increase percentages. Members of the public have had enough of additional costs in running their private affairs and small business people have had enough of paying such costs in running their businesses. I support the Bill and congratulate the member for Goyder on his contribution this afternoon on this important subject.

I ask the Minister in his reply to address what I believe to be the politically sensitive and hidden agenda in this Bill and to tell the House what will be the likely impact on future costs of third party insurance with the SGIC. Further, although there has not been a rise in premiums since the 2.5 per cent increase in May last year, I challenge the Minister to deny that another increase is imminent.

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER (Minister of Education): I thank the Opposition for its support of this measure, albeit a minor amendment to the Motor Vehicles Act with a consequential amendment to the Wrongs Act. The Bill raises certain important issues that have been referred to by Opposition members. In recent months substantial discussions have taken place between the Government, the Insurance Council of Australia, and the SGIC on this and other related matters, many of which have been raised by Opposition members in the second reading debate in this Chamber and more details of which have been given by the responsible Minister in the other place.

I should correct one misapprehension that the member for Goyder may have in respect of a parked vehicle. For instance, a vehicle may be parked over the crest of a hill and as a result be involved in an accident. Section 3 of the Motor Vehicles Act Amendment Act of 1986 amended section 99 of the principal Act to provide for that situation: the use of a motor vehicle where as a consequence it is a parked vehicle. I am advised that that covers the situation referred to by the honourable member in the example that he gave.

A line had to be drawn concerning the way in which the Act was being amended. The Bill has retrospective provisions and actuarial implications. However, this matter has been negotiated with the Insurance Council of Australia and the SGIC so that there is an ability to estimate the impact of the amendment, given its retrospective nature, and so that appropriate provision can be made within the insurance

industry to cover this situation. The amendment has been presented to the Government as desirable and the Government agrees, at least to this extent, that the Act should be amended to provide for the situation in respect of the opening or closing of the door of a vehicle. Therefore, the Bill comes to the House in this form and I commend it to members.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3—'Interpretation.'

Mr MEIER: I thank the Minister for clarifying one or two points in his second reading reply. However, I wish to have one or two further points clarified. The first concerns the driver or passenger who slams his or her fingers in the door of the car on alighting. Has a passenger any recourse under third party insurance if the driver shuts the door on the passenger's fingers? If a driver slams the door on his own fingers, what recourse has he under third party insurance?

Secondly, have we a reciprocal arrangement with other States as to third party cover? Would a problem be created if people from Victoria or New South Wales visiting South Australia did not realise that our laws in this respect differed from those of their home State? Such people, who might not be carrying appropriate public liability insurance, could say after an accident, 'Had we known we would have taken out appropriate public liability insurance on our trip to South Australia, but it's too late now when we are told that we are not covered under South Australian third party laws.'

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER: I thank the honourable member for his questions. In reply to his first question, regarding fingers being caught in a car door and damaged, it depends on the circumstances of each case (and especially whether negligence is present) whether liability follows, and one cannot give an absolute answer.

In reply to the honourable member's second question, it is true that difficulties exist in our relations with New South Wales regarding the legislation that has been enacted there, and its impact on South Australians who have accidents in that State. Discussions are proceeding on this matter and the SGIC is monitoring the situation closely. At present, however, I understand that there have been no major problems in this area.

Mr MEIER: As I said in my second reading speech, some bus operators are concerned about their liability in respect of passengers who may have an accident boarding or leaving a bus or even in the corridor of the bus. From those operators' investigations, it appears that they would not be covered by third party insurance in this regard. Will the Minister say whether or not that is so?

Additionally, what is the situation of a bus driver who carries a passenger's parcels or suitcases and becomes involved in an accident while carrying such parcels or packages? Would the driver be covered under WorkCover or under third party insurance? It would not be difficult for a driver to get into that situation. On country bus runs passengers often bring their cases to the front of the bus and expect the driver to carry them to the rear or the side, and sometimes the driver carries them on to the road side of the bus. Would the driver be covered by WorkCover or third party?

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER: In essence, it is beholden on the part of the bus company to negotiate with the insurance providers complete coverage of all these circumstances. I can understand that they would like to see some of the greyer areas of responsibility brought into the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act and the general third party coverage structure. Negotiations are proceeding with the interested parties to cover some of these grey areas and make them a little more certain than they are. At this time those matters are not believed to be appropriately covered in the Bill.

Mr OSWALD: In my second reading speech I raised the matter of increased premiums and asked the Minister to comment on them. He did not, and he did not pick up my challenge to deny that there would be any increases, so I raise the question again. In October last year an SGIC officer announed that they would be seeking rises which, in real terms, would mean a $25 to $40 increase in city and a $32 increase in country rates to insurance premiums. Mr Gerschwitz denied that, saying that the claim was without foundation and totally misleading. I can accept that, if the claim was without foundation, he had every right to deny it.

However, in January 1988 Mr Gerschwitz confirmed that SGIC would have to take measures to reduce the deficit by more than $119 million. Although the suggestion of increases was denied in October, in January 1988 the SGIC General Manager is starting to talk about economies to the tune of $100 million. We have now increased the benefits—and although I do not know how many claims will be made under these changes, the Bill is here to tidy up a loophole and there are probably not a lot of claims—but I believe it is appropriate now to put this question to the Minister, in light of Mr Gerschwitz's claim that SGIC will have to try to cut $100 million from its costs. There were rumours suggesting that we were going to see a considerable increase of premiums of between 12 per cent and 15 per cent. Therefore, will the Minister confirm that no negotiations are proceeding and deny that the Government does not intend assisting with third party insurance premium increases in the near future?

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER: It is not relevant to the legislation before us to ask the macro question posed. As to the impact of this legislation on third party premiums, one can only hazard that its effect would be minimal. Obviously, along with all other representations made by SGIC to the Third Party Premiums Committee, it will be considered and in due course a recommendation will be made to the Government with respect to appropriate third party premium levels in this State. I can add no more than that to the process that takes place, except to reiterate that the expected impact of this amendment would be minimal indeed.

Mr OSWALD: The Minister is a member of the Cabinet and it has been put to us that consideration is being given to an increase in third party premiums. This is an appropriate line on which to ask the question. We are talking about SGIC and increasing the cover which would impact on premiums. Is the Government or SGIC considering an increase of premiums for third party insurance?

The CHAIRMAN: Reluctantly, I have to rule that question out of order. It is far wider than the scope of the proposition in front of us. The first question was fair enough, because the member referred to what the premiums increase might be as a result of the legislation before us, but he has now taken his question far wider and gone outside of the Bill before us. Therefore, I must rule the question out of order.

Mr MEIER: I thank the Minister for his earlier answer, but again I ask whether he can indicate, as the Government has brought in this amendment, whether the opening or closing of doors on a vehicle is now covered. The Minister said that things were being looked at. I refer to a memo dated 21 January 1988 concerning the Bus and Coach Association, which was concerned about the lack of insurance coverage for people entering or alighting from a bus or

having an accident in a bus. The association was seeking some insurance, its major concern being when the Government was going to act to see whether cover could be made. Can the Minister indicate whether the Government hopes to act on this matter before the completion of the present parliamentary session?

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER: I can understand the representations that the honourable member has received, because there is an attempt to spread loss across the community rather than having that borne by the proprietor. There would be a deal of anxiety to transfer that responsibility in the way that the honourable member refers. I cannot give any specific information to the honourable member about the matters raised, other than what I have already said.

Clause passed.

Title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

WRONGS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 25 February. Page 3133.)

Mr MEIER (Goyder): As I indicated during the second reading debate on the Motor Vehicles Act Amendment Bill, this Bill is consequential on that, and I will not restate the points made then. However, in that debate I did omit to say that this legislation is to apply retrospectively and that retrospectivity generally is unusual. Certainly, the Opposition supports this provision, thus making the legislation retrospective. It can be argued that there are special circumstances, as there is a public expectation that injuries caused as a result of the opening or closing of vehicle doors would be covered under the compulsory third party scheme and because drivers might have had difficulty in insuring against this liability during the past year.

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER (Minister of Education): I thank the Opposition for its support of this legislation which is consequential on the passage of the Motor Vehicles Act Amendment Bill. In that way it provides for the implementation of this minor amendment.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3—'Motor accidents.'

Mr MEIER: I believe it is correct to say that public liability policies exclude claims arising out of the use of motor vehicles. The situation of the opening or closing of a car door has been covered, so people do not have to worry about that, but what about the other examples which could apply to a motor vehicle? Can people cover themselves through policies other than public liability policies? If not, will the Government seek to take corrective action in this area?

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER: The point raised by the honourable member is a very interesting and important one. I understand that the Insurance Council is considering the extension of policies to include such matters as those referred to by the honourable member. That requires a renegotiation of reinsurance policies and other consequential matters, so those discussions are being pursued. That matter is being considered by the insurance industry at large, as I understand it.

Mr MEIER: I assume that the only course of action open to anyone who would be affected by an injury from a motor vehicle that is not covered under third party would be to sue the current owner of the vehicle.

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER: Yes, that is right. It is the same situation as applies in relation to a playground, a house or wherever.

Mr S.G. EVANS: I think that I was the first member to raise this subject in the press. Can the Minister inform the Committee whether the Government is looking at whether it needs to further amend the legislation in other ways? Without committing the Government to which areas, do other areas need to be considered, because I believe that that is the case? Other than the matters being considered by the insurance companies, is the Government looking to see whether or not other areas may need to be clarified?

I will give an example. A few years ago a person's car ran out of petrol. The two occupants of the vehicle decided to walk and obtain the fuel. They obtained the fuel and, on the way back to the car, one person attempted to light a cigarette and the tin caught fire. One person was burnt very severely, because the tin exploded. That incident involved a pay-out claim under the old system. I do not argue that that should be included in relation to the use of a vehicle, but we may need to look at some areas. If the Minister cannot comment on that, is he prepared, along with his colleague, to look at other proposals if they are submitted to him by letter by me or other people?

The Hon. G.J. CRAFTER: Obviously the previous amendments had to be introduced to cover those circumstances, because it was extremely broad in its extent and that was a burden on the community at large. Those circumstances clearly involve a degree of negligence, and that is culpable and those who perpetrate that negligence ought to be responsible rather than the community at large, in terms of the loss spreading then goes on if it was brought under the legislation before us.

The Government does not have any proposals before it to further amend the legislation. This amendment arose as a result of discussions between the Insurance Council of Australia, the State Government Insurance Commission and the Government. As a consequence of those discussions and wider deliberations, this amendment was seen to be desirable, but those discussions are ongoing. It is open for people to make further representations to the Government. Whether they eventually result in further amendments being made remains to be seen.

Clause passed.

Title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

[Sitting suspended from 3.56 to 4.57]

The Hon. M.K. MAYES (Minister of Agriculture): I move:

That the time for moving the adjournment of the House be extended beyond 5 p.m.

Motion carried.

BARLEY MARKETING ACT AMENDMENT BILL (1988)

Returned from the Legislative Council with the following amendment:

Page 1, lines 15 to 19 (clause 2)—Leave out subsection (1) and insert the following subsection:

(1) Where money to which the holder of a mortgage, bill of sale, lien or other charge over barley or oats is entitled is paid by the board to another person, the holder of the mortgage, bill of sale, lien or other charge cannot make a claim against the board in respect of the money or the barley or oats unless the board acted dishonestly in making the payment.

Consideration in Committee.

The Hon. M.K. MAYES: I move:

That the Legislative Council's amendment be agreed to.

Mr GUNN: The Opposition supports this amendment, which seeks to clarify the problems that were raised by Opposition members during an earlier stage of the proceedings. I sincerely hope that this amendment solves the problems that were highlighted by Opposition members and that the matter can now proceed expeditiously.

The Hon. TED CHAPMAN: I want an assurance from the Minister that the amendment does not in any way preclude a person who is unencumbered by a lien, mortgage or other charge from claiming an entitlement to payment for delivered grain, especially when payments for that grain have been inadvertently or honestly, within the ambit of an error, paid to some other person or persons.

The Hon. M.K. MAYES: Following our discussions and negotiations with members in the other place and the agreement that has been forged today, the clause deals with the issue. All the advice that I have received from various officers and other persons in regard to this Bill is that the honourable member's case will be satisfied.

The Hon. TED CHAPMAN: I noted that the Minister carefully referred to the advice that he had received. One can only accept advice in these circumstances, where one has no understanding of the practical subject in the field: I recognise that point. Can I have one more undertaking from the Minister that, if after the passage of this Bill in its present form an anomaly is found along the lines that I have explained, he will correct that forthwith while he is Minister?

The Hon. M.K. MAYES: As I interpret the Bill (of course, I am not a lawyer) it would meet the member's request. Of course, that was the purpose of drafting the amendment. I think we have to put in context the advice that we receive. The request was from the Barley Board, which comprises industry representatives. It was not because of any mistake by my officers that we face this amendment today: advice was received from the board, which had taken advice from its legal representatives, who have raised the practical problem that was referred to in the House yesterday. Unfortunately, that was not communicated to my officers, and that was rather unfortunate. Hopefully, the message will go back to the board not to pursue that process in future. I hope, too, that when they receive advice from their solicitors warning of some practical application, even though they intend to address any problems that may arise, they will ensure that the legal legislative process is covered. I assure the honourable member that, if any member of this House finds that a practical situation poses a problem in the adminstration of this Act, I will be more than happy to address it in this place.

Mr D.S. BAKER: The amendment covers the problems that we had with the Bill yesterday. It protects the growers whom we were trying to protect yesterday from negligence or bad management on behalf of the board. It may be said that the provisions are still quite harsh on the holders of the mortgage, bill of sale or lien. I am led to believe that in respect of the Wheat Board the financiers have the right to register their charge with the board and thereby ensure that their mortgages or liens are paid out as the grower is paid out. If that practice is available to financiers under the legislation, as I am led to believe it is, it should clear up the problems absolutely, and I support it.

Motion carried.

Mr RANN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

A quorum having been formed:

The Hon. M.K. MAYES (Minister of Agriculture): I move:

That Standing Orders be so far suspended as to enable the Clerk to deliver messages to the Legislative Council when this House is not sitting.

Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

At 5.23 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday 22 March at 2 p.m.