

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 3 May 1994

The **SPEAKER (Hon. G.M. Gunn)** took the Chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

WELLAND PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

A petition signed by 642 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to install a pedestrian crossing on Port Road at Welland was presented by Mr Atkinson.

Petition received.

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

A petition signed by 186 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to phase out intensive animal husbandry practices was presented by Mr Becker.

Petition received.

MURRAY RIVER

A petition signed by 441 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to ensure that water to consumers drawn from the River Murray is filtered was presented by Mr Lewis.

Petition received.

QUESTIONS

The **SPEAKER**: I direct that written answers to the following questions on the Notice Paper, as detailed in the schedule that I now table, be distributed and printed in *Hansard*: Nos 75, 76, 120, 125 and 128; and I direct that the following answer to a question without notice be distributed and printed in *Hansard*.

GULF ST VINCENT

In reply to Ms **HURLEY (Napier)** 14 April.

The **Hon. D.S. BAKER**: Following the opening of the Gulf St Vincent prawn fishery during March 1994, the Gulf St Vincent Prawn Boat Owners' Association offered a voluntary contribution of \$1 per kilo of marketable prawns caught per boat. A letter outlining this offer, dated 18 March 1994, was sent to the Chairman of the Gulf St Vincent Prawn Fishery Management Committee, Mr Ted Chapman.

In accordance with the Chairman's arrangement with industry, the total collected is to be held in a special deposit account, identifying each licence holder's contribution. Because of a requirement under the Fisheries Act 1982 to observe confidentiality, individual licence holder's details cannot be provided. However, I can provide aggregate information.

I understand that as at 22 April 1994, eight of the 10 licence holders have made a voluntary contribution, resulting in a total amount of \$77 679 being collected. If some licence holders choose not to pay, the Government is not in a position to compel payment, nor has it any intention of doing so. After all, it is a voluntary contribution, initiated by the Prawn Boat Owners' Association.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

The **SPEAKER** laid on the table the supplementary report of the Auditor-General for the year ended 30 June 1993.

Ordered that report be printed.

MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The **SPEAKER** laid on the table a statement of the Register of Members' Interests for April 1994.

Ordered to be printed.

AUDIT COMMISSION REPORT

The **Hon. DEAN BROWN (Premier)**: I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The **Hon. DEAN BROWN**: I table the report of the independent South Australian Commission of Audit. It is in two volumes, covering 855 pages, plus an overview. There are 336 recommendations. It is the most comprehensive of the audit reports commissioned by State Governments in recent years. It is also the most detailed single analysis of South Australia's finances in our State's history. My Government appointed this commission as one of its first actions because of our concern that the Parliament and the public had not been told the full truth about South Australia's financial position. With this report we now have Labor's albatross—Labor's \$10 billion black hole. This is Labor's legacy to South Australia and this is the week for those responsible to apologise to all South Australians. We will see by Friday if Labor has had the decency to say they are sorry for the chaos they have caused to our State economy and to the public sector. The report shows:

- at the bottom line, South Australians are \$10 000 million worse off than the former Government claimed—the financial black hole created by the former Government's mismanagement of assets and liabilities held in the name of taxpayers is that much worse than the former Government advised to Parliament;
- an increasing liability for superannuation and other entitlements of public servants which the former Government refused to acknowledge;
- under the former Government's 'Meeting the Challenge' strategy, the State's financial position would have continued to deteriorate;
- as a result, the South Australian Government now owes \$9 909 for every man, woman and child in South Australia and the unfunded liability for superannuation is now increasing at the rate of \$200 million a year.

The report also exposes gross mismanagement of the public sector by the former Government in a wide range of areas.

As a result, unless action is taken now, we will be consigning future generations of South Australians to higher tax bills and lower standards of services because an increasing amount of Government funding will be required to pay for the debt and other liabilities run up by past mistakes and mismanagement.

South Australia cannot go on living beyond its means in this way—pushing onto future generations the cost of government today. The report of the Audit Commission shows that this cost is much higher than South Australians had been led to believe.

This report has been prepared by four Commissioners and their dedicated staff. They have worked around the clock in recent weeks to meet the deadline for reporting set in the commission's terms of reference I announced within 48 hours of my Government taking office. I also thank all those who made submissions to the commission. The Government is tabling the report on the first parliamentary sitting day after

receiving it. At the outset, I advise the House of the process the Government will adopt in responding to the report.

The commission has advised that the Government should report publicly its detailed response by the end of October 1994. The Government will do that. Of course, in a report with so many recommendations from an independent commission with an advisory role, not every recommendation is likely to be accepted by the Government. By the end of October, there will be a Government response to Parliament on each and every one of the commission's recommendations. Naturally, some Government decisions will be taken and implemented sooner. Some major decisions will be implemented as part of the 1994-95 State Budget.

A financial statement to be released by the Government during June will foreshadow other decisions. The Government will also make a statement before the end of June about its future approach to public sector separation packages, while amendments to the Government Management and Employment Act will be introduced in the Budget session to provide a better framework for the consideration of public sector staffing issues.

As part of this process, a policy statement on public sector employment tenure will be developed, recognising the view the former Government expressed in the 'Meeting the Challenge' statement that 'future employment will not always confer tenure.' To assist the Government in addressing these and other issues as a response to the report of the Audit Commission, today I invite written submissions from all interested parties on the commission's recommendations. Those submissions should be made to me by 24 May.

I am writing to all public servants today to advise them of the Government's continuing commitment to consultation and equity. In inviting comment and offering consultation, I emphasise that the Government is also seeking cooperation. The extent to which employees, management and unions are prepared to cooperate in the challenge to achieve budget savings and improve efficiency and quality in service delivery will obviously have an important bearing on what final decisions the Government is obliged to take in response to the recommendations of the Audit Commission. We are prepared to talk to public sector unions about the changes required but we cannot guarantee to achieve consensus if union demands on my Government are unreasonable, in view of the mess we have inherited.

In considering this report, the Government will be guided very much by the commission's advice that 'strong leadership will be required from the Government to bring about a sustained improvement in public sector performance—with a greater role for Ministers in championing reform within their agencies.' On behalf of the Government, I recognise that this is a benchmark by which we must be judged. The task we inherited is challenging, and we accept it. The commission's first recommendation is:

The South Australian Government should fundamentally reassess its role in the economy, in order to concentrate on its core functions and to promote efficiency and effectiveness in service provision.

Essentially, throughout its report the commission is saying that South Australians have a clear choice between restoring an affordable and efficient public sector relevant to the present and future needs of South Australians or maintaining a public sector which has become inefficient and a growing burden and drag on South Australia's economy and social well-being, to the point where the State risks permanent national and international obscurity and a continuing decline in living standards. To my Government this is no choice at

all. As we recognised at the election, changes of approach and culture are essential.

My Government accepts that it has a duty to ensure that any burden imposed by change in the short term and the longer term benefits of change are fairly shared by the community. As a community we must accept this challenge together because, as the commission has reported, there are significant opportunities for South Australia to grasp. It has stated that 'the outlook for the State economy is presently healthier than at any time since the recession began'. Reflecting its optimism, the commission has entitled its report 'Charting the Way Forward'.

In considering barriers to the way forward, it has looked back to report that 'South Australia began to lose its competitive edge a couple of decades ago'. It needs to be recognised that the problems identified by the commission involve much more than the recent financial losses of the State Government. They go to the heart of failed Government responsibility, to a failure to give leadership, to a failure to manage, to a failure to provide efficient public services to South Australians and to a failure to respond in sufficient time or in an adequate way to the State's deteriorating financial position. They are failures at the highest level of Government which have developed and become entrenched over a long period—at least a decade. Let the House be quite clear about this point: the ultimate responsibility for the failures exposed in this report lies not with the Public Service—not with the public sector—but with elected Government.

As the commission has reported, the community has 'felt let down by Government. Unfortunately, this has left a legacy of distrust of the public sector in some sections of the community.' It makes it all the more important for all South Australians to make a balanced and mature assessment of this report. This report has not been written in ideological terms and it will not be assessed by the Government in that way. It is above all else a manifesto to manage our State towards a much better future for all South Australians. The commission's report must be seen as charting the way ahead well into the next century, with an agenda for change and progress as comprehensive as any contemplated by our State since the expansion of our economy into the manufacturing industries 60 years ago. Accordingly, my Government will not be stampeded into immediate decisions or reactions to all the major recommendations in this report.

I expect that some in the community will attempt to use the current marginal seat by-election environment to demand assurances that my Government will not do this or that. South Australia's future is too important to be played with like that. Such demands would simply repeat the sort of behaviour which the commission believes has let the community down in the past. Of course, the Government could have withheld this report until after the unforeseen Torrens by-election, but this also would have been wrong. Equally, I could have come before this House now to say, 'Things are much worse than we have been led to believe and therefore all previous commitments are to be reviewed.' It is true that the report shows that the Parliament and the public were grossly misled by the former Government about South Australia's actual financial position. However—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN:—I will not turn my back on the job I was elected to do. Indeed, this report only reinforces our determination to do what is right and required to rebuild our State—not tear it down—and to work in partnership with

the public sector to achieve benefits for all South Australians. I remind the House that my Government pledged to rebuild jobs; to reduce debt; to restore the standards of key Government services; and to regain public respect for the institutions of government.

It is this last commitment that we continue to honour in tabling this report today, just before a by-election. In this report there is further guidance for what needs to be done to firmly establish the other foundations of our platform to rebuild jobs, to reduce the debt and to restore the standards of key Government services. In considering the State's financial position, the commission has disclosed a new major financial burden in warning of the need to look beyond net public sector debt and address the increasing unfunded liabilities of the Government, particularly those related to superannuation.

The commission has taken the position that liability for superannuation 'is another form of borrowing by the Government and is in many ways equivalent to debt.' As such, these liabilities can be seen as a ticking financial time bomb on South Australia. The commission has described them as 'a substantial risk factor to the State.' The full extent of these unfunded liabilities, which mean that South Australia owes much more than the former Government ever acknowledged to this Parliament, has never before been publicly recognised. As far back as April 1988—six years ago—the Auditor-General raised with the former Government the need to report on these liabilities in more detail. In the 1990 report of the Auditor-General—almost four years ago—it was stated that 'progress has been slow in providing information concerning the accumulated cost of these liabilities.' In fact, the former Government did not want this Parliament or the public to know.

Full disclosure of the increasing unfunded liability would have compounded public concern and anger about its financial mismanagement. The former Government ducked these hard decisions, content to leave them to future generations of South Australians—an act of financial vandalism. Already, these liabilities amount to half the size of the current State debt. They are set to blow up in the faces of taxpayers not yet born, unless some action is taken now. They would more than double in real terms over the next 28 years to more than \$7 000 million if the practice of the former Government continued of meeting benefits only as they arise.

Put another way, under this arrangement the liabilities would increase at a rate of \$14 840 every hour of every day for the next 28 years unless current arrangements are changed—\$14 840 every hour, every day and every year. In the year 2021 taxpayers would be having to meet a daily bill of almost \$2 million for public sector superannuation. While some funding has been set aside to meet the liability of the guarantee scheme, the commission believes that, unless further action is taken, the growing cost of superannuation will force increased taxes and lower standards of service on South Australian taxpayers. The commission has therefore recommended that all current schemes, except the guarantee scheme, be closed to new entrants. The Government has decided to introduce legislation to close the voluntary South Australian Superannuation (Lump Sum) Scheme and the Police Superannuation (Lump Sum) Scheme to new entrants, effective from the opening of business tomorrow morning. This action will prevent a sudden influx of new beneficiaries. The legislation will be introduced by the Treasurer later this afternoon.

The effect of this legislation is a freeze on new entrants to allow the Government a period of time to consider the whole issue of superannuation costs, including those relating to the schemes for parliamentarians and judges. It should be noted that there is not the same pressure for entry to those two latter schemes, for which membership is compulsory. At the same time, superannuation will still be provided for new employees who will immediately receive coverage from the guarantee scheme in line with general community standards. The Audit Commission has also recommended a 30 year program to achieve full funding of the current projected liabilities. To achieve this would cost the Government an additional \$113 million next year alone. This is just one of the financial black holes the former Government deliberately concealed.

The commission has confirmed previous reports by the Auditor-General stating that 'the issue of superannuation costs has been looming for some years'. The commission has also advised that 'the failure to fully recognise that liability in the financial accounts of the Government and its constituent liabilities has permitted that liability to grow to what must be regarded by the community as an unacceptable level'. Superannuation liabilities are included in a balance sheet for the entire public sector developed by the commission which contains further direct evidence of the former Government's failure to disclose the true financial position of the public sector to the Parliament and the public.

This balance sheet puts the public sector's net asset position at just under \$4 000 million at June 1993. This is almost \$10 000 million less than the net asset position reported by the former Government in its last budget presented to this Parliament in August last year. In other words, the commission has found a \$10 billion black hole in the Government's financial position. The former Government deliberately inflated the value of assets to set against the debt, and deflated the liabilities to achieve this misleading result. The total public sector assets identified by the Audit Commission have a value of just under \$21.8 billion—\$5.6 billion less than the former Government's estimates. Liabilities exceeded the former Government's estimates by almost \$4.3 billion. The commission has also identified contingent liabilities of about \$10 000 million.

In September last year, the Auditor-General advised Parliament that the former Government had been unable to identify all such liabilities. Now we know why. The Audit Commission has also reported that the former Government failed to publish forward estimates of revenue and spending, contributing to the State's true financial position being concealed. Since 1987 the Auditor-General has been advising the former Government to publish those forward estimates, but it failed to do so. The commission has stated that as a result 'neither the Parliament nor the community has been able to understand and judge either the longer term implications of the annual budget or the Government's financial performance'.

The work of the Audit Commission shows quite clearly how the former Government's persistent refusal to heed the advice of the Auditor-General in successive reports left this Parliament and the public uninformed and unaware of the full extent of the mess Labor was creating. While the former Government manipulated financial figures to suggest an improving financial position, the Audit Commission has advised that South Australia's financial deficit in this financial year is estimated to be the highest of all States in Australia in per capita terms. The deficit of \$343 million, or \$234 for every man, woman and child in South Australia,

compared with surpluses—and I stress the deficit of \$343 million—of \$146 per capita in Queensland and \$49 in Tasmania. Nor do the former Government's debt reduction targets stand up to any scrutiny whatsoever.

In his Meeting the Challenge statement, the former Premier claimed his policies would reduce public sector debt to 22 per cent of gross State product in 1996. However, the Audit Commission has found that the debt would be stuck at 25 per cent in 1996 under a continuation of the policies as outlined in Meeting the Challenge—an unacceptable level. Meeting the Challenge estimated that at June 1993 budget supported debt, that is, debt serviced from taxation, was \$4.9 billion. The Audit Commission puts that debt now at \$6.1 billion. The Audit Commission report well and truly discredits Meeting the Challenge and the former Government's claims to have established a strategy to restore the State's finances. The targets were entirely fictitious and non-achievable. As the commission has demonstrated, the former Government failed to achieve the level of public sector reform required, while it simply ignored the growing unfunded liability for superannuation. As the Liberal Party said at the election, we will clean up the mess left by the Labor Party.

The financial position we have inherited has occurred despite the Audit Commission's finding that, under the former Government, spending and taxation increased at a faster rate in South Australia than in any other State in Australia. In its management of the public sector, the former Government neglected to protect South Australia's competitive position. Hence, companies looked elsewhere to establish new factories. The commission has reported that, overall, wages and salaries in the private sector in South Australia are 2.4 per cent below the national average, but in the State public sector they are 2.6 per cent above the national average—7 per cent higher in education and 7.9 per cent higher in health.

A further result of these higher public sector salaries is a loss to South Australia of \$51 million in Commonwealth funding this financial year as recommended by the Grants Commission. Revelations by the Audit Commission about public sector salaries and other benefits including superannuation require the Government and the public sector to consider whether it is any longer fair to have entitlements so far out of line with those in the private sector.

In education, the commission advises that South Australia has the highest average teaching salary costs of all States of Australia, meaning that the average cost per student in South Australia is also higher than anywhere else. I am sure South Australians would be prepared to pay more for an important service like education if there was demonstrable evidence that the much higher cost guaranteed much better education standards and facilities for our children. However, South Australians must now ask themselves whether we can continue to afford more teachers paid higher average salaries when the commission has also reported that no convincing evidence has been presented which links South Australia's higher expenditure with improved outcomes. The commission has also reported that a very high level of Education Department employees are absent for workers compensation reasons. The education of our children has suffered as a consequence. I now understand why certain representatives of the South Australian Institute of Teachers have been so fearful of the report of this Audit Commission.

It is symptomatic of the former Government's failure to address this issue that, according to the commission, only 36

per cent of Government agencies have a good employee safety record and the Government has a stress claim incident rate at least six times higher than the private sector. While insisting on improved safety practices in the private sector, the former Government refused to apply those same standards to its own activities. The former Government's record in staff training was no better. For example, the commission has reported that an average of only 17 per cent of staff employed in the financial management area of the Government have any formal accounting qualifications, with very few of these having qualifications and experience in cost accounting.

It is no wonder, given these failures, that the commission has reported that under the former Labor Government South Australia had the worst performing public sector trading enterprises of any State. In ETSA and in Government owned ports, labour productivity is measured as the lowest anywhere in Australia, according to the commission. Public services such as ETSA, the Housing Trust, E&WS and the ports were built up by the Playford Liberal Government between the 1930s and the mid-1960s to a level where they were the most efficient in the whole of Australia. It is a tragedy for all South Australians that they have been allowed to run down to such low standards of service by successive Labor Governments, as the report of the Audit Commission has now exposed.

The commission has recognised some of the changes my Government has already initiated to improve the level of service, and this includes changes in urban passenger transport and in public hospitals (through casemix funding). It has endorsed the agreements with senior public sector executives for a whole of Government integrated management cycle in which the budget is presented earlier and the strategic planning process is directly linked with annual budgeting and reporting. It has endorsed our stance for contestability and outsourcing in some public sector activities, including health and information technology, to maximise efficiency gains and to give some real encouragement to local industry. It has endorsed our stance for basic skills testing in education and devolving greater management responsibility to the level of the individual school. It has endorsed our proposal for regionalisation of health administration and for giving the private sector the opportunity to build the State's next major prison. The commission also offers some advice to all South Australians:

In particular there is a need to change the community's expectations about and understanding of public expenditure levels. There needs to be the development in the community of an understanding that a reduction in staffing, or a rationalisation in the number of service delivery points, does not necessarily mean a lowering of standards.

We have higher than average staffing levels now; we have numerous service delivery points, but South Australians are not receiving an adequate standard of service in many areas. My Government is committed to providing high standards of service to the public and to doing so on an internationally competitive basis.

It is vital, in the debate we will have over the next few months, to focus just as much on the level and efficiency of the service as on who actually provides that service. In many areas, a vital role will remain for the public sector. But the public sector can only be efficient and respected by the public if it is prepared to accept the challenge for change which has faced everyone else in recent years.

The whole culture of the public sector must change to one of helping to rebuild South Australia's economic and financial position. The report of the Audit Commission is

there for all of us to assess. I and my Government are committed to bringing about major reform of the public sector and to restoring our State's financial position. We will put the broad interests of our community and people at the forefront in doing so. As I have said, my Government accepts the challenge to achieve the commitment from senior public sector executives and the change of culture across the public sector which will be necessary to chart the way forward to a better future for South Australians.

I commend the report to the Parliament and to the people of South Australia for their consideration. The challenges ahead are greater than most South Australians have faced before in their lifetime. We must no longer postpone the day when we confront these challenges. I am ready to face the challenge. My Government is ready to face the challenge. I know that the people of South Australia are also ready to face that same challenge.

PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Premier (Hon. Dean Brown)—

Charting the way forward, improving public sector performance—South Australian Commission of Audit, April 1994.

By the Deputy Premier (Hon. S.J. Baker)—

Supreme Court Act 1935—Supreme Court Rules—Alteration of Documents—Pecuniary Damages.

By the Minister for Industrial Affairs (Hon. G.A. Ingerson)—

Remuneration Tribunal—Determination No. 1 of 1994—Members of Parliament.

By the Minister for Industry, Manufacturing, Small Business and Regional Development (Hon. J.W. Olsen)—

Harbors Act 1936—Regulations—Formula One Power Boat Grand Prix.

By the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations (Hon. J.K.G. Oswald)—

Corporation of Mitcham—By-law No. 2—Streets and Public Places.

District Council of Mannum—By-law No. 11—Moveable Signs.

By the Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources (Hon. D.C. Wotton)—

Coast Protection Board—Report, 1992-93.

By the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education (Hon. R.B. Such)—

Senior Secondary Assessment Board of SA—Report, 1993—Table 5 Amendment.

Teachers Registration Board of South Australia—Report, 1993.

HINDMARSH ISLAND BRIDGE

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I rise to inform the House that I have today reluctantly issued an authorisation to the Department of Road Transport to allow damage to Aboriginal sites to the minimal extent necessary to allow the construction of a bridge to Hindmarsh Island. This authority has been given under section 23 of the Aboriginal Heritage Act following extensive consultation with the Aboriginal community and further archaeological site work.

My statutory discretion under the Act is a personal one as Minister. Earlier I had considered that my discretions were subject to the collective decisions of Cabinet. However, following discussions with Government's legal advisers, I was made aware of the fact that the use of my statutory discretion under section 23 is not determined by any decisions of Cabinet or even any contractual obligations of the Government. I have come to this decision aware of these facts, yet it gave me no pleasure to make this decision.

First, the Government has explored all legal measures to extricate itself from this difficult situation. Secondly, as Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, I recognise that Aboriginal sites will be damaged by the construction and that this fact causes great distress to the Aboriginal community. The Lower Murray Aboriginal Heritage Committee, representing the Ngarrindjeri people, remains implacably opposed to the construction of the bridge. I have met with representatives of the committee on at least four occasions and discussed their concerns. My staff and I have had numerous written and telephone communications with members of the committee and their legal representatives. All of these communications leave me in no doubt of the Aboriginal opposition to the construction of the bridge and that the community will be extremely disappointed.

In coming to my decision I was determined that I should be fully briefed on what sites were to be affected. I directed that a full survey of the sites to be affected by the bridge be completed as a matter of urgency. The report from this survey was made available to me at the end of last week, having been carried out between 20 and 29 April. Despite all the time available to the previous Government, this was the first detailed archaeological survey of the area to be affected. It is clear that it is not practicable both for the sites in the proposed bridge alignment to be protected and preserved and for the bridge to be constructed.

In making my decision I was aware of the fact that the bridge alignment follows the existing Brooking Street and ferry alignment, which have already physically damaged the site. Considering the full extent of other interests to be weighed up, I have concluded that I need to authorise damage to the sites to allow bridge construction to go ahead. However, my authorisation is subject to a series of strict conditions designed to minimise the damage to the sites in the area. The Lower Murray Aboriginal Heritage Committee is also concerned about the secondary impact of the bridge on other Aboriginal sites on Hindmarsh Island and in the region.

I assure the committee that the Government is determined to do all that it can to ensure that any further development on Hindmarsh Island is pursued in a way which respects Aboriginal culture and heritage. The Government will complete the survey of Aboriginal sites on Hindmarsh Island at a cost of \$35 000 as a matter of priority. The Lower Murray Aboriginal Heritage Committee will be asked to be involved in this process. Further, I give my commitment that the State Department of Aboriginal Affairs and I will work with the Lower Murray Aboriginal Heritage Committee to explore in a positive manner a range of other proposals, such as fostering Aboriginal cultural tourism and Aboriginal involvement in the management of the Coorong National Park, and environmental management initiatives on Hindmarsh Island.

In conclusion, I would urge all the parties involved in this issue, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, Government and non-Government, to review critically their participation. I believe that the Government and the Aboriginal community share two

common goals: a commitment to economic development, and a respect for Aboriginal culture and history. The challenge for all of us is how to promote one without forgoing the other.

QUESTION TIME

AUDIT COMMISSION REPORT

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD (Leader of the Opposition): Given the Premier's pre-election commitments including those on health, education, housing, public transport and law and order, will the Premier identify which of the Audit Commission recommendations he will immediately and categorically rule out?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections on my right. The Leader has the call.

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: During the election campaign the Premier made what may be defined as concrete commitments that pledged, among other things, to increase education spending, maintain class sizes, increase the health budget and add an extra 200 police, and that there would then be no further cuts to public sector employment.

An honourable member interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Brindal interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Unley will come to order.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Who got us into this mess? He did.

An honourable member: Who didn't tell us what the figures were?

The SPEAKER: Order!

An honourable member: Who didn't tell us the truth?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will resume his seat.

An honourable member interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections. The Premier has the call, and I intend to see that he is heard. I do not want to have to exercise Standing Orders in a manner which may be unpleasant to certain members. The honourable Premier.

An honourable member: A great interjection.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I thought that the interjection—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: —'Who didn't tell us the truth?' was very pertinent—

Mr Quirke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Playford.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: —and I ask the honourable member to look along the bench at his own Leader and the other Ministers who were in his Government's Cabinet—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: —because this Audit Commission completely discredits the Meeting the Challenge document, the budget position and everything else put down by the Labor Government last year. This Audit Commission is the epitaph for the Leader of the Opposition. It highlights the manner in which he brought fictitious figures into this

House as part of the 1993 budget. It highlights the legacy that he has left for all South Australians. I challenge the Leader of the Opposition, as the Leader of the Labor Party, to stand up now, this week, and apologise to the people of South Australia for the chaos in which he has left this State. He sits there and smirks, having left—in last year's budget alone—a \$10 billion black hole. This Audit Commission and the financial position that it outlines are Arnold's albatross and Bannon's \$10 billion black hole. That is the legacy that the Labor Party has left—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

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

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: —for all South Australians.

Let us look at who should take responsibility for the mess that we are in. Who sat in Cabinet for 11 years; who was responsible for the Education Department for three of those 11 years to slip and the costs to escalate; and who was responsible for economic and industrial development in this State when we had the biggest loss of jobs ever recorded in the recent history of South Australia? The Leader of the Opposition. Who was Premier for more than 12 months leading up to the election last year, and who told us that he had the State's finances under control? He was. Who now has had all those financial projections totally discredited? Again, the Leader of the Opposition. If ever there was a dark day in his life, today must be it; if ever there was a day of reckoning before the people of South Australia, today is that day.

I point out that we went to the election promising to restore confidence and credibility back into the South Australian Parliament and Government. We had four clear objectives. The first was to restore and rebuild the State's economy and to create jobs. The second was to lower the real debt, despite the then Premier, just before the election, losing \$600 million of debt in his in-tray. How could any responsible financial manager—the man who sits there and asks the sort of question that he asks—for three weeks lose \$600 million of additional debt in his in-tray? It is absolutely incredible.

Who went to the last State election with promises three times the value of those put forward by the Liberal Party? It was the Labor Party. Yet members opposite have the hide to stand up and ask what we are going to do to get the State out of its financial mess. Just think through all the debacle that that Government left as a legacy for this State: the loss of the Grand Prix; the Hindmarsh Island Bridge; the State's finances; the high level of unemployment; and the loss of industry to this State. I could go on and on. All I can say is that if I were the Leader of the Opposition today and I had been responsible for what he was responsible for during the past 12 years, I would resign. I could not sit in the House and leave South Australians with the sort of legacy which has been left by this Audit Commission. I would be ashamed of myself.

STATE TAXATION

Mrs KOTZ (Newland): Will the Premier advise the House whether the Audit Commission report supports Government policy not to increase taxes and to provide tax incentives for exporters?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I appreciate that question, because I heard the Leader of the Opposition on ABC Radio this morning saying that he believed there should be increases in taxation to get our State out of the financial predicament

that it is in. We all know that Labor is the high tax Party of South Australia; we all know that when it comes to hard decisions Labor will increase taxes rather than make other decisions. What has that done for South Australia? It has made this State uncompetitive. That is why industry left this State under the former Labor Government.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I am delighted that the member for Ross Smith is interjecting, because he wears the responsibility with other members of the Labor Party for having the highest increases in taxation of any State in the whole of Australia over the past three years. What a burden to carry as a political Party! As a result of those higher taxes and the loss of industry and jobs, this State now has a precarious financial position and an economy that needs a whole new approach and direction.

Mr Atkinson: What are you doing about it?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: What will I do about the precarious position that we are in? The first thing is that we will not shirk our responsibility. We were elected to bring about reform in South Australia. We were elected to bring about changes to WorkCover, to the industrial relations system and to the public transport system—all the areas that the Labor Party is now trying to block. One stands back and wonders who actually won the mandate at the election. Was it Mr Elliott in another place, who lost the seat he stood for in the Lower House? Was it the Labor Party, which now has a mere 10 members in the House?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The interesting thing is that the Audit Commission report endorses the position that I put down both before and after the election: that South Australia cannot afford to have further increases in taxes because it would further damage our competitive position and once again drive industry out of South Australia. That is why I fully support and endorse the stance taken by the Audit Commission that the very last resort should be an increase in taxes. That is why I put down the position: there should be no increases in taxes in South Australia.

AUDIT COMMISSION REPORT

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD (Leader of the Opposition): Following his announced three-week consultation period on the Audit Commission report, will the Premier personally meet interest and community groups to discuss the report and will he recall Parliament in June to allow a full and considered debate on the report, the Government's response to the report and the economic statement that the Government has promised will be delivered in June?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: It appears that the Leader of the Opposition this afternoon came into the House with a series of questions and, despite my half-hour ministerial statement earlier, he is not willing to change those questions which I answered during the ministerial statement.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much conversation.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: They wind him up each day and send him into the House with his prepared questions—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier must not invite interjections.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The Government will bring down a financial statement in early June. The House will not be recalled for that statement, and neither should it be. It will

be a public statement, and I presume that members opposite can read a statement like that just as easily both inside and outside this House. I will make sure that the honourable member gets a copy of that statement when it is made.

Mrs Kotz: And a translation!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: There is no doubt that he will need a translation, based on his previous performance. As to whether I would meet every party which puts forward a proposal, of course I cannot give that commitment, and it would be ridiculous to do so. Thousands of submissions may be made. Can I correct the public impression—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: —given by the South Australian Institute of Teachers that, in the preparation of the Audit Commission report, there was no opportunity for outside parties to make submissions. In fact, the South Australian Institute of Teachers, the PSA and other unions, as well as many other parties in South Australia, made detailed submissions to the Audit Commission, and a number of them made a series of reports to it.

It is not as if there has not been consultation already. Now that we have the final recommendations of the Audit Commission, it is appropriate to give it three weeks to sit down and assess them and make a further submission to the Government. At that stage the Government will start to make and implement firm decisions. The first occasion will be with the financial statement in early June. There will be statements in June about what will replace the targeted separation packages, and there will be further statements as the Government makes decisions during June, July and August. We will introduce the details of the budget into this Parliament in the last week of August, and we have taken on the challenge of making sure that ultimately we respond to every one of the 336 recommendations by the end of October.

PUBLIC SECTOR SUPERANNUATION

Mr CUMMINS (Norwood): My question is addressed to the Premier. In light of the Audit Commission report, did the former Labor Government reveal to Parliament and the public the full cost of public sector superannuation liabilities?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The answer is 'No.' Despite six years of requests from the Auditor-General, who reported directly to the then Premier (now Leader of the Opposition) and was under his direct ministerial control, the then Premier still failed to heed the specific request of the Auditor-General to come to grips with the unfunded liability of superannuation in South Australia. Now we find that that liability is expected to be \$3 500 million higher than previously reported to the Parliament or the people of South Australia. I find that an unacceptable position and one upon which our Government is prepared to move in and start acting.

The Audit Commission has recommended that over a 30 year period that unfunded liability should eventually be picked up and fully funded by the Government. Certainly, the Government will consider that as part of its overall recommendations to the Audit Commission, but we cannot afford to continue these excesses on the community's finances and the South Australian Government's current delicate and unsatisfactory financial position and expect future generations of this State to pay for it. It will adversely affect all of us, particularly as we move into a period where the population growth rate continues as it has been.

In fact, the part that is perhaps most disturbing of all is the very low population growth rate of only .1 per cent for the nought to 65 year olds: that is the age group that will create the economic activity for our State and produce the wealth. However, the aged portion of our community—those 65 and over—is growing at the rate of 2.5 per cent a year. It is because of that significant increase in the ageing of our population that this superannuation liability as laid down by the State schemes, particularly the two lump sum schemes I referred to earlier this afternoon, is established on South Australians. I said that the superannuation liability would be \$3 500 million—that is over a 28 year period. I refer members to an excellent table and a graph in volume 1 of the report and also the overview of the Audit Commission's report, which highlight the extent to which that liability on superannuation is now escalating and continues to escalate right through.

SCHOOL SIZE

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education, representing the Minister for Education and Children's Services. Does the Minister support recommendation 12.11 of the Commission of Audit that the average school size should be increased towards an 'optimal size', particularly in the metropolitan area? Page 130 of the Audit Commission report states that the adoption of optimum numbers for schools of 300 for primary schools and 600 to 800 for secondary schools could mean that upwards of 140 primary and 10 secondary schools could become 'surplus to requirements'.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: I thank the Deputy Leader for his question. The Deputy Leader should know that this was an independent commission and it is a report to Government, and the Government in due course will consider—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has the call.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: —the recommendations of the Audit Commission report. They will be dealt with over time. At this stage we are not in a position to provide a detailed response to a question such as that.

PUBLIC SECTOR SUPERANNUATION

Mr ASHENDEN (Wright): I address my question to the Premier. Is it true that, in the hour that this Question Time will take, the liability for South Australian taxpayers for public sector superannuation will increase by almost \$15 000?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The honourable member is right in his assumption that, in the one hour that we have for Question Time, the superannuation unfunded liability being carried by the State Government will increase by about \$15 000. The part that really concerns me is that, unless we do something about that, the legacy we would be leaving to our children (and I hope I will still be around as a taxpayer in this State) in the year 2021 and to all South Australians would be a liability of \$2 million a day just to fund the superannuation schemes. No State economy in the sort of projections and growth rates we have from now until the year 2021 can afford that sort of figure in present dollar terms—a liability of \$2 million a day. Imagine the waste of effort if that were to be imposed today! Therefore, all of us should now pick up our share of that responsibility and make sure

that that unfunded liability does not continue. If we have any responsibility whatsoever, we should now start to fund that liability and take the burden off future generations.

EDUCATION POLICY

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): My question is again to the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education representing the Minister for Education and Children's Services. Given that the Premier said earlier this afternoon that 'not every recommendation is likely to be accepted by the Government', does the Minister support the recommendations of the Audit Commission for the devolution of the education system, reductions in the number of teachers, the rationalisation of schools, optimum school student sizes and school closures; or does he believe the Government should stand by the 'categorical assurance' in the election to increase spending on education in real terms during 1994-95?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: It is obvious that the Deputy Leader is a slow learner.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: When it comes to education, I think there is some scope for a bit of activity on behalf of the Deputy Leader. I indicated earlier what the position was on behalf of the Government. This is a report to Government and it will be considered in a proper, rational way, in contrast to the way that you stuffed up this State over 11 years.

PUBLIC SECTOR SUPERANNUATION

Mr BRINDAL (Unley): In view of the Audit Commission's findings about the spiralling costs of superannuation in the public sector and in view of the Premier's answers to questions from my colleagues the members for Norwood and Wright, can the Premier tell me what the Government proposes to do about this problem?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The Government has decided that we must immediately step in and put a freeze on further entrance to the superannuation lump sum schemes—both the State superannuation public sector scheme and the police scheme. It is exactly the same action as that taken by the former Labor Government in freezing entrance to the superannuation schemes in 1986. We will have to wait and see whether members opposite have any credibility today by supporting our move or whether, just because they are in Opposition, they will do a sudden complete flip and throw all their principles out the window. What they did in 1986—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I acknowledge my mistake, Mr Speaker: they have no principles left to throw out the window. It will be interesting to see what their reaction is today, because it was the Labor Government that imposed exactly the same freeze on entrance to the former superannuation pension schemes that applied prior to 1986.

I am quite frank in making this important point: we are not cutting the benefits to the participants in those superannuation schemes by the measures we have taken. Let us not have the Labor Party or the Australian Democrats running around South Australia saying, 'The Liberals have just cut off your superannuation benefits.' We have not done that at all: all we

have done has been to freeze entrance to the superannuation schemes.

Any new employee of the Government will be able to join the so-called Federal Government's superannuation guarantee scheme, which the State Government operates and which currently attracts 5 per cent of the payroll of the individual, to be escalated eventually to 9 per cent under the regime set down by the Federal Government. People still have that superannuation scheme available to them but we are stopping the opportunity for there to be an overnight flood into the old lump sum superannuation schemes. That is a responsible move and I hope that the Labor Party—the Opposition in this House—will be prepared to cooperate in getting that measure through the two Houses of Parliament over the next two weeks. This is a fundamental part of the financial strategy of the Liberal Government.

The Opposition can put its head in the sand and its members become troglodytes, as they have in regard to WorkCover, industrial relations and amendments and reforms to public transport legislation and all the other promises that we made before the election to bring about reform. Those troglodytes opposite are now trying to cut back those reforms—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I found it incredible to hear on ABC radio this morning the Leader of the Opposition claiming that WorkCover amendments now before the House were in breach of our election promise. We put the detail down before the election. I announced them with the Minister on the Friday eight days before the election. Our policy talked about journey accidents, stress claims and restructuring of the WorkCover board. These are the fundamental reforms with which we went to, and won, the election. The same applies with regard to industrial relations legislation. We brought down one of the most detailed policies on industrial relations, indicating before the election what we would put into the legislation.

What is the Opposition now claiming? Apparently Opposition members did not even bother to read that policy document, because there have been no breaches of policy or promises whatever. What is the position now? Because certain elements of the trade union movement are pulling the puppet strings, the Opposition is now dancing the tune to oppose those reforms. Let the House be quite clear that, if those reforms are defeated in another place with the support of the Labor Party, the responsibility for that lies squarely with the Labor Party of South Australia.

Let me be quite clear. If the Government cannot bring about significant reforms and cost savings through these well planned measures, announced before the election, the responsibility for cuts elsewhere will be squarely on the Opposition's head, and all South Australians know it.

HEALTH SYSTEM

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): Does the Minister for Health accept the views of the Audit Commission that annual savings in the order of \$90 million can be achieved in the South Australian health system, and will he say how these savings can be achieved? Does the Minister still stand behind his election promise of 'retaining within the health system all savings generated so that increased funds can be provided for direct patient services and for initiatives announced in this policy document'?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: In the time it took the member for Spence to ask his question, our unfunded superannuation liability increased at the rate of \$250 a minute. When I wrote the policy, I was certain of one thing: I was certain that it would fix the problems of South Australia and the South Australian health system. I confess that what was an unknown when I wrote the policy was the fact that our State finances were actually \$10 billion worse off than we had been told. I was uncertain of that. However, what the commission and the policy have in common is a focus on efficiency. I would look at a couple of the aspects mentioned in the commission, for example, casemix funding.

If the member for Spence turns to page 280 of volume one, which is not the area detailing the Health Commission but which relates to budget development processes, he will see that it states:

The introduction of casemix funding for South Australian public hospitals is an example of Government working towards more clearly defining what is purchased for the health dollar.

In other words, it highlights the importance of being effective. The commission goes on to talk about regionalisation (page 181, volume two), giving a ringing endorsement of the policy document. It talks about the Repatriation Hospital, and we have struggled valiantly to fix the mire that was left on 11 December 1993 concerning that hospital, and that is mentioned on page 178 of volume two. The commission goes on further to talk about outsourcing. One of the most commonly asked questions prior to the election involved outsourcing, and that is mentioned in glowing terms by the commission (page 226, volume two). Indeed, the commission is a glowing endorsement of the policy direction of the Liberal Party. The previous Government's way of running hospital funding was known as historical funding.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Hysterical—

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: Hysterical funding! Unfortunately for the 10 000 patients waiting, it was not very funny at all. Under historical funding, the level of funds was increased according to the CPI, roughly. That builds in encouragement for inefficiency and has nothing to do with efficiency. Clearly, changes were necessary. Time and time again people have come to me with concerns about our plans and wanting to discuss them, and I asked them, 'Were you happy with the previous system?' A ringing 'No' was the routine response. As to all this, as to our previous commitments, we are having a consultative process about all our changes. In fact, some of the Opposition's immediate friends, members of the Miscellaneous Workers Union, only the other day said to me that they had never been consulted so much in the whole history of government. They said that they were sick of my ringing them up and asking them to come in and discuss matters. Of course, any changes that are necessary—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Ross Smith.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: —to ensure that people get treated properly, effectively and efficiently will be done.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

STATE ASSETS

Mr BASS (Florey): Will the Treasurer explain to the House why the State's net asset position has suffered such a dramatic decline? In the financial statement prepared by the previous Government for the budget last year, estimated net assets—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Ross Smith. The honourable member for Florey.

Mr BASS: —of the total South Australian public sector were listed as \$13.53 billion yet, according to the Audit Commission's calculations, the net assets are less than one-third of that figure, down to \$3.95 billion.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I thank the honourable member for his question. It is a very timely question, because the member for Giles was on ABC radio this morning. The interviewer asked:

... how much information does an outgoing Government have to give an incoming Government? ... is an outgoing Government of any persuasion able to kind of pop under the cushions for the other lot to find?

The member for Giles replied:

... zero. ... Nothing at all. It's all declared every budget. ...

Last budget the former Treasurer declared that the public sector had \$27.4 billion worth of assets with liabilities of \$13.8 billion, leaving a free board of \$13.53 billion. We now have found out that the picture is somewhat different from that. It is \$21.8 billion worth of assets, \$17.8 billion worth of liabilities and a net asset situation of \$3.95 billion. That is a \$10 billion hole. It was put to this Parliament by the former Treasurer. I am not going to accuse the former Treasurer of misleading this House, because that has to be by substantive motion.

It is quite indicative of the performance of the previous Government. It inflated its assets and underestimated its liabilities. In the process, it misled the people and the public of South Australia. Instead of passing on \$13.5 billion worth of net assets, we now have less than \$4 billion of net assets and, per capita, we would have to be in the worst situation of any Government in terms of its asset base. I make the point that it places great pressure on all Governments to be able to perform under those circumstances when overnight we find that we have an asset base of \$10 billion less than that which was previously provided by the former Treasurer in a budget situation where we expect some degree of accuracy. The Audit Commission does point out that it is a challenge for us to repair the state of the finances. We intend to do that and I hope, instead of like little dogs yapping at our heels, we will see some constructive debate and cooperation from the people who caused the mess.

QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): I ask the—

The Hon. Frank Blevins interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Giles has been interjecting the whole of Question Time. I suggest he cease forthwith.

Mr ATKINSON: I ask the Minister for Health whether he will reject the advice of the Audit Commission by unconditionally guaranteeing the Queen Elizabeth Hospital's future as a major teaching hospital? The Audit Commission concluded at page 178:

It is questionable whether Adelaide needs as many teaching hospitals as it currently has. This point should be taken into consideration when the proposed refurbishment of QEH... is determined.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: What is happening with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in relation to the Audit Commission is that, as the member for Spence quotes, the future must be looked at in regard to the process of region-

alisation. Of course, as the member for Spence would realise, we are great fans of regionalisation. I have discussed inordinately with all members of hospitals a system of regionalisation which will allow the efficient provision of services with a proper funder/purchaser/provider split. The member for Spence is new to the game and I will give him a briefing on that sometime if he likes. What the member for Spence would not realise, because he has not had time to read all the report—but I do know what is going on in the Health Commission—is that there is a Metropolitan Adelaide Strategic Health Facilities Project to be released after consultation between all the parties, including all the hospitals, which will keep the member for Spence and all the people in the western suburbs very happy.

STATE TAXATION AND EXPENDITURE

Mr ROSSI (Lee): My question is directed to the Premier. What trends has the Audit Commission identified in State Government taxing and spending?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The Audit Commission has highlighted the fact that over the past 10 years South Australia has had the fastest growth in outlays, that is, in expenditure, of any State in Australia. At the same time, the Audit Commission highlighted that in recent years South Australia has also had the fastest increase in the level of taxation of any State in Australia. I find that unacceptable, particularly when you realise—and this is what the Audit Commission has stressed—that there has been no beneficial outcome from that higher level of taxation or that higher level of expenditure here in South Australia. It says there is no evidence to say that, because we have spent more on education in South Australia, we have better standards of education.

It is interesting, because it has been the South Australian Institute of Teachers which has actually opposed the measuring of standards for teaching and equally has opposed any assessment of the learning difficulties that students might have within the education system. At the same time, it is saying we should have more teachers, that those teachers should be paid more and that we should have higher WorkCover claims within the education area.

I think it is unacceptable to say that we are going to spend much more money but have no more beneficial outcome than those States that are spending considerably less. Therefore—and I stress to the member for Lee—it is not just in education: the same applies across a whole range of other Government activities. It is quite clear that what we need to do in this State is to start to turn the focus on outputs from Government. What is the quality and the efficiency of the delivery of services to the South Australia community? That is exactly what the new Government is about.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: It is a pity that the member for Giles does not bother to listen, because he, as Treasurer for the past 18 months, was the man who deliberately misled this Parliament about our true financial position. Here is the man who, along with the then Premier, stood there and deceived South Australians. He deceived them about the level of liability, the position of State finances and the fact that we have higher unfunded liabilities than he had bothered to reveal either through the economic statement or the budget.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has the call. There are too many interjections. The Chair does not want to have

to name members. If members are to continue to interject, I will do it without any further hesitation. I point out that members on the right have no more protection than members on the left.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I point out to the member for Giles that he is guilty. He even sounded guilty on ABC radio this morning when he defended the position of his former Government.

HOUSING TRUST RENTS

Mr QUIRKE (Playford): My question is directed to the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations. In view of the finding of the Audit Commission on page 48 of the overview—‘introduce a . . . market related rental fee structure’ for the Housing Trust—will the Minister assure this House that pensioners and welfare recipients will not face Housing Trust rental increases?

The Hon. J.K.G. OSWALD: I refer members opposite to the very detailed section on the South Australian Housing Trust in which they will see laid out, chapter and verse, the deterioration of finance—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.K.G. OSWALD:—within the Housing Trust over many years, to the stage—I am coming to the answer to the question; you have been warned and I suggest that you stop interjecting for a while and listen—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.K.G. OSWALD: Listen and you will learn something about what is actually happening inside the Housing Trust as a result of the previous Government’s poor administration.

Mr QUIRKE: On a point of order, Mr Speaker—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Playford.

Mr QUIRKE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Can you bring the Minister back to answering the question instead of abusing my colleague?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Chair is not responsible for the answers that Ministers give. However, I do suggest to the Minister that he direct his comments through the Chair.

The Hon. J.K.G. OSWALD: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will have the greatest of pleasure in directing them through the Chair. When members opposite read that report, they will find out that over the period of the administration of the former Government they built up a debt structure in the Housing Trust of \$1.3 billion, of which \$1 billion is owed back to the South Australian Government. Within that particular debt structure, we as the incoming Government have inherited the most gigantic problem, which we will fix up but do so in such a way as to ensure that people in public housing will have protection.

We are acutely aware of the difficulties of people in public housing and we will look at this matter in a very compassionate way, but before members opposite start to analyse what is in this commission’s report they should remember very carefully that there was \$1.3 billion worth of debt that they created and did nothing about, and we are having to service it. Have members opposite ever stopped to consider what the interest is on \$1.3 billion and what that is doing to rip the guts out of the Housing Trust’s finances? At the end of the day,

we know our responsibilities as regards welfare housing and our responsibility to tenants. I will analyse that section chapter and verse, line by line, and we will come up with something which I am sure you will find is acceptable to all Housing Trust tenants. But please remember, the \$1.3 billion debt was about to push the Housing Trust over. It is easy to say you have \$3 billion worth of assets, but the \$1.3 billion debt created in the Housing Trust, a debt that members opposite did not talk about because they did not want the public to know, is another indictment on the former Government.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Mr BROKENSHIRE (Mawson): My question is directed to the Premier. Does the Audit Commission support the Government’s policy to outsource information technology activities of the public sector?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I can assure the honourable member that a whole series of quotations in the report highlight the extent to which there has been waste within Government as to the manner in which it has handled information technology. It stresses that significant savings can be made by outsourcing that information technology. We read at page 323 of volume 1 of the report the following recommendation by the Audit Commission:

Agencies should be encouraged to seek opportunities to outsource within Government or to the private sector as an efficient alternative to internal purchase or provision of capital or services for information technology.

In other words, the Audit Commission itself is endorsing exactly what the new Liberal Government is doing. It is stressing the need to bring information technology together under one centralised control of Government, which is what we have done with the Office of Information Technology, and where appropriate then to outsource that.

It is also interesting to see where they indicate on page 349 that, through taking similar measures, the New South Wales Government was able to achieve a saving of 40 per cent in the cost of information technology. That is in the budget section of the New South Wales Government. If ever there was an independent survey now endorsing what this Liberal Government has been about for the past four months, it is this recommendation on information technology.

The member for Hart must sit there very embarrassed, having been on the personal staff of the former Premier, when for a three year period the Labor Government failed to achieve any rationalisation of information technology within Government. This is just one crucial area; there are many other areas of Government where tendering out would have saved the taxpayers millions of dollars. We have the member for Hart, as the shadow Minister for what, I am not quite sure, but as spokesman on this matter, running around opposing every single move that the Government is making in this area. He even appears to be opposing the fact that we are trying to attract major new outsources to South Australia, such as Motorola and others.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: He has just buried his head in the sand, having realised what a failure the Labor Government was over a three or four year period. I understand from his interjection that he is actually complaining about the success we are having with companies such as Motorola and also about some of the significant improvements we are getting in terms of efficiency and cost saving.

PUBLIC SECTOR SUPERANNUATION

Mr QUIRKE (Playford): My question is directed to the Treasurer. In the light of the recommendations of the Audit Commission, and the Premier's commitment today to make widespread changes to the State superannuation scheme, will the Treasurer tell us exactly what is going on, and will he stand by his written promises given before the 11 December election? Prior to the election, the current State Government made firm commitments on the State superannuation scheme. These were as follows:

A Liberal Government will support the current level of benefits. The lump sum scheme will remain open to new members. Superannuation entitlements of State Government employees will be not prejudiced by any accumulation of liabilities which cause financing difficulties in the future. There are no plans to close off—

and this is the chestnut, Mr Speaker—

or limit access to superannuation under a Liberal Government.

As recently as 19 April, in answer to a question in this House, the Treasurer said, 'There are no plans to change the current arrangements.'

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: Obviously the honourable member is very hard of hearing. He does not listen. What they do is get around their little table—and it is a very small table these days—and compare notes on what questions should be asked. Once having written out those questions, they stay on those questions no matter what. Let us be quite clear.

Mr Quirke: Are you closing it off or not?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: Let us be quite clear.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I do not know how many questions the honourable member really wants answered. I presume he wants the original one answered. We might answer some of the others along the way and talk about the financial hole created—the \$10 billion; or, indeed, the \$109 million or \$120 million surplus that has become a \$560 million deficit if you look at the Audit Commission accounting for the budget this year. Obviously the matters previously canvassed have to be looked at in the light of the Audit Commission's findings. We have said there will be a clear process put in place, when we will look at the whole of the recommendations. There are 336 recommendations, which will be looked at in the light of the finances. They will be looked at in the light of how much progress we have made to date, and decisions will be made. The honourable member will hear about them at the same time as everybody else.

STATE BANK

Mr CAUDELL (Mitchell): My question is directed to the Premier. Does the report of the Audit Commission support the approach that the Government has taken for the sale of the State Bank?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Spence is warned for the second time.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Ross Smith will be right behind him, make no mistake. The honourable Premier.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I suppose that when you are in Opposition with 10 members and you are faced with a report like this Audit Commission report you cannot do much else but sit there today and babble on and try to drown out any point that is made in the House. I imagine that members

opposite are all sitting there today feeling particularly embarrassed about how their Leader, when the Premier of this State, let them down; and about how their Treasurer, the member for Giles, who sits on the back bench, let them down. Perhaps they understood what was coming and that is why they put him on the back bench.

I pick up the point about the sale of the State Bank—it is a very important point that the member for Mitchell raises—because it was the member for Giles and the now Leader of the Opposition who were so emphatic that if they decided to sell the State Bank it had to be sold in a trade sale. I was the one who stood up and said, 'No, that is being overly dogmatic. It is not looking at other options.' In fact, it was the Liberal Party when in Opposition which put down the preferred position of looking at a public float of the State Bank and other instrumentalities, if they should be sold.

The Audit Commission has now confirmed the position I took. I argued that we should look at all options, including the float, and that the float should be our preferred option. The Audit Commission has stated that the Government has already announced that it may prefer the sale of the State Bank and SGIC through a public share offering, and that the Government should receive advice on the best price achievable under all options, even though the sale method chosen may not achieve the highest price.

I pick up that point as well, because in fact I argued that we may face some disadvantage in price, maybe a small disadvantage but nevertheless some disadvantage in price, through having a float rather than a trade sale. Of course, the former Treasurer and the former Premier argued that, no, we should have a trade sale and we should close down all the branches.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The member for Mitchell should understand the consequences of that trade sale. If the bank were sold to one of the major national banks we would face the same situation in South Australia as was faced in Victoria, where something like 350 branches of its State Bank closed with the loss of over 3 000 jobs. We cannot tolerate that here.

The Hon. Frank Blevins interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Giles will come to order. The honourable member for Hart.

The Hon. Frank Blevins interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Giles has been given a great deal of latitude. He will not get any more. The honourable member for Hart.

POLICE DEPARTMENT FUNDING

Mr FOLEY (Hart): My question is directed to the Minister for Emergency Services. Does the Minister agree with recommendation 16.15 of the Audit Commission which states:

When determining the South Australian Police Department's future funding needs, the Government should have regard to the fact that the Police Department appears to be relatively well-resourced.

Will he honour his election promise to increase the size of the Police Force by an additional 200 officers?

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I ask the member to focus very carefully on the words he has just quoted and to focus in particular on the words 'appears to be relatively well-resourced'. Over the past few weeks I have had the Police Department undertake an exercise to determine the correctness of figures continually quoted by the previous Labor

Government, to the extent that that former Government claims—

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: The honourable member waves the figures around. Those are the figures available to Government and calculated prior to the election. Those figures claim a police population ratio of one police officer to 398 people. I asked the department to get back to core business activities, undertake a national comparison and determine the accuracy of those figures. The department has found that, compared to other States, when all things are taken into account, South Australia sits fifth, not first, in policing levels. That information was completed only one week ago.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: The honourable member can wave the piece of paper around. That information was completed one week ago. The review of policing went back to core business activities, and the department has identified, at this stage, 224 positions—I will repeat that number slowly for the honourable member: 224 positions—which are presently undertaken by uniform police officers and which could be undertaken by civilian personnel.

It is fair to say that the words given to me by a senior police officer ring true. The police have told me that under Labor absolutely anybody who walked on two legs was sworn in as a police officer. If police dogs and horses had been able to stand on two legs for long enough, they too would have been sworn in. What prevailed under the Labor Government was an exclusive air wing service run by police officers. Mechanics, panel beaters and all other personnel at the Novar Gardens police depot were uniformed officers; and people driving trucks and chauffeurs were uniformed police officers.

A police band of 34 members (none of whom undertakes active operational duties), 67 officers who sit behind cameras and people who sit behind desks doing statistical work and other non-operational police duties all wear police uniforms—224 of them. What happened was a deliberate fudging of operational policing figures by the previous Government in a pathetic attempt to make it look as though it was effectively policing South Australia.

POLICE DEPARTMENT STAFF

Mr FOLEY (Hart): Does the Minister for Emergency Services agree with recommendation 16.16 of the Audit Commission report? It states:

The Police Department should negotiate new flexible staffing arrangements to remove the present impediments (including overtime and penalties for shifts and weekend work) to the efficient deployment of staff.

An honourable member: That's a disgrace.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Ross Smith is aware of the consequences.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: It is with pleasure that I also answer this question. Prior to the last election, as the Opposition spokesman for Emergency Services, I commenced constructive negotiations with the Police Association via its President, Mr Peter Alexander. During the course of those negotiations we discussed enterprise bargaining options and also flexibility of work hours. The fact is that at present, because of the nature of the working hours of police and

because of the nature of the penalty provisions, the same number of police are on duty for each shift. That means the same number of police are on patrol duty on a Friday or Saturday night as they are on a Sunday morning.

Anyone running a business would ensure that they had peak staffing at peak business times. That is what the police wish to achieve, and their union has agreed to further negotiations on this issue. Following the election the union sought the opportunity to discuss options further. Those discussions are ongoing, obviously awaiting the final outcome of legislation before Parliament. The best staffing ratios will then be determined.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: The honourable member simply does not understand. No-one is saying—

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: Let me say it slowly for the honourable member: no-one is saying that the police will receive a cut in salary—no-one is saying that. Negotiations with the union relating to more flexible working hours for police occurred before the election and have continued since the election. It is something the Police Association is willing to talk to this Government about, and it is something it welcomes. The honourable member and other members in this House who want greater police numbers patrolling on a Friday or Saturday night will have a greater opportunity for that to occur. If the honourable member—

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: I rise on a point of order, Sir. Because of the numerous conversations opposite I cannot hear—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Giles has a point of order. There were too many interruptions for the Chair to hear the point of order.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: That is precisely my point, Sir. There is so much conversation between members opposite I cannot hear the Minister.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The conduct of a number of members during Question Time has left a lot to be desired. There have been far too many interjections.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I must say that I am surprised that the member for Giles, as a former Treasurer, would have the gall to stand in this place today, given that he presided over the mess that has been revealed in the Audit Commission report. As to the issue of police staffing—

The SPEAKER: Order! I think the Minister has given an adequate answer; he is now digressing. I ask him to conclude his comments.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: To conclude the issue of police staffing, this Government will continue to negotiate with the Police Association to determine suitable rostering arrangements to enhance public safety and to better utilise operational police. At the end of our first term in Government we will not have—as was the case under the previous Labor Government—a minimum of 224 police on non-operational duties who do not participate in direct roles protecting the public.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

The SPEAKER: Order! The question before the Chair is that the House note grievances.

Mr BROKENSHIRE (Mawson): Anybody who has a family or happens to have a lot of faith and belief in this State would have to agree that today was certainly a sad day for South Australia now that the facts have been laid before us—facts that were always hidden by those on the other side who can only smile today. Not all is lost, because at last we have a Government that will address these problems. In this instance I wish to refer to the Torrens by-election this Saturday. When I was door-knocking in the electorate of Torrens the other day an irate constituent—who will certainly not support the Geraghtys of this world on Saturday—handed me some tripe and propaganda that I have before me today.

When you read what the Geraghtys of this world are campaigning with it reinforces the reasons why this State is in such a mess. My suspicions were aroused when I looked at the bottom of this letter from the EPU Workers Union. It is supported by the Secretary—one R.J. Geraghty. It is interesting to note that the Labor candidate for Torrens is also R. Geraghty. I believe the candidate is the wife of the Secretary of this union, which is spending union money in an endeavour to elect another person from the Labor Party to Parliament to do more of the damage that is mentioned in the Audit Commission report.

My comments are reinforced by what the Minister for Primary Industries said last week when he announced in this House that on 9 December last year the unions and the previous Labor Government got together in another attempt to knife many of the workers that they purport to support. It was interesting, when I picked up a copy of the Hon. Dale Baker's press release—

Mr ATKINSON: I rise on a point of order, Mr Acting Speaker. This is the second time that the member for Mawson has displayed a document in the Chamber. Displays are prohibited under the Standing Orders.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Bass): I uphold the point of order.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: I will proceed, because the honourable member is simply trying to stop the truth coming out before the by-election in Torrens. The evidence clearly indicates to the people of Torrens that they should never support the dishonourable and inept Labor Party we have in South Australia. The fact of the matter is that this Geraghty person—the husband of the lady running for the Labor Party in the seat of Torrens—signed a document with McMahon, Tumbers and Cook from other unions agreeing with the previous Government's decision to sack 100 workers. I think that is absolutely disgraceful.

After seeing the evidence clearly laid before the House today, where we have \$9 900 worth of debt for every man, woman and child in this State and up to \$7 billion in unfunded liabilities by the year 2021 if we had kept going down the track of the previous Government, how could anyone in Torrens ever vote for the Labor Party? The constituents of Torrens are having their letterboxes filled with trash that claims the Government will get rid of award safety nets and that people will not be covered under WorkCover. It also claims that, unlike many other politicians, this lady happens to know what it is like to struggle to make ends meet. I would have to question that, given her background and the fact that she worked for Mr Duncan.

We have clearly seen the evidence today. There is an opportunity for us in South Australia to proceed, and that has been supported in the summary of this Audit Commission. South Australia is turning the corner. At least the signals are there, except from members opposite who are still refusing to support legislation which is imperative if we are to get this State back in order. I hope that they will read this report, absorb it and carry out what is recommended by supporting us. I also appeal to the people of Torrens on Saturday to consider strongly what is in this report and to remember the tie up between the Geraghtys and the unions and the fact that they are purporting to look after workers but at the same time are stabbing them in the back. If they want jobs for their children and a future for Torrens and for South Australia, the only way that they can go on Saturday is to get behind the Dean Brown Liberal Government and support a guy, who will be a former police officer, who knows about the real world, Stephen Ernst, who is 32 years of age and who will do a damn good job.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's time has expired. The member for Playford.

Mr QUIRKE (Playford): The member for Mawson became highly agitated and gave us a lecture on what is in the best interests of the people of Torrens. In fact, that raises an interesting question: who lives there? According to the Liberal Party of Australia in these documents, they certainly are not coppers. I understand that the bloke who is running does not live there either, but that is not the issue here. There cannot be any coppers out there because they are just having their overtime done. That is the first thing. If police officers do live in Torrens, they ought to realise what these documents signal: their overtime has gone.

Let us look at a few of the other groups who might live there. Are there any pensioners? One would doubt it. There cannot be a pensioner in the whole of Torrens; otherwise, we would not have some of the things that are in this set of documents. Let us look at a few of them. One thing is that concessions on the buses and trains need to be looked at. Why have they got to be looked at? The reason is that the Government believes—or the Audit Commission is recommending to the Government, and it is not denying it here or in the other place this afternoon—that it needs to raise more money out of fares. It needs to raise more money out of concessional fares, so pensioners in Torrens ought to be warned about that.

We had the hoary old chestnut, which was dragged by every Minister of Transport on this side of politics, that those who use the busway should pay more because it is faster and nicer. Whatever reason they could think of was dragged by Minister Blevins, Minister Abbott and Minister Wiese, and we rejected it every time. Most of the people in Torrens who catch the bus go on the busway. That is in the report as well.

We can presume from these documents and from the member for Mawson who was talking about the citizens of Torrens that they are not coppers, not people who use the buses or people who want to use the trains, and they are not pensioners who get concessions. Are they Housing Trust tenants, are they pensioners, are they welfare people who need the miserably small concessions that we give them so that they can have a reasonable life? What we were told today by the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations is that in the fullness of time, when the Government has had time to look at it, when it is all finished and all boiled down, we will get an answer. There are three weeks for everyone here and everyone outside to submit

various pleas to the Government not to proceed with these recommendations, but they will take six months to make up their mind on these issues.

The Hon. R.B. Such interjecting:

Mr QUIRKE: The consultation, as the Minister says, is on now. It is on until 24 May. After that members opposite will work out what they can get away with in the Liberal Party's alternative election agenda. This is the agenda that they would not put before the people of South Australia in December last year. The only thing that is not in here is a poll tax.

Let us look at a couple of other groups who may not be in Torrens. We have no pensioners, welfare recipients, police officers or people who use public transport. However, we also find in Torrens a number of other people who will be greatly affected by these documents. One had better not be a resident anywhere in South Australia if one believes that superannuation is safe with this shower, because it is not. What happened to State Bank of South Australia workers, as the Opposition warned, is the tip of the iceberg. I say quite openly that in the figures here we find all sorts of things about how to close off the defined benefit schemes. This afternoon we asked whether that was the case, because we got the signal from the Government benches that they were being closed off from today. We queried whether that would happen, even though the whole of South Australia was told last year clearly, 'There are no plans to close off or limit access to superannuation under a Liberal Government.' Well, we found that one went out of the window.

Mr BRINDAL (Unley): Rarely in my brief time in this place have I heard such rubbish as has just been spouted by the member for Playford. I do not know what world he is living in—certainly the world of teaching and of Venn diagrams. He asked: who are the people of Torrens? According to him, they are not pensioners, users of public transport, Housing Trust tenants, police officers or anything. I have news for him. Like every person in this Chamber and every person whom we represent, they are South Australians. Like me, today they must be horrified at the Audit Commission report laid in this Parliament by the Premier of South Australia.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

Mr BRINDAL: I remind the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that the Premier of this State promised an Audit Commission and he promised to release the findings after he received them on the first day that Parliament sat, and he has delivered on both of those promises. I refute and reject totally the scurrilous assertions of the member for Playford who claims that this is the Liberal Party policy that we were too scared to release. I challenge him to say that outside, because that is a reflection on those independent members of the Audit Commission who came up with these findings.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

Mr BRINDAL: I remind the Deputy Leader that there have been Audit Commissions in five States in this country so far: two in New South Wales, one in Victoria, one in Tasmania and one in Western Australia, and we now have this one in South Australia. Mr Nicholls has been on five of those six, and he believes that this is the most comprehensive set of findings of any Audit Commission that has been undertaken in any Australian State. They are to be commended for the way in which they have examined this matter.

The Hon. M.D. Rann: How many are members of the Liberal Party?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will not interject.

Mr Condous interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member for Unley has the floor.

Mr BRINDAL: My friend and colleague the member for Colton interjects. I know it is out of order, but, quite rightly, he says, 'It's a report card on your performance over the past 11 years.' I believe that is a statement of fact. It does not give me or any member on this side of the House any pleasure to read the report's recommendations. They will cause us personally, our families, friends and loved ones a lot of pain. Everyone of us will have a lot of trauma over what is contained in the report. However, I suggest that there is no one in this State above a reasonable functioning age who does not realise the financial difficulties in which this State has been placed by the previous Government.

We all knew that this report was going to be bad. I do not think we dreamed how bad, but we knew it. Every member in this House knew it. It does not give us pleasure to sit here and listen to the Premier tell us just how bad it is. However, as the Premier said, here is one Government that has the courage not to play politics over by-elections, but to do something to put South Australia back on its feet. The previous Government may have cared nothing beyond the next election; this Government is committed to the future of South Australia. This Government is committed to the next generation and to making a South Australia that is as good as we inherited, not to continue a South Australia which has been squandered, plundered and wasted by selfish, greedy, avaricious people who want nothing better than the comfort of their own lifestyles.

There will be pain: there will be pain for each and every one of us, but I know that every member on this side is prepared to bear that, to go to the people and, whether or not we survive the next election, at least to be able to hold up our heads. Unlike members opposite, we will be able to say that we did what we promised to do and, what is more, we did what was best for South Australia. If any of us are defeated at the next poll because we did what was best for this State, then so be it, but at least we will not have a Leader of the Opposition coming into this place after the next election saying there was a \$10 billion hole in the assets; there were miscalculations about the liabilities of the Government; and there was fudging, deceit and dishonesty. At least that will not be said about the Brown Liberal Government.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's time has expired. The member for Wright.

Mr ASHENDEN (Wright): I want to address an issue this afternoon which I have always found to be of extreme importance and which I addressed on a number of occasions during my term here between 1979 and 1985, when I was fortunate first to be in Government and then in Opposition. I refer to the problems that our schools suffer with vandalism and graffiti. I certainly hope that members do not think I am merely jumping on a band wagon because of the most disgraceful actions that occurred a few days ago, with the total destruction of a junior primary school. It is something which has long concerned me and which I addressed before this most unfortunate event. On 9 March I wrote to the Minister for Education and Children's Services, as follows:

[I believe] that the establishment of security systems in all schools would more than recoup the associated installation costs, as they would not only reduce the incidence of vandalism but also the

cost of repairing damage. For example [and I relate to a specific school in my electorate], the school recently obtained a quote of \$12 000 to install a security system. [That school has] pointed out that in a single incident recently, vandals caused damage amounting to over \$6 000.

In other words, the point I was making to the Minister was that, in just one really so-called 'minor' incident (and I do not think \$6 000 can really be regarded as minor but it is minor in relation to the \$2 million that we lost in the most recent example), 50 per cent of the cost of the security system could have been recouped had the system been installed. I went on to state:

I share their belief that it would be far cheaper to invest in a security system than to constantly pay expensive repair costs. I am therefore writing to request that very serious consideration be given to the provision of funds to all schools in South Australia to enable them to establish security systems. [Importantly] This I see as an investment, not a cost.

I want to develop and expand on this theme. For example, the Northern Territory used to provide a residential caretaker in its schools. A home was provided on the grounds and the caretaker was in residence at all times. My advice is that when this system was in operation the success rate was extremely high in that it virtually removed the problems of vandalism and damage by persons entering schools during non-school periods. I appreciate that to install a home and a residential caretaker in every school in South Australia would be to incur a very high cost and that, even when that cost was amortised against the cost that we are suffering in schools because of damage, vandalism and graffiti, it may be many years for that amortisation to be met. However, if effective alarm systems could be installed which were accessed or directly linked to police stations so that the police were immediately advised at the first sign of any entry to school premises and could respond quickly, I am absolutely certain that the cost of installing such a system would be recouped in less than a year.

I therefore strongly urge the Minister and the Government to look very closely at the installation of these systems. To give this Government full marks, it has already gone a long way towards this. It is already installing closed circuit television cameras in schools to do exactly what I am talking about. It is a step in the right direction, and I hope that the Government continues in that direction because, Lord only knows, we do not need any more destruction. It is not only the financial cost we have to put up with: it is the huge human cost that impacts on the staff, parents and children who attend these schools where this destruction occurs. I hope the Government is able to provide the assistance I am seeking.

The SPEAKER: Order! the honourable member's time has expired. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Today I intend to speak about tomorrow's Federal Government's jobs white paper but, with respect to the Audit Commission report, it is quite clear from the categorical assurances that the Premier gave prior to the last election that he was the most promising Opposition Leader then but that he has become the least promising Premier overnight. I should remind those Liberal marginal members here who have been gloating this afternoon that behind their gloats they know that the Audit Commission will be an 855 page suicide note.

I take this opportunity today to put on record my view on what the Federal Government's jobs white paper should contain to be of real benefit to South Australia, indeed all

Australia. First and foremost, tomorrow's Federal jobs white paper must contain measures to boost the availability of venture capital for small and medium sized businesses to create jobs. This assistance to small and medium sized businesses should include tax incentives, capital provision and expanded training opportunities. In addition, superannuation funds across Australia should be encouraged to invest in small and medium sized business expansion. I think it is a tragedy that too many of our superannuation funds around the country are investing in either non-productive activities or, even worse, in overseas speculative ventures including the stock market internationally.

We need a nationally coordinated program to make it easier for small businesses to get venture capital for new projects, to provide enhanced rebates for new employees and to rebate wholesale sale taxes on goods which are exported. Small business needs to be targeted, because it is the sector which will provide the best growth potential to create new jobs in the lead-up to the year 2000. Unfortunately, we have seen a rise in unemployment in South Australia since the election, even though Australia as a nation is moving steadily out of recession. Over 8 000 jobs were lost in the first three months of this Liberal Government. The national economic indicators are looking much better, with both employment and business investment growing and retail spending increasing, but around Australia we cannot let the end of recession blind us to the real problems caused by long-term unemployment. We must break the cycle of poverty in which the long-term unemployed have become entrenched.

Growth by itself will simply not be able to create all the jobs we need to seriously unshackle the long-term unemployed. High levels of youth unemployment are not the only problem, and I hope that tomorrow's white paper will also focus on assisting the mature aged unemployed, because there are tens of thousands of people who have been retrenched in their 50s, and their skills and enthusiasm are being wasted, with tremendous social costs and family stress. If we are to generate the jobs needed not only to reduce the general unemployment rate but also to start providing opportunities for the long-term unemployed, the role of small business in generating new jobs must be fully recognised in Wednesday's statement. The focus must be on not just big business and big projects. Many small and medium businesses are simply not getting the information they need about export opportunities, particularly in Asia, or about the incentive schemes, grants and rebates currently available.

There also needs to be expanded and more flexible training opportunities, but small business will not realise its full potential unless the level of venture capital provision is boosted. As a nation, we need to look at a range of options, including how superannuation funds can be encouraged to invest a proportion of their funds in responsible venture capital for small and medium businesses. As to job training programs, I also believe strongly that there must be an expansion of the Landcare Environment Action Program (LEAP), which was created following the success of South Australia's Youth Conservation Corps, which I established in 1991. The program involves long-term unemployed young people working on a range of environmental projects and requires participants to enrol in accredited training courses to give them skills in order to get long-term real jobs.

We need to mobilise long-term unemployed young people in projects across this nation that will give them worthwhile job experiences and improve their skills potential to secure careers. Certainly, I hope that both our Youth Conservation

Corps and Kickstart regional employment strategies receive increased Federal and State Government funding. Also, I hope there will be a strong emphasis on regional development. Tomorrow's white paper must concentrate upon sadly overlooked areas of this nation—and I am talking about regional Australia.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Bass): Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): The Audit Commission report released today states:

The level of WorkCover benefits is more generous in South Australia than any other State.

Perhaps this helps to explain, first, the high WorkCover premiums levied against the Port Lincoln based firm that is now expanding its operations into other parts of the State and, secondly, the need for WorkCover reforms in South Australia. Since June 1990 to 31 March 1994, Port Lincoln Bacon Specialists has paid about \$252 958 in WorkCover premiums. Claims paid by WorkCover to the company's employees total just \$37 249 for the same period, which represents an excess of premiums over claims of about \$215 709 for this Port Lincoln based firm.

What astounds me is that the net excess WorkCover premium per week is more than the net combined wages of the firm's Managing Director and office manager. This is deplorable, outrageous and a disgrace. It is no wonder that South Australian firms say to me, 'We cannot afford to increase employment opportunities until we get some relief from overheads.' I ask that a full breakdown of Port Lincoln Bacon Specialist's financial commitment to WorkCover be incorporated in *Hansard* for the benefit of members. I ask that members consider this example, because I believe it is consistent with the costs that South Australian industry has to bear as to WorkCover premiums.

It is my view that Port Lincoln Bacon Specialists has not been neglectful in its obligations to provide a safe work environment. In the period from June 1990 to 31 March 1994 the company has had only three big or serious claims from its 72 employees. The company operates a bacon factory, an abattoir and a render plant. It has premises at Port Lincoln and Port Pirie and it produces a wide variety of innovative smallgoods. The company has an excellent reputation and its brand name is well recognised, particularly on Eyre Peninsula, which is where the company started.

Port Lincoln Bacon Specialists employ 20 full-time staff and another 54 part-time employees in its expanding business. As the House can see, with this level of employment, the company makes a significant impact on the economic health of the region. It also provides a valuable outlet for livestock produced on Eyre Peninsula, including baconer and porker pigs. The company purchases classes of lambs, sheep and cattle, mostly from Eyre Peninsula producers. Operating the only large abattoir on Lower Eyre Peninsula, the company provides a valuable service. The company supplies both the local supermarkets in Port Lincoln with fresh meat, and several outlets in Whyalla are also supplied with fresh meat, killed and processed at the Port Lincoln works.

I emphasise again how important it is to remove impediments to business. This is vital if we are to increase the employment opportunities in our far flung regions. Increasing employment will lead to growth and help to increase the economic performance of our State. WorkCover premiums have to be reduced one way or another. Perhaps the solution

is to open up the workers compensation industry to private enterprise. I ask the House to note that this suggestion has already been promoted in Victoria in order to increase the efficiency and performance of its workers compensation scheme.

I am not saying everything they do in Victoria should be copied in South Australia, but we should look at options and study what is done in other States as well as what is done to cover the health and safety of workers in other countries. WorkCover reforms are long overdue and I hope, for the sake of local industries, that that happens sooner rather than later. As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has just stated, small business needs venture capital and encouragement, and alleviation of unfair WorkCover premiums, as I have just illustrated, would go some way toward doing that and to provide funds for more employment and expansion, particularly in country regions.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Did the member for Flinders wish to have a table inserted in *Hansard*? Is that table of a purely statistical nature?

Mrs PENFOLD: Yes, it is of a purely statistical nature and I seek leave to have the table inserted in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Port Lincoln Bacon Specialists WorkCover Payments 1.7.90 to 31.3.94		
	\$	
Gross paid	252 958.67	over 3.75 years
Total claims	37 249.29	over 3.75 years
NET	215 709.38	
		\$
Gross paid per year (3.75 years)		67 455.64
Gross paid per month (3.75 years)		5 621.30
Gross paid per week (3.75 years)		1 297.22
Average on claims per year		9 933.14
Average on claims per month		827.76
Average on claims per week		191.02
Average NET: Excess per year	57 522.50 (3.75 years)	
Excess per month	4 793.54 (45 months)	
Excess per week	1 106.20 (195 weeks)	

STATUTES REPEAL (OBSOLETE AGRICULTURAL ACTS) BILL

The Hon. D.S. BAKER (Minister for Primary Industries) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to repeal the Canned Fruits Marketing Act 1980, the Farmers Assistance Act 1933, the Primary Producers Assistance Act 1943 and the Primary Producers Debts Act. Read a first time.

The Hon. D.S. BAKER: I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

I seek leave to have the second reading explanation inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

This short bill repeals four measures that have become moribund. The *Canned Fruits Marketing Act 1980* ratified the Commonwealth/States scheme for the marketing and equalisation of certain Australian canned fruits. That scheme was dismantled in 1988/89 with the repeal of the Commonwealth Act and subsequent winding up of the Australian Canned Fruits Corporation.

The *Primary Producers' Debts Act 1935* was superseded by the *Primary Producers Assistance Act 1943*. The latter in turn has been rendered superfluous by more recent legislation. There are no accounts under either Act.

In the course of inquiries into this situation, the existence of the *Farmers Assistance Act 1933* was discovered. This measure has clearly been inoperative for decades.

The provisions of the Bill are as follows:

Clause 1 is formal.

Clause 2 provides for commencement on a day to be fixed by proclamation.

Clause 3 repeals the *Canned Fruits Marketing Act 1980*.

Clause 4 repeals the *Farmers Assistance Act 1933*.

Clause 5 repeals the *Primary Producers Assistance Act 1943*.

Clause 6 repeals the *Primary Producers' Debts Act 1935*.

The Hon. M.D. RANN secured the adjournment of the debate.

DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources): I move:

That a joint committee be appointed—

- (a) to inquire into the future development and conservation of South Australia's living resources;
- (b) to recommend broad strategic directions and policies for the conservation and development of South Australia's living resources from now and into the twenty-first century;
- (c) to recommend how its report could be incorporated into a State conservation strategy;
- (d) to give opportunity for the taking of evidence from a wide range of interests including industry, commerce and conservation representatives as well as Government departments and statutory authorities in the formulation of its report; and
- (e) to report to Parliament with its findings and recommendations by December 1994,

and in the event of the joint committee being appointed, the House of Assembly be represented thereon by three members, of whom two shall form a quorum of the Assembly members necessary to be present at all sittings of the committee; and that a message be sent to the Legislative Council transmitting the foregoing resolution and requesting its concurrence thereto.

I wish to emphasise to the House the importance I attach to the outcome of the joint committee's deliberations. Establishment of the joint committee will fulfil an important election pledge. It will provide a clear signal to both development and conservation interests that the Government is committed to an ecologically sustainable future for South Australia. The Government's policy on natural resources, environment and conservation states:

A Liberal Government's first priority for the environment will be to pursue our State conservation strategy as an acceptable basis for the future development and conservation of South Australia's living resources. The strategy will be based on the principles established in this policy which will set specific targets and establish guidelines to take us into the twenty-first century.

Conceptually, the task of the joint committee will be to address how South Australia's living resources can be used in a manner consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development. Ecologically sustainable development is concerned with using, conserving and enhancing the community's resources so that ecological processes, on which life depends, are maintained and the total quality of life, now and in the future, can be increased. Nowhere is this more relevant than in respect of our living resources.

The term 'living resources' should be taken to include South Australia's indigenous flora and fauna, on the land, in streams and lakes and in the sea, together with the ecological conditions which are vital for the continued existence of our flora and fauna. It is essential for the survival of any species of wildlife that its habitat be safeguarded as well.

The joint committee's task will be wide ranging, covering the role of national parks and other protected areas in the

conservation of represented samples of living resources, the protection of living resources on private land such as heritage agreement areas under the native vegetation management program, the use of private sanctuaries in conservation, the reintroduction of species to the wild, and the role of zoos and botanic gardens. It will cover the farming of indigenous species such as emu farming, oyster growing and aquaculture; the development of the State's flora for cut flower export market; the opportunities in developing the bush tucker market; and the role of living resources in tourism.

I emphasise that the joint committee's task will be to address both the conservation and the development of South Australia's living resources within a framework of ecologically sustainable development. In carrying out its task the joint committee will consult widely with the community and with particular interests. The past few years have seen a plethora of national strategies covering a range of relevant subjects: national strategy for the conservation of Australia's biological diversity, national forests policy, and national strategy for rangeland management, to name a few.

Australia has also entered into international commitments such as the Convention on Biological Diversity. At the State level, a draft threatened species strategy and a draft revegetation strategy have been released. In addition, I have recently released the report on the parks review: a wide ranging inquiry into the national parks system in South Australia. Many of these documents are very relevant to the subject of the joint committee's task. An important task will be to integrate into a definitive program the various commitments made through these strategies and policies in so far as they affect the conservation and development of living resources.

The terms of reference are deliberately broad so that the joint committee can cast a wide net in its investigations and report. The committee itself will not prepare a State conservation strategy: this will be the Government's responsibility following its report, but the committee will make recommendations on how its report could be incorporated into such a strategy.

The joint committees's task will be a challenging one but one which I believe is essential if we are to ensure the conservation of our living resources for the benefit of our children and grandchildren, whilst also identifying the opportunities for the sustainable use and development of these resources for the benefit of our present community. I commend the motion to the House.

The Hon. M.D. RANN secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADELAIDE FESTIVAL CENTRE TRUST (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 13 April. Page 696.)

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): There are a number of matters related to the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust and its practices that I want to deal with at another date, namely, during the Estimates Committees. This follows some information that has been provided to the Opposition, but that information does not relate to this Bill. I indicate that the Opposition and I, as shadow Minister for the Arts, support the second reading of this Bill. I am aware that there has been considerable debate in another place, with

amendments being moved by my colleague, the former Minister for the Arts, Anne Levy.

This legislation arises from a matter which came to the former Government's attention in the caretaker Government period late last year. There was, I understand, correspondence between both the former Minister for the Arts and the present Minister in their different capacities, and there has been a considerable amount of background to this matter. Briefly, the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust, which as we all know is a large entrepreneurial organisation, provides a great deal of the artistic and cultural activity that occurs in Adelaide, and it has conducted itself with a flair, attracting national and international attention. In fact, it receives a Government subsidy of only about 23 per cent of its budget each year, compared to corresponding organisations in other States where the Government subsidy required to keep the organisations in question going is a very much larger proportion of their budgets, up to 50 or 60 per cent not being unusual.

Late last year there was a commercial opportunity for the Festival Centre Trust to enter into an arrangement with the AFL regarding ticketing through BASS for certain fixtures occurring at Football Park. This was a commercial opportunity of great potential financial benefit to the trust and a great benefit to the AFL. At a fairly late stage it was drawn to the attention of the Festival Centre Trust that, strictly under its Act, it did not have the power to undertake such an activity since this was something not occurring at the Festival Centre Trust—it was a ticketing system down at Football Park. There was a technical legal problem. After consultation between the former Minister, the then shadow Minister (Diana Laidlaw) and Crown Law officers—I know that in this particular area Crown Law has a great deal of expertise—agreement was reached so that the Festival Centre Trust Act could be amended to provide that such an activity would fall within the functions of the trust.

The agreement for the commercial activity to take place was then signed by the Hon. Anne Levy, who said that it could occur, and the necessary funds, totalling some \$300 000, were also temporarily found from within the resources of the Department for the Arts and Cultural Heritage, as it then was. A commitment was given by the trust that as soon as the amending legislation was passed it would have the power to undertake such activities and repay the department the \$300 000 which otherwise would cause a considerable hole in the department's budget for this financial year—hence the urgency for getting this legislation through the Parliament before the end of the financial year, which obviously means in the next two weeks. That is why I am particularly eager to assist my learned colleague.

The other matters dealt with in the Bill relating to sunset clauses, sewerage and various other matters I think have been adequately dealt with in the Upper House by my colleague, Anne Levy. The Opposition therefore has great pleasure in supporting this Bill but with the proviso that we intend to ask a range of questions relating to the trust, its activities and practices during the next round of Estimates Committees.

Mr BRINDAL (Unley): I will not detain the House long on this Bill. Obviously, as a member of the Government, I support it. I put on record, as I think should be put on record, the appreciation of all South Australians for the valuable work which the trust has done since its inception. It has not been a continually smooth road and there have been ups and downs in the progress of the Festival Centre Trust since the

Festival Centre was established, but by and large it is a very important part of South Australia's cultural heritage.

It has done exceptionally well, as the Opposition has acknowledged, especially with respect to the set construction carried out at Dry Creek, an undertaking that I believe is the leading set constructor for all major productions throughout Australia. That is no mean feat for South Australia and brings to this State both expertise and money. The influx of creative people into this State in all areas is noteworthy and I think is largely due to the nucleus formed by the Festival Centre Trust.

There is just one matter that I would briefly canvass in the context of this Bill, and that hinges around the valuation for water and sewerage rates. It has been of some concern to me for some time that in trying to balance budgets it is easy for Government to neglect and not properly maintain current assets. It has been pointed out to me that the Festival Trust is a very valuable asset of this State which has perhaps not been maintained to the standard to which it should have been maintained in the last Government's rush to go off and build extra entertainment facilities around Adelaide.

There would not be a South Australian who would not worry if there was any threat to the Festival Centre, to its fabric or to the valuable work that it does, and I would hope that, as part of the Audit Commission findings tabled in the House today, we will look at valuable assets such as the Festival Centre and see that they are not only maintained but also enhanced, so that as we chart our way forward we ensure that our valuable public assets such as the Festival Centre Trust are maintained and enhanced.

In closing, I commend the Bill to the House and congratulate the current management under the leadership of Mr McFarlane, who stands as an example to many people in the arts area as to the productive capacity of the arts and the valuable contribution they can make to this State.

Mr BECKER (Peake): This Bill does two main things: it recognises the operation of BASS in expanding into Football Park; and it contains provisions relating to rating the value of the Festival Theatre. The ticketing arrangement made with Football Park by the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust was announced long before this legislation came into the House. It was announced before the first major game of football at Football Park this season and regrettably turned out to be quite a shambles. There were some considerable delays at Football Park using this new ticketing operation. I particularly loathe the way the whole thing has been done. I thought it was very poor form that an announcement was made at Football Park one day that we would go into this new ticketing arrangement when the legislation had not even been before the Parliament. I do not know whether the Minister was fully aware of it; certainly we as the elected representatives of the people had no idea whatsoever.

If these organisations are to go into these entrepreneurial areas, they must remember that they are accountable to Parliament and will be made accountable to Parliament. If they go into these types of operations, they must give full consideration to the public they are there to serve, because it was an inconvenience to the people at Football Park. While everybody has apologised—the Football League and so forth—somebody nevertheless horribly underestimated the operation of the system. If we are going to bid for major sporting events, if we are to use the facilities that we have to the maximum benefit for the people of South Australia, and we want to attract people from overseas, then we have to get

these operations correct. It is all very well wanting to be the big players in some of these fields, but the public are getting tired of being used as fodder in experimentation. I suppose I am giving a warning that if we want to do these things we have to do them properly and get it right the first time. The Minister reminded us in the explanation of the Bill:

The Adelaide Festival Centre Trust is now engaged in a number of entrepreneurial and commercial activities which were not envisaged when the trust was first established. The trust has, since 1985, provided accounting, marketing, and technical advice services to visiting shows including *Les Miserables*, *Cats*, *Starlight Express*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *The King and I*, *South Pacific* and *Me and My Girl*.

Some of those shows have been extremely successful. They were presented very well by the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust, and it deserves the highest praise. Not every show will be an absolutely outstanding success, but anything involving Andrew Lloyd Webber has been and always will be successful. There is no doubt that we would like to see the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust have the opportunity to pick up a show from either Broadway or London that would be so attractive that we would be able to arrange tourist packages to bring people from other States to Adelaide, but we have to realise we are not a big city and do not have a big population, and that makes it very difficult for us. We do have a beautiful theatre. The Festival Theatre is something of which we can all be very proud.

The decision to site the Festival Theatre was made at a function that I arranged for my branch of the Liberal Party in 1970, when the then Premier, Steele Hall, asked where I thought the theatre should go, either on the hill or on the banks of the River Torrens. I said, 'The Torrens.' He announced it that night, and that is exactly how the decision came about to build it. I have had a particular interest in the development and success of the Adelaide Festival Theatre.

I am not so much in conflict with the part that relates to the promotion of BASS activities and the opportunities to develop and keep BASS going, which is under a considerable amount of pressure, I might add, and is something we need to watch very closely, because it is necessary to have a reliable and successful operation that will handle all ticketing arrangements. People buy tickets to go to theatres today anything up to three, four or five months in advance. I do not like that idea; I think it is wrong. The entrepreneur pockets considerable sums of money for several months, no doubt having it invested at the highest possible interest rate. Provided that money is safe and in a trust account, that is all right, and BASS to date has been very successful in doing that. As long as it can contain its overheads, there is no reason why we should have any problems in that regard.

When the trust moves into other areas, such as sporting functions at Football Park, it should learn from that lesson and be a little more cautious in the future. Certainly, Parliament should have had the opportunity to look at that venture before it was undertaken, because it is a new departure. It was not contemplated that the Festival Centre would go that way.

However, where I am in conflict is that, with the development of the Adelaide Entertainment Centre, I firmly believe, as a member of Parliament, that, if the Entertainment Centre was to compete with other entrepreneurs, it should pay rates and taxes, that is, council rates. I was quite horrified when I first met the Chief Executive Officer of the Hindmarsh council to learn that the Entertainment Centre did not pay council rates. As the Adelaide Entertainment Centre is a commercial undertaking, strongly competing with all other

theatres and entrepreneurs within the City of Adelaide, I believe it should pay council rates. That is why I was concerned when I read the Minister's following statement:

In the light of a case currently before the courts relating directly to the liability for council rates of a Government organisation on Crown property involved in a 'commercial type' activity (the Entertainment Centre), an amendment specifically stating that the Festival Centre Trust property is not rateable for the purposes of local government rates is proposed to avoid any ambiguity.

In my opinion that is unfair because it is taking a position, and we as the Parliament are asked to take a position that would pre-empt a court case. The Hindmarsh council, having merged with the Woodville council, has now become the Hindmarsh-Woodville council. Because of that, legal action is continuing, and quite rightly so. I believe that the council has every right to pursue council rates from that organisation.

The Auditor-General, under 'Non-current Assets' in his report for the year ended 30 June 1993 (page 10), valued the development as follows: assets, land and buildings at \$48.7 million, and plant and equipment at \$4.1 million. So a substantial property in the Hindmarsh-Woodville council area is earning a considerable income and yet it is not paying council rates. Under 'Utilities' on page 12, the Auditor-General's Report states:

Electricity, gas, rates and taxes and telephone charges have been allocated between event expenditure, administration and overheads.

That does not include council rates, which would make a considerable difference. It would have made a considerable difference to the former Hindmarsh council if the centre had paid council rates. There was a significant impact in the area when the properties were acquired by the Government to build and develop this Entertainment Centre. It is unfair for Governments to move into council areas, compulsorily acquire properties, demolish them and build something without giving any consideration to paying council rates.

When you look at the accounts for the Adelaide Entertainment Centre—and it is very early days in its establishment; it will take some time before it makes substantial profits—you can see that it is viable and will continue to be viable because its current management (the Grand Prix Board) has been quite ruthless in reorganising the centre's staffing structure. It has shed quite a number of staff. Also, there have been considerable inter-union disputes within that organisation, which is a pity. We now find that the obnoxious union which sneaked across the border from Victoria to South Australia to control part of our building industry has taken over some of the construction work.

Under 'Capital Maintenance Sinking Fund', the Auditor-General provides the following warning:

The management agreement requires the AEC Board to set aside from gross revenues each year a specified amount for future maintenance. The amount so set aside is required to be invested in a sinking fund for future major maintenance and refurbishment items. Under the terms of the management agreement, \$1.5 million was required to be set aside in the sinking fund at 30 June 1993. Funds held for specific purposes at 30 June 1993 amounted to \$862 000. The shortfall partly relates to the repayment of \$530 000 which was owing to the South Australian Government Financing Authority.

With that type of pressure, I understand and accept that it does make it difficult for the Entertainment Centre to pay full council rates on that property at this stage. At the same time, it is not beyond the realms of possibility that in the future the Entertainment Centre will pay council rates.

The Adelaide Festival Centre Trust does pay rates and does make a contribution. It concerns me that the Minister,

in his second reading explanation, limits the valuation and proposes a notional valuation of \$1 million. The Minister's second reading explanation states on page 696:

It is intended that the Trust [Adelaide Festival Centre Trust] will continue to pay water and sewerage rates so that the true cost of operations is reflected in the trust's business operations and pricing structure. However, water and sewerage rates have been limited by virtue of section 31 until 31 December 1993. Any change from the present limited capital valuation of \$1 million to a notional capital valuation of \$54 million for the Festival Centre (as determined by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources) would increase water and sewerage rates significantly. The trust has the ability to recover such costs but requires sufficient opportunity to review its business operations and pricing structure. Thus the proposed amendment is to be retrospectively dated from 1 January 1994 and will seek to extend the present limitations of water and sewerage rates until 1 July 1997, following which the Adelaide Festival Centre will be required to pay water and sewerage rates based on whatever future notional capital valuation is determined by a Government valuation for the Festival Centre.

Again, we have retrospectivity which I do not like and which we normally do not support. A value of \$54 million is suggested for the Festival Centre. I find that hard to accept when the Auditor-General values the land and buildings at only \$27.7 million. The balance sheet indicates that the Adelaide Festival Centre pays insurance, rates and taxes of \$480 000 and, of course, that is because of the nominal property value. The centre is doing quite well in that respect. However, I do not like legislation that would make it retrospective, and I believe it is extremely unfair to protect the organisation and pre-empt what may occur in a court judgment. It is unfair to my constituency, which takes in quite a considerable part of the Hindmarsh Woodville council.

I can understand what the Government is trying to do; I can understand how the Government must assist these organisations to develop and to provide a much needed service and facility. The Adelaide Entertainment Centre has provided many jobs and it has brought considerable business to Adelaide, and it will continue to do that in the future. As a matter of fact, it will do much more. I can see a very bright future for the Adelaide Entertainment Centre under the new management structure, and that will continue.

When we look at this type of development or any proposed structure such as this in the future, we should give long-term consideration to rates and taxes. If it had been suggested right from the moment it was built or prior to its being built that there would be a remission of rates and taxes for the first 10, 15 or 20 years, I would have no argument. That is something that from now on we must pay much closer attention to. The parliamentary Public Works Committee should have thought this matter through; it should have looked at it and made it part of its recommendation that nothing be approved unless its viability was assured.

We cannot expect taxpayers continually to subsidise these sorts of ventures. As I said, the Hindmarsh Woodville council is in effect subsidising the Adelaide Entertainment Centre. However, the council does not receive any rates or financial benefit from the centre, even though the residents in that area and surrounding that area are inconvenienced by the large volume of traffic that enters and departs the area as late as midnight. Staff have been known to work at the Entertainment Centre until three and four o'clock in the morning. Some environmental noise impacts on the area, and I remind members that two hospitals are located in very close vicinity to the Adelaide Entertainment Centre.

Mr LEWIS (Ridley): I have a few points to place on the record. The first, and the most important, is my profound respect for Mr Tim McFarlane as a manager. I am quite sure that, had we not had somebody of the calibre of Mr McFarlane managing, administering and directing the activities of the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust during the 1980s, it would have ended up in the same kind of mess as many other quangos run by the Labor Party when it was in Government.

I am certain that none of the Ministers to whom he had to answer had the slightest goose of a notion as to how they would have made the organisation accountable. It has been entirely funded from public sources from the outset, having to rely upon such entrepreneurial skills as have been acquired for it by successive Governments over time. Mr McFarlane has been outstanding in that respect. It is unfortunate that the trust has to administer such structures as the one adjacent to the Festival Centre itself, and I refer to the car park. Whilst the rest of the structure which comprises the body of the theatres is very sound, if not outstanding in some respects, the structure of the plaza and the car park beneath it is a real botch.

It was a design disaster to start with. It has corroded badly. Inappropriate materials and methods were used when it was constructed, given the nature of the footings and the foundation on which those footings were erected. The millions upon millions of dollars that have been spent on the continuing maintenance of those areas bear testimony to the truth of what I am saying. To my mind it is a good idea that we now put the trust on notice that it will have to be viable in its entrepreneurial activities by 30 June 1997. It gives the trust time to rearrange its financial affairs in order to ensure that it can be viable.

I am one of those people who, whilst I am no philistine—indeed, I am a strong supporter of the arts and cultural activities generally—is antagonistic toward those people who think their particular and peculiar interests in the fine arts and the performing arts are the only ones worthy of subsidy and that all others are unworthy. That is pretty much the way in which things have been administered in this State over the time I have been in this place and even before that. When I have tried to obtain assistance for some of the arts for the people I represent who are interested in doing what they regard as an important part of their culture, there has been very little sympathy.

When I have finally been able to obtain some understanding of the cause for which I argue and the excellence that is being attained by those on whose behalf I argue, I am nonetheless confronted by bureaucrats protecting their patch who say, 'Oh yes, that is all very well, but. . .'. They have the NOOME syndrome—Not Out Of My Expenditure. They do not want their line of expenditure in the budget for their pet projects to be in any way disturbed, and they subtly denigrate anybody else's view of what represents part of our culture. Some of the things I have seen done in the name of art and culture certainly do not appeal to me and I am sure to the majority of folk as being artistic or, for that matter, of very much merit, if any.

Another aspect of the legislation that concerns me is that it is retrospective. The member for Peake referred to this matter. The amendments which extend it from 31 December 1981 to 31 December 1983 and from that date forward until 1993 have covered the exemption from council rates and water and sewerage rates only until that date, but now it is four or five months later and we are moving to pass legisla-

tion which will provide for a retrospective exemption from those expenses. That is a measure of the competence, or more particularly the incompetence, of the previous Minister in the former Labor Government. The legislation should have been introduced into the Parliament before the election, but it was not; it should have been passed before the election, but it was not. Therefore, we are now retrospectively to give to the Festival Centre Trust notionally thousands upon thousands of dollars. I have no doubt that it will be over \$100 000, and it would not surprise me if it was about \$1 million. The real value of the land is about \$54 million, but we are going to create the legal fiction that it is only \$1 million.

In addition, we are saying that no rates will be payable for local government purposes, not now or ever, on the Festival Centre Trust or on anything that the trust owns. Whereas before section 31 of the principal Act pointed out that no water, sewerage rates or local government rates would be charged, we have now split that in the Bill from where it was in the principal Act to make sections 31 and 31A separate propositions and for all time enable the Festival Centre Trust to own land without paying any rates to local government.

I assure the board of management of the trust that that will not last. If I have anything to do with it, they will have to accept that they are part of the real world, or otherwise justify why they should continue to be considered an exception. The performing arts that are undertaken in the Festival Theatre are no different from the sort of performing arts that are undertaken on Memorial Drive, at Football Park, at the racecourse or at the speedway at Murray Bridge. They are still performing arts and they are patronised by people in the community who, in my judgment, have the right to have their kind of entertainment just as much as anybody else.

Mr Atkinson: Members of the public, not people in the community.

Mr LEWIS: All right, members of the public, for the greater gratification of the honourable member. I am happy to say that it does not matter who they are; in my judgment, their interests and activities have as much merit as anybody else's. I have my own preferences and I do not expect others to share them with the same enthusiasm, but the people who spend money on the kinds of activities that can be and are undertaken in the facilities provided by the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust seem to think that they have some God given right—or wherever the hell else they get it from I do not know—to require the rest of us to pay taxes to continue to entertain them with the kind of entertainment that they consider appropriate to their needs and interests with a subsidy on the real cost of doing so.

To my mind, it is a pity that it is retrospective. I know that rural families presently struggling to stay alive and to keep themselves fed are not getting any retrospective consideration in exemption from stamp duty, but the Festival Centre Trust and the people who will benefit from the lower tariffs that they will pay for admission tickets are getting retrospective consideration. It will be back dated to December 1993. That is sad, because it shows a double standard somewhere.

I am also concerned that entrepreneurial activities can be undertaken on the Minister's say so—admittedly, only on the Minister's say so—but if it were not for the fact that we had a man of the calibre of Mr McFarlane at the helm I would be really worried about that. Whilst I do not have a quarrel with this Minister, I have had many reservations about the competence of previous Ministers to make those kinds of judgments. The way in which they behaved in successive Cabinets, until the Cabinet of the last Government, clearly

illustrate the truth of what I am saying in that respect. It ought not to be the exclusive province of the Minister in secret. There is no requirement for it to be reported to the Parliament or to anyone anywhere else in the public domain that the Minister has decided to allow one kind of entrepreneurial activity to be subsidised and not another and to add yet some additional activity of that kind.

I believe that there should be a requirement, whenever the Minister agrees to an extension of the entrepreneurial activities of the trust, that such extension is placed before the Parliament and the Legislative Review Committee and made subject to disallowance by the Parliament, because it is public money that is being spent, and public money in greater quantity is put at risk if that entrepreneurial activity falls over in an identical fashion to the way in which it occurred in the State Bank.

Another matter of interest to me in the legislation which bears some comment—and I want members to understand that I have no difficulty with allowing the legislation to pass—is the quaint position in which we will find ourselves as members of Parliament. The Festival Centre Trust has the responsibility for overseeing the management of the car park; the land was provided by an Act of this Parliament for the establishment of those facilities and it was finally vested as it is with the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust. It took over land which had been occupied by activities that were recreational in some part—the city baths—but to the west and in other places on the site—the old Government printing facility—it provided services to the Parliament and the Government. It displaced the mews and parking facilities for people who came to the Parliament in their sulkies, traps and buggies or horses.

Mr Atkinson: On their horses.

Mr LEWIS: No. I do not mind whether they came on their horses. They may have decided to walk with their horses, but it does not matter. The stables were there and I am talking about the facilities in which the horses were kept. They have gone. These days most of us use motor cars, some use motorbikes and others use public transport.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

Mr LEWIS: Indeed. Notwithstanding that, the Parliament requires facilities in which members and those who work in the Parliament can park their cars with security. In recognition of the arrangement and the sequence of events by which the Festival Centre Trust car park came into existence, we have to appropriate to ourselves a certain amount of space to meet the needs of those of us in this building. As I have said before, that was the site upon which from day one means of transport privately owned by members were accommodated. Therefore, people charged with the responsibility of managing that facility need to bear in mind that if we find, as I do, that the parking facilities are inadequate to meet the needs of occupational health, safety and other similar requirements for members and staff working in this building, the area will have to be extended, and we will do that on motion; and they cannot be, nor should they feel, offended by that in the least. The time will come, and it will be fairly soon, when we do that.

More particularly, I draw attention to the quaint provision in the legislation that has not taken account of that phenomenon, and that is new section 31A, which provides:

Subject to subsection (2), land owned by the trust is not rateable under the Local Government Act 1934.

That is all right, so they are not paying any local government rates on any land they own anywhere. The Festival Centre Trust is exempt after this legislation has been passed by both Houses and given royal assent by Her Excellency. But the next clause is very interesting, and this is the nub of it. It provides that if any such land is occupied under a lease or licence by any person other than the Crown or an agency or instrumentality of the Crown (and I point out to members that Parliament is not the Crown and the Crown is not the Parliament), that person is liable as occupier of the land to rates levied under the Local Government Act. So, it seems that we have shot ourselves in the foot, because we may find ourselves being asked to pay rates on that part of the facility which we use for car parking purposes. But I would have to tell His Worship the Lord Mayor, Henry Ninio, and any other fancy-footed city councillor that if they have any ideas about charging us rates for the car park they had better think again, because we will tidy that up very smartly.

There is no way that we have ever accepted a responsibility to do that: the Parliament provides the framework through which society functions and through which citizens can obtain their rights and, accordingly, it provides the breath of life through legislation for local government more effectively to administer affairs relevant to its purposes at the local level. It has the power and the responsibility to ensure more than anything else that the Parliament survives, because without it there is no capacity to establish what is law and what is not, and there is no capacity to hold the Government accountable to the people by the mechanisms available within the institution of Parliament. So, Parliament will take care of its own affairs and I am sure that, in due time, whether in short order or later, landowners such as the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust, like any other quango, will have to pay local government rates and be capable of paying water rates, sewerage rates and the like, such as they may be in 1997. I believe that they are likely to be very different from what they are now, in terms not so much of the quantity that might be paid but of the fashion in which they are determined. It is currently old fashioned and it needs to be reviewed, but that is a whole other debate for another day and not part of this legislation.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN (Minister for Industry, Manufacturing, Small Business and Regional Development): I acknowledge the contributions of respective members in this second reading debate; I thank the honourable member and the Opposition for their support of the measure. I acknowledge that during the Estimates Committee there are matters that the Opposition would wish to pursue, and logically that is the forum where the Minister will be present at the table with the officers to respond directly to those queries that the Opposition might have. I will draw to the attention of the Minister the contribution of respective members and some of the philosophical points that have been put forward in terms of policy and legislative direction for the future.

I was reminded that parliamentarians do have somewhat of a cross subsidy: I understand the car parking cross subsidy is to the tune of \$135 000 per annum. That is something that we ought to note in the course of the debate. If this measure is passed, it will make the Festival Centre Trust accountable for a number of water and sewerage charges, and with this legislation we are giving the trust sufficient notice to put in place financial arrangements to meet those commitments for which it has not hitherto had to account. It is right and proper

that if the ground rules change there should be an appropriate time frame in which appropriate adjustments to cash flow can be undertaken to meet those future responsibilities. I commend the Bill to the House.

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

MEAT HYGIENE BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 19 April. Page 795.)

Mr CLARKE (Ross Smith): The Opposition has studied the Bill, and my colleague in another place will have more to say when it is debated there. However, the Opposition supports any efforts which will reduce costs to meat processors and, hopefully, to pass those reduced costs on to producers and consumers. We understand that the driving force behind the Bill is the insistence of the Commonwealth Government to achieve full cost recovery of the meat inspection service, something of the order of \$70 000 per annum per inspector. However, our support for a lower cost structure is tempered by the need for the State Government to ensure that the quality control that the processing companies undertake is rigorous and no less demanding than it is now, to ensure the quality of the meat products offered for sale.

This comes down to the issue of self regulation by the meat processing companies, and I must say that personally I have some scepticism with respect to self regulation. I remember the debates in the Federal Parliament not so long ago when self regulation was introduced for the commercial television companies with respect to the number of advertisements they could run every hour. Self regulation was no sooner established in the commercial television area than the number of advertisements per hour jumped quite considerably. There was very little by way of self regulation by that industry, and the Opposition is somewhat concerned that simply bringing in self regulation without ensuring proper standards with respect to meat hygiene will be to the detriment of South Australian consumers in the long run.

This Bill has also raised concerns from the Public Sector Union, in particular the members who are employed as meat inspectors, for reasons of which I believe the Minister is probably well aware but which also relate to their concern about ongoing quality control of the meat processors and of the ultimate quality that is afforded to the consumers here in Australia. The Bill as presently constituted does not specify the inspection standards that will apply with respect to the in-house inspectors and what degree of competence they must achieve. They are to be developed in consultation with the Minister over time.

Presently, meat inspectors must undergo a two year part-time training course. In Victoria, where self-regulation has been introduced, the accreditation course is for only six weeks, as I understand it, but I do not believe that a person who undertakes a pressured six weeks course has the same competency as an inspector who has undertaken a two year part-time course of study. As this matter is yet to be determined by the Government, I urge it to be careful, because the health of not only South Australian citizens but interstate consumers who buy South Australian meat could be at risk.

There is an irony that consumers in the United States, Japan and elsewhere outside Australia will be guaranteed contamination-free Australian meat because of their import

requirements and the fact that every export abattoir must have a licensed meat inspector on site, yet in South Australia under this Bill the same stringent quality control conditions may not exist. The Opposition is also concerned that, whilst Victoria has legislated on this matter to allow self-regulation and South Australia is following suit, New South Wales has so far sat on the fence and preferred to retain an independent meat inspection service.

Most of the other points I wish to raise will be through questions to the Minister in Committee. However, meat processors will be expecting their employees to undertake a quality assurance role. Employees on the line will be expected to participate in quality control. The meat processing business involves much piecework and I am concerned about processors expecting workers on the line to inspect every carcass for imperfections, disease or any other problems indicating that meat is not fit for human consumption. As the wages of people working on the line are based on the number of bodies they can ship through the abattoirs in a given period and as the industry attracts many itinerant employees, will such workers have sufficient skills or the time in which to check carcasses for imperfections or disease? Certainly, I would be concerned if processors used that method as a ground for seeking accreditation under the Bill. The Opposition supports the second reading of the Bill to enable further questions and answers in the Committee stage.

Mr BUCKBY (Light): I support the Bill. This measure and the approach adopted parallel the approach being taken in Queensland, Tasmania and Victoria, as the member for Ross Smith has said. It moves towards quality assurance within the meat industry and aims at flexible controls at plant level. The member for Ross Smith also said that currently slaughterhouses are bound to have an AQIS inspector at a cost of around \$68 000 to \$70 000 a year, regardless of the number of head they put through. This gets to be costly for those operating on the basis of a small number of units and the Bill allows for some flexibility in that area.

The Bill also corrects deficiencies in the current legislation, for example, the lack of provisions covering the processing of game meat such as kangaroo. We have seen over the past four or five years the increased consumption of kangaroo meat for human consumption in restaurants and elsewhere. The Bill replaces the Meat Hygiene Act 1980 and the Poultry Meat Hygiene Act 1986 and seeks to ensure that all meat and meat products in South Australia for consumption by the public or domestic pets are to be of a wholesome quality. The new South Australian Meat Hygiene Advisory Council replaces the Meat Hygiene Authority and, in so doing, shifts the responsibility towards industry and involves the industry in the regulation and standard of meat hygiene in South Australia.

As I have said, the Bill allows slaughterhouses to process meat without the imposition of external full-time meat inspection. Under the Bill the quality assurance criteria will be adopted by the industry, and these will be nationally accepted hygiene standards. Operators will be able to seek accreditation based on that standard, on the capability of their facilities and processes and on their level of training and competency. The member for Ross Smith referred to training within the industry. A specific aim of the Bill is that people remain at a level of competency to ensure that quality assurance criteria are adhered to. Existing controls on pet food will be retained, and that is covered by the Bill.

To meet the Bill's objectives the legislation will operate under the various national guidelines of practice on the basis of accreditation. It will provide for the appointment of meat hygiene officers in the Department of Primary Industries and provide for the contracting of external persons as necessary for inspection or audit. The Bill enables the raising of funds via fees and charges and provides for heavy penalties if any laxity comes into the operations of a particular slaughterhouse. It protects inspectors within the organisation and also allows for a property owner or occupier to slaughter his or her own stock on a home property provided that stock is to be consumed by the residing property occupants.

The cornerstone of the legislation is the accreditation of operators on quality assurance or external inspection programs to replace the licensing of premises that currently exists. The accreditation requirements include the adherence to an approved quality assurance program, full-time inspection by an external agency approved by the Minister, a program of regular inspection of premises and processing, and accreditation in the name of the owner. Processing companies will be encouraged to employ staff qualified in meat inspection. All operators seeking unrestricted trade in meat or meat products will be required to reach nationally accepted standards of production, which is the safety area to ensure that quality is maintained.

The powers of meat hygiene officers are to inspect and enforce the quality insurance principles. Consultation is something that did not happen previously in the industry. That is now allowable and will be undertaken, as representatives of the industry will sit on the new board. Following the McKinsey report, consultation has been taking place on a regular basis, and this Bill is before us as a result of that consultation. The Bill will give an effective industry/Government framework for the facilitation of trade in South Australian meat products both within the State and interstate. In summary, the Bill establishes an accreditation scheme parallel to other States, one which allows some flexibility to operators. I support the Bill.

Mr LEWIS (Ridley): I support this legislation, which has substantial implications for everybody I represent, whether it involves consumers, producers, people with an interest in production, or that even smaller set of people who are involved in the slaughter and preparation of meat for human consumption. In fact, the only people whom I represent who might not be in the least bit interested in this legislation are those who are totally vegetarian and do not care much about the health and welfare of anyone else who eats meat.

This is a fairly important measure, and the Minister is to be commended for the speed with which he has acted to fix up the mess inherited from the previous Government. In fact, I consider it had its origins even before the Labor Party came to office: when we were last in office. Some draconian provisions were enacted in legislation at that time which were never taken up or enforced in that form whilst we were in office but which subsequently were rigidly enforced to the letter during the period from 1982 until the present. It taught me a lesson: never publicly agree to legislation which does not do what you believe it ought to do.

Accordingly, I am pleased that we are now in office and have the opportunity of addressing the problems created by the legislation which, from 1982 until now, governed the way in which meat could be slaughtered and sold for human consumption. The celebrated causes with which I have been connected have involved a number of centres around my

electorate where the letter of the law was enforced way beyond the need for it to be so enforced in the public interest.

One place in particular was in the Swan Reach community. The area in question is miles from anywhere, yet the previous Government, under successive Ministers, flatly refused to allow that community, or anyone who wanted to go there to be a butcher, to slaughter and sell meat to local residents. They were compelled to buy the meat from other export abattoirs. I thought I would be able to get approval for a neighbouring slaughterhouse, or slaughterhouses, to be used by a butcher in Swan Reach, (Mr Ned Dreschler, when he came to the area to take up the business) to slaughter the meat he required to service the needs of the people in that community. They all liked the notion of being able to buy local meat just like people in Truro, Waikerie, Mannum or Karoonda, for example. They did not mind complying, as they had complied in the past, with all the requirements of the Meat Hygiene Authority and the inspectors as they interpreted those requirements.

There was a capacity in terms of the number of beasts that could be slaughtered in each category—for instance, available through the Waikerie slaughterhouse—to enable Mr Dreschler to slaughter in cooperation with the Waikerie butcher. However, neither the Meat Hygiene Authority nor the Minister would agree to that. That is when I became absolutely convinced that much of what was being done was not in the interests of public health at all. It was quite demonstrable that public health was not being served by having meat carried to Swan Reach on a passenger bus twice a week—admittedly in containers that were properly provided for it—when it could otherwise have been slaughtered and carried in a chiller van from Waikerie to Swan Reach: a much shorter distance than bringing it in a passenger bus from the metropolitan area or an area close thereto. It was much more satisfactory to the locals to buy meat which had been produced by their neighbours, but, no, neither the department nor the Minister was interested.

I became convinced that the purpose of the insistence was to kowtow to the Meat Workers Union and ensure that as much business as possible was channelled through abattoirs where union labour was employed. To my mind that was absolutely outrageous. It put the price of meat available to people in Swan Reach at a very much higher figure than needed to be the case for Mr Dreschler to be able to continue as a viable butcher. It meant that his business was so much less successful than it could otherwise have been, without any good purpose being served. There were no circumstances in which the public interest was at risk had my request been acceded to. It is now a matter of history. Swan Reach is able to obtain its meat slaughtered in the neighbourhood, and this legislation ensures that that will continue.

So long as Ned continues to do what all other country butchers have to do and comply with the requirements that protect public health, it does not matter whether or not the meat is slaughtered by a union member, and that is the way it ought to be. I commend the Minister for what he has done and I am pleased to support the proposition knowing that in doing so public interest is not in the least bit compromised where health and wholesomeness is involved; indeed, in every other respect the public interest is enhanced because local meat can be killed locally for the benefit of local people where they know they are supporting their neighbours and a local business in the process.

Mr KERIN (Frome): It is with pleasure that I congratulate the Minister not only on the legislation but on the extensive consultation that has taken place in the lead up to the introduction of the Bill. Not only was the opportunity there for interested people to submit their ideas and concerns, but it certainly shows that this feedback was actually considered in the drafting of the Bill. In the electorate of Frome I have a mix of slaughtering operations including some well run country butcher operated slaughterhouses and also the Conroy family owned Port Pirie abattoirs. The communities at Port Pirie and surrounding region are indebted to the Conroy family for taking on what were previously endangered abattoirs which looked like closing down. Not only are they operating well but a program has been commenced to modernise the facility. Certainly, the local government authority and the Port Pirie Regional Development Board played a major role in saving that important industry.

During the period of consultation the Minister accompanied me on visits to both abattoirs in Port Pirie and butchers in the region. I am glad to say that this legislation looks like underpinning their future. The abolition of the Meat Hygiene Authority will certainly be important in the Frome electorate. From discussions with people in the industry, it was obvious that that authority's operation posed a major problem. Replacing it with the South Australian Meat Industry Advisory Council will be seen in the electorate, and no doubt throughout rural South Australia, as a progressive step. Absolutely fundamental to the Bill is the removal of the compulsion that all carcasses be inspected if the operator adopts a quality assurance program. The Bill has made it essential that all slaughter operations meet national standards regardless of whether the operator opts for quality assurance or chooses the full-time external inspection.

This certainly brings the meat hygiene legislation into line with the requirements which apply to other foodstuffs and standards which are in force elsewhere in the world. Of concern to some is the fact that the Bill extends the current legislative coverage beyond its previous limits. It includes certain processing establishments which were not previously subject to the regulations. Whilst some of these establishments may feel as if they are penalised by the Bill, this extension is necessary not only to protect the public's interests but also to introduce uniformity between the States and protect the important interstate trade of those businesses.

I applaud the introduction of this Bill. It will protect the public interest in that the public will receive good healthy meat. It will allow the industry to get on with the job in an efficient fashion. It will allow many country butchers to go out and buy their own meat and have it killed reasonably locally and thus have some say on the quality. It certainly underpins the future of the meat industry, which is a very important industry to rural South Australia. It certainly does it in an efficient and affordable way. I commend the Bill.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS (Giles): I congratulate the previous speaker on his brevity, and I will try to match it. I support the second reading of this Bill and do so very strongly. I congratulate the Minister for Primary Industries for bringing it in so quickly. As a former Minister of Agriculture about 11 years ago, I can sympathise to some extent with what the Minister has gone through to get this Bill to this stage, because it is an extremely vexed area. The paramount consideration obviously has to be the health of the consumer. How far you take that is always the debate. There

are some in the industry who believe that every living thing that is killed in South Australia ought to be killed in an abattoir that complies with the US Department of Agriculture standards which we apply in the main to our meat exports. I have always thought that that was nonsense. It is a question of where you draw the line. What degree of regulation is required? Looking at this Bill, I believe that the Minister is certainly on the right track, to say the very least.

The Government does have an enormous responsibility to ensure that all meat killed for human consumption in South Australia is safe. If the Government, through its legislation or deregulation in this instance, brings about a situation where that cannot be guaranteed, it has to accept that responsibility. I know that this Minister will have no difficulty with that as a philosophical underpinning of this legislation. It is not possible for the Opposition to look into the future and see precisely what the outcomes will be when this Bill is finally passed by Parliament. Nevertheless, it is a welcome step in respect of deregulation. Obviously you cannot totally deregulate this area, and it would be foolhardy to do that. I was about to go on and say 'given the high stakes involved', but that would be a very poor pun and, I dare say, would not be appreciated by the House. Some degree of regulation is clearly necessary. It is interesting to see the Liberal Party supporting deregulation in primary industry, because my experience in the 19 years I have been in this Parliament is that it has a complete, utter and vicious opposition to any deregulation in these areas at all.

The Hon. D.S. Baker: I supported you.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: I will check the *Hansard*. The Minister says he supported me. I am not sure that that was the case all the way down the line. I will check the *Hansard*. The Minister knows that I always do that, and I will have a great deal of pleasure in either confirming his assertion or pointing out that that was not correct. Nevertheless, it is pleasing to see some measure of deregulation in primary industry being supported by members opposite. My experience in the 19 years I have been here, as I said, is that every bit of deregulation—not total deregulation necessarily, but even minor amendments that in any way tried to take away the monopoly powers of primary producers—has been vigorously and totally opposed by members opposite.

I can remember going through hell in this place trying to deregulate a boiled egg, never mind a slice of bread! What happened with the slice of bread? When we tried to deregulate a slice of bread, there was vicious opposition from members opposite—and let us not even talk about potatoes! In deference to the Chair, I will not even mention deregulation of the common potato, because people were marching in the streets. Members opposite led these people to believe that South Australia as we know it—the whole social fabric of this community—would disintegrate if we deregulated the humble potato. That was the big one.

I do not want to name names in here, and one never involves the Chair in debate—that is something I was taught at school many years ago—but there are people within hearing of me now who fought tooth and nail to ensure that the humble potato was not allowed to be sold without a huge bureaucracy monopolising its sale. In fact, some people in this Parliament insisted that potatoes in this State had to be sold in a different bag to try to get around section 92 of the Federal Constitution. They tried to get around the interstate provisions by saying, 'No, we are not opposed to potatoes, but we are opposed to the larger sized bag', so it all has a very interesting history.

When I tried to achieve some slight modifications to the taxi, motor vehicle and hire vehicle industry in this State, I recall that the Minister for Primary Industries stood on the steps of Parliament House and said that this grossly regulated industry was the last bastion of free enterprise. If you can call the taxi industry the last bastion of free enterprise, I will go 'he'. Nevertheless, however late, I welcome this conversion to sensible deregulation. I just shudder to think what would have happened if we had attempted anything like this. I know that the member for Custance would have really gone off his face, screaming at us across the Chamber that we were bringing down primary producers.

It is a very serious Bill and it is a very serious issue. If what the Minister intends comes about, he is certainly to be congratulated because there is no point in this or any other industry's having unnecessary regulations. There are people who claim on a daily basis that competition is the lifeblood of this community and that it will make us great, yet at the same time they run away from any mention of the word when it applies to something they have a monopoly over. In conclusion, I congratulate the Minister. I expect it will all work out—I certainly hope so. I am sure the Minister will be back to the Parliament very quickly if any dangers arise for consumers within South Australia after this legislation goes through.

Mr VENNING (Custance): I want to speak briefly in support of the Bill, because it has been such a long time coming. It is very much appreciated. In the four years I have been in this place, this issue has been raised by my constituents many times. Since this Government has been in power, two of the problems have been solved. I place on the public record how much I appreciate how the present Minister has taken on these issues. In one case a problem which had continued for three years was solved within three days. I commend the Minister for that.

The consultation in relation to this Bill could be a model to anybody in the legislative process as to how to introduce and develop a Bill from the grassroots level. The consultation in respect of this Bill, which occurred for quite some years, was superb. The people affected by this Bill were extensively consulted. Local communities were involved, and they submitted many papers, several of which I was given and questioned on. I mention one person in particular. Mr Charles Symon from Jamestown has kept me up to the mark in relation to this issue. He—and I think the Minister would agree—has been a very valuable person to have out there in the community. He heads the South Australian Farmers Federation committee on the Meat Hygiene Act. I pay tribute to him.

A few moments ago my colleague the member for Frome—and I congratulate him on his input—very capably discussed the Port Pirie abattoir problem. I copped this one exactly half way through my four years in this place, and it was a very difficult problem. We all know the problems we have had with regional abattoirs in South Australia: they have been a continuing problem. Strategically, the State could not do without an abattoir of the size and nature of the Port Pirie meatworks, which is an export standard abattoir. I congratulate those involved, including, as the member for Frome said, the Port Pirie Development Board.

I know that the board received its fair share of flack for the work that it did through me earlier and then later through the member for Frome. We saw the influx of Conroy's and, since it took over, the industry has gone from strength to strength.

A further development, which we cannot discuss at this time, is in the wind. It will really put the icing on the cake in relation to the future of the Port Pirie export abattoir. I congratulate those involved with that.

Country slaughterhouses have been a problem for many years, and we have seen an over-servicing of the provisions of the Act. Many country slaughterhouses have disappeared because the operators could not hack the hassle. In fact, it got to one of my friends who had a slaughterhouse, and eventually he had a heart attack and died (and people know about whom I am talking). He was continually harassed by the officers who came around. They checked the fly wire and said that it had to be on the inside of the louvres; the next time they came they said that it had to be on the outside of the louvres. They kept changing the system, and each inspector seemed to have a different standard. All that has gone now, and we have uniform standards. The level of hygiene in our country slaughterhouses is generally very good, and that is great to see.

Over the years the average farmer killed the hogget under the gum tree, chucked a rope over the lowest bough, hauled it up, and might have stuck a bag over it the next day. Nobody seemed to die from this practice. The meat was well cured by the time it was eaten. It would appear that now we have gone to the extreme. However, because there are multiple killings, slaughterhouses are a lot more intense than that, so you have to make sure that your standard of hygiene is up to the mark.

When they kill a sheep in *Footrot Flats*, the rope goes over the bough, they pull it up, the dog gets the bit on the bottom and the humans get the rest. However, that is not on nowadays. I feel that in many areas we have gone over the top, particularly in relation to the AQIS standards for export abattoirs. I know we have to be very vigilant when we sell on the export market, but these inspections increase the cost and bureaucracy with respect to our once thriving industry, and we have to be very careful about that.

The checks and balances remain under this Bill. They must always remain, because we will always have people in the industry who are unscrupulous, less honest, less diligent and who will not do the right thing, and those people will pull down the general good reputation of the whole industry. I am very glad to see that the checks and balances are still there. Bureaucracy has added cost and frustration to this industry, and it is great to see deregulation, as the member for Giles said—and it is not often that I agree with the member for Giles. It is high time this industry had deregulation. This industry is mature enough to take this deregulation and I can see the industry going from strength to strength.

Many constituents have telephoned me about this problem in my four years in this place. One of my constituents, the butcher at Kapunda, Mr Brian Menzel, whom I have known for many years, has an excellent accreditation rating and an excellent standard of hygiene. In fact, his registration number is South Australia No 1. He has just been given permission to kill extra meat in his slaughterhouse at Kapunda so that he may sell it in his newly acquired shop at Nuriootpa. That is commonsense, because what we are seeing now is better utilisation of an excellent slaughterhouse. Mr Menzel is able to maximise his situation; he can now maintain his slaughterhouse on a full-time basis.

If you are killing in a slaughterhouse three days a week, you must clean up and then leave the slaughterhouse for four days. When you return to the slaughterhouse, you have to clean it before you start but, if you are killing six days a week

or 5½ days a week, it is much more convenient; it is a better utilisation of the infrastructure that a butcher must have in these modern days. I welcome the change and I congratulate the Government and particularly the Minister for being diligent in introducing this Bill. The preparation of this Bill has been excellent and has occurred over a long time. The Government did much of this work in Opposition. This Bill has support from both sides of Parliament and will eventually become law. It is with great pleasure that I support this Bill.

The Hon. D.S. BAKER (Minister for Primary Industries): I thank members for their interest, contributions and support of this Bill. I must say that the member for Giles has, along with me, been a strong critic of the Meat Hygiene Authority and some of its decisions. He also referred to deregulation. The only difference between the member for Giles and this side of the House is that the Government believes in deregulation: the Government is more caring and feeling about it and so it does not put a heap of people out of business while it takes place. When the member for Giles deregulated the potato industry, he did it overnight. He also wanted to have a go at the taxi industry and various other industries. He caused massive disruption in the egg industry by deregulating overnight.

This Government is more caring and feeling and tends to do things over a longer period of time, so that there can be some structural adjustment to go along with it. That is what this Bill is about. It is not deregulation overnight: it allows quality assurance programs to be put in place at the behest of the Minister and, of course, the slaughterhouse or the abattoirs so that we can bring people up to speed as the industry is gradually deregulated. I must say that some people do not quite understand what it is all about.

The hot red meat industry is the only industry in Australia where an AQIS inspector determines whether meat is fit for human consumption. Boning rooms, small goods factories and all the other enterprises are under the Health Act. This Bill brings all areas under the one Act. Of course, a fair proportion of the meat killed in South Australia is killed under slaughterhouse conditions, which do not have the same AQIS inspectors as do licensed abattoirs, and that is really what the Bill is all about. It brings all those people who kill meat for local consumption under the same rules and regulations and gives those who want to specialise in local consumption the ability to do that without AQIS inspections.

As the member for Ross Smith said, if we sell meat overseas it must be inspected, but everyone would acknowledge that that is a form of non-tariff trade barrier imposed on us by countries that do not want to allow our product into their country without putting impediments in the way. I think all members on both sides of this House agree that something should be done and something can be done. As is my usual practice, I have offered briefings to the Opposition and to the Opposition spokesman on Primary Industries in another place. I have organised that today so that he is fully briefed on the matter before the Bill goes to the other place.

It is very positive legislation. The South Australian Farmers Federation, all those involved in slaughterhouse operations and in abattoirs, and consumers have been involved in the consultation process that has led to this stage. The processing of meats will be under a rigid quality assurance program so that everyone will be judged by the same standard. I understand that the AQIS inspectors are feeling the cool winds of change, and they probably do not want that. I believe that they claimed on radio the other day

that a terrible chemical residue may slip through. I do not think that any chemical residue has ever been found by an AQIS inspector, because they do not inspect for that. The AQIS inspectors do a physical inspection at the end of the chain and then determine whether the meat is fit for human consumption.

The very important point with quality assurance is that it is a process which happens over the whole slaughtering procedure and not only at the end where an inspector says, 'Here is the carcass. Yes, you can let that go and it is fit for human consumption', or, 'No, it is not.' Quality assurance programs, as they will be interpreted, will be conducted throughout the whole process and will determine whether the slaughterhouse or the abattoir meets the standard and the methods of killing. So instead of picking one point for an inspection, it will happen throughout the whole process.

It is a step forward, and I can assure members opposite that the quality assurance program will be a national program and under national guidelines. Our standards will not be lower: that is not the aim. It is a part of deregulation that I think is sensible and, as the member for Giles said, where an area is left to regulation and there are problems, we will ensure that the consumers in South Australia and in other States, if they are allowed to export under section 92, are adequately protected.

I have been most encouraged by the Victorian Government and its representatives, because we have worked very closely with them in this whole program. Queensland has moved a step ahead of us and deregulated much more. We are working as closely as we can with other States to ensure that our regulations and our deregulation is sensible and at a speed that all States can cope with in their training programs and so that consumers are confident that they are totally protected when purchasing red meat. All that will happen at the end is that hot red meat will be on exactly the same basis as most other food products in this country and around the world.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 6 passed.

[Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.]

Clauses 7 and 8 passed.

Clause 9—'Composition of advisory council.'

Mr CLARKE: In terms of the composition of the advisory council, a number of people are appointed directly because they represent various meat processors who are associated with slaughtering works supplying meat to the South Australian market, a person nominated by the Meat and Allied Trades Federation and a person nominated by the South Australian Farmers Federation Incorporated. Has the Minister considered allowing representation on the advisory council for consumer organisations and for a trade union which is involved in the industry, such as the Meat Workers Union, which obviously will have a great interest in the Meat Hygiene Advisory Council and its deliberations and would be on a par with the Meat and Allied Trades Federation of South Australia which looks after the interests of employers?

The Hon. D.S. BAKER: We have tried to get together a group of people who represent the industry. It will be noted that subclause (2) provides:

The advisory council may include further members appointed by the Minister to represent other interested persons as the Minister considers appropriate.

The council is quite large. Clause 11(4) provides:

Subject to this Act, the advisory council may determine its own procedures.

We can appoint more people to it if it is thought fit and proper representation is made. We can also appoint the executive to run the day-to-day functions of the advisory council. Once it gets up and running, I am happy to make sure that all interests are represented on it. The council has the power to have an executive function, but I do not think we want 25 people sitting around as a committee because committees do not operate too well.

Mr CLARKE: Further to the Minister's answer, particularly in relation to subclause (2), do I take it that the Minister, exercising his powers under the Bill, would be prepared to nominate a person representing consumers and a person representing employees to the advisory council? I understand what the Minister is saying about having too large a committee but, on the other hand, just about every person and their dog, if I may describe it in that way, is represented directly within the industry under the Government's proposals. The difference between 23 and 25 representatives is of minor significance, but in terms of the way that they operate it would be of significant interest to those groups. The Minister is noted for his consultative procedures and mechanisms by which he wants to operate in this industry. It seems to me that representatives of employees and, in particular, consumer groups who have to eat the goods that will be supplied under this deregulated industry should be represented.

The Hon. D.S. BAKER: I have no problem with that proposition, except that I do not want to be locked into a situation of putting on extra people before we have set up the council and consulted it. As I have said, the clause refers to 'other interested persons as the Minister considers appropriate'. If in future I think it is necessary, I assure the honourable member that I will act on that. However, at this stage I do not want to lock myself in until we have it set up. If it is felt that someone from the union and someone from the consumers should be on the council, they may not be considered to be the appropriate people to be on it. However, I am happy to take any submissions from the honourable member or other people in the community to make sure that their interests are represented.

Clause passed.

Clauses 10 and 11 passed.

Clause 12—'Obligation to hold accreditation.'

Mr CLARKE: Subclause (2)(c) provides:

(2) This section does not apply to— . . .

(c) the further processing of meat that has been processed by the holder of an accreditation (or has been processed in another State or a Territory of the Commonwealth. . .

On what basis does the Minister believe that the standards of accreditation across other States will be equal to or better than those in South Australia with respect to hygiene in the slaughter and sale of meat?

The Hon. D.S. BAKER: That is the fundamental part of what we are trying to get into. Under mutual recognition we will be forced at some stage in future to be involved in national codes which will set the pattern that we are to follow, and I am very supportive of that. I can assure the honourable member that our quality assurance programs will be to the national codes, not to what we want. As we work through the process—and other States will be doing the same—mutual recognition will ensure that there is uniformity between States, and that is what I think we are all aiming for.

Mr CLARKE: Is the Minister assuring the Committee that a level playing field with respect to accreditation will be

established before we allow the sale of red meat in South Australia from a State which has accreditation levels, standards of competency and so on of a lesser standard than will exist in South Australia under this Bill?

The Hon. D.S. BAKER: When we get to mutual recognition, everyone will have the right to trade across State borders. I assure the honourable member that I will do nothing in the interim that will put the sale of red meat at any disadvantage to the sale of fish, poultry and milk products in this State that are already under quality assurance programs which the public finds acceptable. If there is an interim period, we will make sure that we cover it. No-one in this State will be disadvantaged in relation to products that put red meat in a worse situation. There will be a phasing in process. We have to allow people to go into this. Until we are entirely satisfied, we will not let them go into it; they will remain on the old system, which means AQIS inspectors for licensed abattoirs or restrictions in numbers in relation to slaughterhouses.

So, it will not happen overnight, and I can assure the honourable member that we do not want it to happen overnight. Those who want to use it must be involved in the training process, mutual recognition and quality assurance programs, which would be drawn up in conjunction with AQIS to ensure uniformity across State boundaries.

Clause passed.

Clause 13—'Application for accreditation.'

Mr CLARKE: Subclause (1)(c) provides that an application for accreditation must be accompanied by a fee fixed by regulation. Has the Minister determined upon what basis the fee will be fixed; how does one calculate what the fee should be; has the Minister arrived at a determination; and, if so, what are the component parts that make up the fee?

The Hon. D.S. BAKER: The honourable member knows my reputation for consultation, and I can assure him that I do not have a fixed fee in mind, except of course that the Government would not want to be out of pocket. However, the whole purpose of our not fixing a fee and going through the tortuous process of arguing about it in Parliament is that we want to get the scheme up and running. We are trying to make sure that as we let people into these quality assurance programs it is cost effective for the consumer and the person getting involved in the quality assurance program. The whole idea is that the fees will be set as we work into it. I think the council is the right entity to set those fees and at the end of the day the Minister has control over it, but that consultation process makes sure that everyone has their say. The only way we will ever get quality assurance going is when people are comfortable that they can do it and that they can afford the fees set; if not, they may decide to retain the old process. There would have to be some incentive from the council in the early days that will probably alter as the scheme comes further into practice.

Clause passed.

Clause 14—'Temporary accreditation.'

Mr CLARKE: Subclause (1) provides that the Minister may, pending determination of an application for accreditation, grant temporary accreditation under this clause. What worries me is that, if we are to apply temporary accreditation, what happens if the checking and quality assurance procedures of the slaughterhouse concerned are found to be below standard? We could have a situation where, while the Minister's officers are determining whether or not a plant should be accredited, it is slaughtering animals and putting out for sale to the general public meat that has not had proper

quality assurance inspection, and therefore the general public may be exposed to some risk.

The Hon. D.S. BAKER: First, at present everyone is operating under two systems—the slaughterhouse system or AQIS inspectors—so the only people who will be operating are operating at present. This does not stop new people coming in, but we are talking about the interim period. The council will advise the Minister that it believes that temporary accreditation should be applied at a certain works in certain circumstances, and if there is a problem it will automatically be withdrawn. The whole scheme will be under quality assurance audit to make sure that what the people say they will do (and they are independent, of course) is in fact carried out. I do not believe that there will be any lessening at all, and it allows that flexibility as people are moving from one scheme to the other to have temporary accreditation while they work into the whole program.

Mr CLARKE: My concern is that we are not just talking about a transitional provision: this provision deals with any new establishment that may arise, and that temporary accreditation could be granted. I am not talking about only the transitional provisions where somebody who is already operating satisfactorily will operate under the transitional schedule as they currently do; but a new institution starting up from day one after this becomes law can apply for temporary accreditation. My concern is still the fact that we are dealing with an unknown quantity (a new enterprise that has just established itself) and that it could be carrying out an inspection function that is entirely below par for a period of up to six months, according to subclause (2), and the amount of meat that may then be placed on the table of consumers in South Australia that is not up to scratch.

The Hon. D.S. BAKER: I can assure the honourable member that during the six month period a new works cannot be started unless it complies substantially, and that approval will not be automatic: in any quality assurance program the day you start operating you have to assure the auditors that you are carrying out everything satisfactorily. There may be minor details and adjustments and closer inspections to satisfy the auditors during that six month period, but if you want to start up a poultry processing works you have to do certain things under the Health Act at present before you start producing. The meat industry and any new applications that come in are under much closer surveillance under this transitional scheme than are many of our food processing industries at present, because they are covered under the Health Act.

The whole idea is to impose a transitional period where we get game meat, poultry, boning rooms, secondary processes or smallgoods under this one piece of legislation. We have to allow some flexibility to make sure that everyone is complying. We do not want anyone prevented from producing from next week while they are complying with all the regulations and getting their programs up and running, but I can assure the honourable member that there will be no detriment to the consumer in South Australia.

Mr CLARKE: My final question relates to subclause (2)(a), providing temporary accreditation for a period of not less than six months stated in the accreditation ends. On the surface, six months would seem an unduly long period in which the Minister can make a decision. I am sure the Minister is aware of the promise made at the last State election in regard to signing off on the bottom line by 9 o'clock the following morning. I am wondering why that seems to have been extended out to six months in this matter.

The Hon. D.S. BAKER: I assure the honourable member that I signed off on this Bill at 9 o'clock the following morning, and that is why it is before Parliament at this time. The Minister has acted with all the due haste that the honourable member would expect of him, but we must provide a reasonable period after the operator opens the door to ensure that the inspectors and independent auditors are totally satisfied with that process. Nothing that comes out the other end is put at risk; it is a matter of fine tuning over that period. I am happy to make it shorter, but I do not think it is in the long term interests of the meat processing industry in a transitional period, especially when we are including people, boning rooms and smallgoods operators who have never been included before. It is a new phase; in fact, in those cases we are putting more restrictions on them than they currently have. We believe that that period is sensible and flexible and allows everyone to adjust.

Clause passed.

Clause 15—'Grant of accreditation.'

Mr CLARKE: I refer to subclause (1)(a)(ii) and the definition of 'a suitable person to hold the accreditation'. What is meant by that definition? Nowhere in the clause is there a reference to what standards of competency or training quality assurance employees must have with respect to working for meat processors under the self-regulation requirements set out in the Bill. That is of vital concern. I understand the Government is still working out what those competency standards will be, but this is a matter of great concern to the general community as it relates to meat hygiene.

The Hon. D.S. BAKER: I am not being political when I assure the honourable member that he would be a suitable person, provided he had adequate training. If an owner has not had suitable training (I will come to the other point later), he can nominate an employee with suitable training who can represent the owner in that establishment. We are accrediting the person, as we do not want to license the establishment, as happened in the past. Under the Bill we are doing it differently, which is the whole thrust of the legislation.

The honourable member expressed concern about how people will be trained. National standards of accreditation will apply and will be agreed to prior to people going in. The standards will be contained in the regulations, and I can assure the honourable member that the council will be recommending the standards to the Minister. They will be checked by us and the independent auditors to ensure that they are suitable under the mutual recognition rules that will apply around Australia. More importantly AQIS has offered to run the training programs to ensure that people are properly trained and accredited.

Mr CLARKE: Subclause (1)(e) provides:

to the extent that the applicant does not propose to have a quality assurance program in relation to the proposed processing program—that satisfactory arrangements are proposed. . .

Should not all meat processors have a quality assurance program? Is that program not the basis on which consumers expect the meat they buy to meet all the hygiene standards they would expect and have enjoyed in South Australia for many years?

The Hon. D.S. BAKER: Over a period we hope to get everyone involved in domestic consumption under quality assurance programs. However, if people do not want to do that, they will remain under the full-time inspection services under which they operate now. At present domestic consumption licensed abattoirs are under full-time AQIS inspectors.

We are adding a bit more flexibility. Along with many other people, I believe that a proper quality assurance program has more checks in it than a point of delivery carcass inspection, but we have to keep that flexibility there as we transfer through. If people do not go on to quality assurance, they will be under full-time inspectors and that is the end of the story.

Mr CLARKE: As to training and the level of competency in training that will take place with quality assurance employees, in an earlier answer the Minister spoke of national standards that would be introduced prior to any of this work taking place under the proposed legislation. Can the Minister assure the Committee that in regard to South Australia any national training standards and competencies for quality assurance employees will not be less than applies under the current meat inspection service?

The Hon. D.S. BAKER: National codes are now in place for meat hygiene. The national standards and training levels to which people will be trained will not be less than what is in place at present. As I said, AQIS is going to be running those training programs. It is not a matter where someone can whiz out and pay \$50 in order to get a quality assurance program running and then say, 'Okay, I've got one.' It is subject to outside independent audit. We will use TAFE in the whole system because we do not want everyone running off to Canberra to do training.

The coordinated program is stringent and the honourable member will find that it will take a period for everyone to get comfortable with it, not only the slaughterhouse operators or those who want to get off total inspection services back on to quality assurance programs, and it is going to be a two way thing. Certainly, it will be a while before AQIS, which is doing the training, is satisfied that people can be thrown to the winds. However, I am not going to let people hold up the program. If there is any stopping on either side, I will be pushing to make sure that we are pushing ahead, which is why we are using TAFE as an intermediary, to ensure that facilities are available to push the program through.

Clause passed.

Clause 16—'Conditions of accreditation.'

Mr CLARKE: Subclause (1)(g) provides:

if the conditions imposed by the Minister require a program of inspection to be carried out, the holder of the accreditation—

- (1) . . . (B) if an inspection shows a significant failure to comply with conditions of accreditation or this Act—such additional inspections as the Minister considers appropriate;

What is meant by 'significant failure' to comply with conditions of accreditation? It seems very open ended before the Minister is able to impose additional conditions as he or she sees fit.

The Hon. D.S. BAKER: The position is similar to that applying at present, where we have a good system even in the slaughterhouses and where we have not had a breakdown, but that will be defined by the regulations and by the council in setting the rules and regulations which then have to come back to the Minister. I can assure the honourable member that it will be a significant failure under the new regulations and the new law will be no different as to what 'significant failure' means under the present system of processing red meat through the normal channels.

Clause passed.

Clause 17—'Annual return and fee.'

Mr CLARKE: Subclause (1) provides:

The holder of an accreditation must, not later than the date in each year fixed by regulation—

(a) pay to the Minister the fee fixed by regulation;

What is the range of fees anticipated by the Minister and on what will the fees be based? What will be the yardstick for the setting of these fees?

The Hon. D.S. BAKER: They will be set by the council, which will consider what happens in other States, because the legislation has to work in favour of both consumers and producers. I will be watching very closely to ensure that the fees set not only reflect the cost but are also cost effective for all people involved. I will also ensure that they are set in consultation with the council and by regulation.

Mr CLARKE: I refer to clause 17(4). It seems to me that the six month period is an inordinately long time. If the holder of accreditation fails to comply with a notice given pursuant to this provision, why are they given six months before the accreditation is cancelled? In the area of public health there is a need to ensure the hygiene of red meat for sale to the general customers of South Australia. The holder of accreditation should be given much less than six months to comply with this provision.

The Hon. D.S. BAKER: I think six months is a sensible period. In most cases it will be cancelled if people are not doing what they are supposed to do. If major alterations are required, it could take some time. All we are saying is that, if people are not prepared to get their establishments into line to fit in with the quality assurance program, the Minister has the power to cancel accreditation overnight; and, if they are working towards it and are stalling and have not done it within six months, the accreditation can be cancelled.

Clause passed.

Clauses 18 to 22 passed.

Clause 23—'Sale of meat for human consumption.'

Mr CLARKE: I draw the Minister's attention to clause 22(1)(b), and this relates to questions I asked earlier. If meat sold for human consumption is processed in another State or Territory by a person authorised to do so in accordance with the law of that State or Territory, it can be sold in South Australia. This relates to a question that was answered under an earlier clause, but I would like reaffirmation that we in South Australia will not go down to the lowest common denominator, that is, we will insist that the standards of hygiene in every State that sells meat will not be less than what we currently have in South Australia.

The Hon. D.S. BAKER: As I said before, mutual recognition will be involved here. We are most definite about mutual recognition. We are desperately trying to get this State away from being the lowest common denominator, as the honourable member well knows.

Clause passed.

Clauses 24 and 25 passed.

Clause 26—'Approved inspection or audit services.'

Mr CLARKE: My question relates to subclause (2)(c), which relates again to the setting of fees to be paid by the service to the Minister. What yardstick will be used to determine the fees that will be set with respect to this matter?

The Hon. D.S. BAKER: I can be more specific here. It will most decidedly be on a cost recovery basis, because that is the policy of the current Government. When the regulations come forward, cost recovery will be included.

Clause passed.

Remaining clauses (27 to 47) passed.

Schedule 1—'Repeal and transitional provisions.'

Mr CLARKE: My question relates to the transitional provisions in clause 2(1). At the moment, meat industry

inspectors check every carcass on the line, but the day after the legislation is proclaimed there will be no meat inspectors at the slaughterhouses. If it is not possible to train qualified staff to the appropriate competency levels, how can you grant these slaughterhouses this transitional provision to allow them to carry on because in the past they have operated under a meat inspection service performed by AQIS?

Once the Bill comes into force, AQIS is not necessarily there, yet the employers will not have had the time to bring their own employees up to the standards of a quality assurance inspector, nor will any national standards have been developed with respect to quality assurance and standards of competency and training for those quality assurance inspectors in the employ of the processors concerned. It seems that it could potentially fall between two stalls. Does the Minister see a solution to that conundrum?

The Hon. D.S. BAKER: Luckily the Minister has worked it out immediately. The *status quo* will remain. The honourable member should not get mixed up with accreditation and quality assurance. The temporary accreditation at the start means that AQIS meat inspectors will stay until a suitably agreed quality assurance program is in place. There is not a closing off point. When accreditation starts, the meat inspectors are not dispensed with. In many cases there will be an overlap of dual programs as they work in, so we will not open the floodgates. The AQIS inspectors will be there until the authorities believe that a proper quality assurance program is in train that will not put the consumer at risk.

Schedule passed.

Schedule 2 and title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

SUPERANNUATION (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 20 April. Page 844.)

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

A quorum having been formed:

Mr QUIRKE (Playford): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to speak on this issue. Whenever the Government raises the question of superannuation, we get a bit nervous on this side. We do not know whether it will be some blokes in the State Bank being screwed around, like they were a few weeks ago, or whether or not it will be some new deal or another group of workers who will pay the price for the Government's desire to reduce the unfunded liability. I must say that we do not find any of that in this legislation, so the Opposition is quite happy to support these proposals. Indeed, we note that the legislation makes a number of technical amendments to the Act. We support those technical amendments.

There are a couple of items of substance, and one in particular deals with the dismissal of incompetent workers. The Opposition supports that proposal. We know from experience that, if a person is dismissed for incompetence, they had to be either very bad or so incompetent that they could not do anything about that situation. We have no problem in accepting that, for superannuation purposes, they should be treated along the same lines as a person who resigns.

The other aspects of the Bill which the Opposition support include the introduction of a degree of flexibility with respect

to the question of incapacitation and the effect of incapacitation. We have a number of worries about that, but they are matters for interpretation further down the track about how you determine 60 per cent incapacity. One would hope that this will streamline the processes that many of us go through in our electorate offices now, and I refer to constituents who want to apply for a disability pension, for instance, and we have the argument about 15 per cent and 20 per cent. A 63 year old bricklayer came to my office. He had to use a walking frame, yet the department said that he had five per cent incapacity. One would hope that we do not have those sorts of arguments, and I am sure with goodwill we will not. I do not want to delay this legislation any further. I simply wanted to put on the record those comments from the Opposition. It is not our intention to move any amendments to the Bill.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Treasurer): I thank the honourable member for his contribution. As he pointed out, it is mainly about technical matters that have to be tidied up as part of our legislative responsibilities. The two issues that have been canvassed in this measure include the matter of incompetence and the level of invalidity or disability. Anecdotally, I can say that the police were subject to the same rules as we are inserting here and, rather than having 30 police who were suddenly at death's door and could not go another day, I think we had one the next year.

I am not reflecting on the police, but there has been a rort in this area for some time and it really does need to be sorted out. It happens across the board, with people either feeling distressed with the Public Service or experiencing problems at home and they think of ways of getting out of the Public Service at a cost to the taxpayers when basically they are fairly fit individuals. So, it will be applied with a great deal of discretion and it is consistent with the changes that we have made with respect to legislation affecting the police. I thank the Opposition for its support.

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

CROWN LANDS (LIABILITY OF THE CROWN) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 20 April. Page 845.)

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): The Opposition has studied the Bill most carefully. We think it sensible. The Bill was first presented to the House by the previous Government. It has been put to the House out of an abundance of caution. The Bill arises from the recent Willmott case. In that case a trail bike rider decided to use unalienated Crown land at Redbanks north of Burra and accelerated up a small rise only to find a precipice on the other side. She was injured. The rider sued the State Government for negligence, alleging that the Government owed trail bike riders a duty of care to signpost millions of acres of unalienated Crown land to warn of hazards. The claim was upheld at first instance by a single judge of the Supreme Court. On appeal, the Full Court of the Supreme Court held that the duty of care was not owed. The trial judge's decision was reversed. Leave to appeal to the High Court was not granted.

Although the law as stated by the Full Court is in my opinion sensible, it is useful to affirm that law by statute. It is possible that a trail bike rider or bushwalker on unalienated

Crown land would come to court with slightly different facts, the case could be decided differently and South Australian taxpayers could be slugged for compensation for personal injury. The decision at first instance would require the Government, if it were to preclude liability, to fence and signpost vast areas of the State. The decision reminds me of the judicial activism of a United States judge who ordered carpet installed in all mental hospitals to prevent injury to hyperactive patients who might injure themselves falling on the floor. No doubt it is desirable in the abstract to carpet mental hospitals or to fence and signpost hazards wherever they might occur, but a judge hearing just one case has no way of knowing what other deserving claims are being made on Consolidated Revenue. I support the Bill.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources): I thank the honourable member for his support of the legislation. As he says, it is sensible legislation. It is exactly the same legislation as was introduced by the previous Government. Crown lands are increasingly being used for public recreation. Some areas are heavily used by the public. The Belair National Park is very popular with hundreds of thousands of visitors for a range of sporting and leisure activities. On the other hand, many reserves in very remote desert settings are used by limited but rapidly increasing numbers of visitors. These areas, because of their natural features, are quite dangerous. It is not possible in many of these areas to warn people of dangers that they might confront.

In addressing the Bill, the honourable member has referred to problems with trail bike riding, but that is only one area where problems can be experienced. This is an important piece of legislation. As the honourable member opposite has said, a matter has been before the court and has been determined, but I think it is appropriate that this legislation be introduced to ensure that the problems that have been experienced in the past will not cause future embarrassment or difficulties. I thank members for their support of the second reading.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clause 1 passed.

Clause 2—'Liability of Crown in relation to Crown lands.'

Mr ATKINSON: I note that in the Minister's second reading explanation he said that the Bill was intended to limit the liability of the Crown in respect of injury for damage or loss occurring on or emanating from unoccupied Crown land. I refer to the legal principle of *Rylands v Fletcher*, whereby occupiers can be liable for dangerous items kept on their property which might go into another property and cause damage, for instance, a dam on one property with a wall insufficiently strong to retain the water so that the water leaves the property and goes onto another property and damages it. Is this provision designed to exclude the Crown from liability under the *Rylands v Fletcher* principle? And what if a town was near unalienated Crown land through which a creek flowed—

Mr Brindal interjecting:

Mr ATKINSON: Thank you, to the member for Unley, for that contribution. If a town was close to unalienated Crown land through which a creek flowed and if the creek was subject to flooding—

Mr Brindal: How often?

Mr ATKINSON: Once every 10 years. If the Government could quite easily prevent this flooding by sand-bagging

the creek but did not do so and the creek flooded the town, would the Crown be excluded from liability under this provision?

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: The short answer is 'Yes.' It is hard to envisage that this might happen.

Mr Atkinson: It is rather.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: As the honourable member has brought it to the attention of all readers of *Hansard*, I can assure all those people that the advice that I have is that the Crown would continue to be exempt.

Mr ATKINSON: The Minister says that 'the Crown would continue to be exempt'; surely the correct answer is that the Crown would not previously have been exempt but now is.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Not necessarily.

Mr BRINDAL: How many South Australian lives does the Minister believe are imperiled by the questions and the sandbags of the honourable member opposite?

Mr ATKINSON: I am not quite clear on the status of national parks under this Bill. If a walking trail was constructed in a national park and it followed a rise, and if at the end of the walking trail there was a precipice and a bush walker fell over it, I take it that the Crown would still be liable under this Bill. However, if the precipice did not have a walking trail leading up to it and there was no development in that area of the national park, then the Crown would not be liable. Is this distinction correct?

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Again, the answer is 'Yes.' The fact is that, if it is a national park which is not being used, it would come under this legislation, but if we erect the walking trail then we would be responsible.

Mr FOLEY: Have other States passed legislation to exclude occupier's liability for unalienated Crown land?

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Not that I am aware of.

Clause passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

AGRICULTURAL AND VETERINARY CHEMICALS (SOUTH AUSTRALIA) BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 20 April. Page 848.)

Mr FOLEY (Hart): I do not intend to speak for long on this Bill tonight, but I will make a few comments about the importance of what this Bill is designed to do. Clearly, the Bill complements Commonwealth legislation in the area of agricultural and veterinary chemicals. It should be noted that this State, through the former Department of Agriculture (now the Department of Primary Industries) and former Ministers for Agriculture—one of whom I had some association with, I might add—were at the forefront of pushing the proper registration and use of agricultural and veterinary chemicals.

No doubt the Minister has had far more experience than I in the area of agricultural chemicals. The Minister is the authority on this but I thought I would make a few comments. It is clearly important in this day and age, with the amount of chemicals being used on rural properties, that they are registered properly and monitored by both State and Federal Governments to ensure that we are not using any chemicals that could be harmful to humans, to plant life or, for that matter, to livestock on properties.

As I said, the State Government for some years has been injecting many resources into this area. The Department of

Primary Industries has a well resourced division responsible for agricultural and veterinary chemicals and the department should be complimented for the work it has done over the years. I am pleased to see that the Minister is continuing the good work put in train by the now Leader of the Opposition, Lynn Arnold, who got this whole area off and running about three or four years ago. The Opposition has no complaint with the Bill. It complements Commonwealth legislation and legislation that has been enacted in all States of Australia. The Opposition will ask a couple of questions in Committee and I will leave further comment until then.

The Hon. D.S. BAKER (Minister for Primary Industries): This measure is based on a model Bill designed to be enacted by all States. I must say that, at the ARMCANZ meeting on Friday, Senator Collins was most anxious to know where South Australia was at with this Bill. The guts of it is that we are trying to achieve—as we talked about in regard to the previous Bill—mutual recognition across Australia with respect to labelling. We are trying to ensure that chemicals are evaluated on a national basis. There has been some concern about that. The legislation still allows the States to have total control over the use of chemicals within a State and, of course, it still allows the full control of any accreditation or licensing of the operators.

All States bar South Australia and, I think, Western Australia have either passed legislation or are in the process of doing so. If we do not get the Bill through by June, we shall be at some disadvantage as to funding because we shall have to fund the evaluation of all these chemicals. This is a lengthy Bill, but it carries on with mutual recognition, as it is being provided in all States, and most decidedly it will benefit agricultural industries in terms of flexibility in the use of chemicals. I commend the Bill to the House.

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

JOINT COMMITTEE ON WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT

Consideration of the Legislative Council's resolution:

1. That, in the opinion of this Council, a joint committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon the following matters—
 - (a) the reason and extent of any existing impediments to women standing for Parliament;
 - (b) strategies for increasing both the number of women and the effectiveness of women in the political and electoral process; and
 - (c) the effect of parliamentary procedures and practice on women's aspiration to and participation in the South Australian Parliament.
2. That in the event of the joint committee being appointed, the Legislative Council be represented thereon by three members, of whom two shall form a quorum of Council members necessary to be present at all sittings of the committee.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Deputy Premier): I move:

That the resolution be agreed to.

An infinitely sensible resolution has come before the House. My friend and colleague the member for Coles, if she were here, would be able to put it far more eloquently than I. However, I am commencing the debate on this issue.

It is important to all Australians that there be wider representation within their Parliaments. We recognise that there is an imbalance in those Parliaments, and that is a matter of history rather than the result of any determination

or desire of any particular segment of the community. Over the centuries we have seen that power has been vested in the male of the species, and the male of the species has acquired that power through strength. Times have changed quite dramatically in the past 50 years, and our institutions are taking longer to adjust to the fact that, for example, in South Australia over 50 per cent of the population comprises women.

The changes taking place are fundamental, and we now recognise this in schools. Looking at the results at secondary level, we find that young female students, who were previously targeted as being those who were not able to perform to their maximum level because of institutional bias, are now generally exceeding the results of their male counterparts. There is a quiet revolution going on in our schools which is probably little understood by the population at large. However, it is important to grasp the fact that women are now surpassing the male of the species. That is not just a South Australian or Australian trend, because it is happening in other countries as more effort has been made to encourage women to achieve their maximum potential.

I am an enthusiast of the proposition that we should look at ourselves and the way we conduct our affairs. I have two daughters and I want them to reach the highest levels possible in any career structure. It is a competitive structure. Special benefits should not be bestowed, but there should be a wider acknowledgment that this Parliament does not have sufficient women within its ranks. That should be recognised by the Parliament and by the committee that is proposed. Basically, we should look at the constraints, first, on women presenting themselves and entering the Parliament; and, secondly, on those who possess the capabilities from being selected to contest very winnable seats. It may be all right, according to some people, that we should have equal representation of male and female candidates if that is the way the colleges turn out, but invariably we have seen a number of females who have been successful in achieving candidature but in areas that have not been winnable.

I am not saying that there is a simple answer, because a lot of it is related to history and to quite fundamental and far reaching changes taking place all around us, but it is important that the Parliament recognise those changes and that we understand that in all fields of endeavour women are now coming to the fore. Only 10 years ago the thought of having women jockeys horrified me, because I thought they might be killed or maimed. Women jockeys do get killed and maimed, and that is a fact of life, but male jockeys are also killed and maimed, because it is an occupational hazard. The instinct that we may once have had to prevent women from performing in all spheres of endeavour may have been protectionist or motivated by other compelling reasons.

Mr Atkinson: What about front-line troops?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I have no difficulty in having women at the front line, just as traditionally we have had males at the front line. I have no difficulty with that concept whatsoever.

Mr Atkinson: With bayonets?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: With bayonets, yes. I do not have any difficulty with that particular concept. I believe that the world is changing quite dramatically and it is about time we recognised it. In any debates on the future composition of the Parliament, obviously with 52 per cent of the population there is a fair chance that women are not necessarily getting a fair go in terms of parliamentary representation.

I support the resolution that has come from the other place. We have to look at the reasons and determine why changes are not taking place as quickly as they are in many other areas of endeavour. I know that the member for Coles, if she were not ill today, would also strongly support this resolution. It could be a matter of considerable debate among those selected to serve on this committee if they were to recognise where we have been over the past 50 or 100 years and where we wish to be in the next 50 to 100 years, removing some of the obstacles to the sort of changes that I think will be healthy for this Parliament and the people of South Australia.

The SPEAKER: Before calling the member for Elizabeth, I point out to the House that this is a maiden speech and I ask that the normal courtesies apply to the honourable member.

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): In speaking to this resolution, I should like to preface my remarks by some other comments as this is my first opportunity to speak in the House. It is a great honour to be here as the person elected by the people of Elizabeth to represent them in the State Parliament. I have worked in Elizabeth in education in various roles since 1980. My children attended Freemont High School, and I have had the opportunity to be involved with many people in many important issues throughout this time. These have included neighbourhood groups, community houses, youth groups, community development projects, as well as secondary education where I was foundation Principal of the Elizabeth West Adult Campus of Inbarendi College and then later Principal of Elizabeth City High School.

I say again today as I said at the declaration of the poll that I am fully committed to working to the best of my ability to serve all the people in Elizabeth. This is not the first seat that I have contested, but it is the place where so much of my personal energy and involvement have been and it is where my heart is.

It is especially significant for me as a woman having been elected in the year in which we are celebrating the centenary of women's suffrage in South Australia. I have become the twenty-third woman to be elected to the Parliament of South Australia, and at the end of my time here I want to be able to say that I have made a difference by bringing my particular combination of skills, knowledge and experience to the challenges that we face.

The electorate of Elizabeth has in the past been represented in this place by outstanding individuals. Martyn Evans, who is now the Federal member for Bonython, held this seat since 1984 until early this year and served Elizabeth, this Parliament and as a Minister in our State Government with distinction. I have worked with Martyn over many years and have seen his dedication, hard work and commitment over this time. His election to the Federal Parliament will enable him to continue this work in a different sphere. I look forward to continuing a close working relationship as in our different capacities we both represent the people of Elizabeth. Before him, Peter Duncan, now the Federal member for Makin, also made a significant contribution as the local member and as a Minister. Peter, too, worked hard and with dedication for the people of Elizabeth and for social justice reforms in our State.

I am not thinking of any move to the Federal arena, but it is my very definite intention to work hard and to live up to the great honour and responsibility which I now carry. I thank the Australian Labor Party for the confidence it has shown in me as part of its State Parliamentary Caucus. I look forward

to joining my colleagues in taking the debate to the Government, raising the issues and testing and challenging Government policy to ensure that it serves the interests of all people in the community.

I also pay tribute to the many people who worked with me towards my election to this seat: my husband, Mike; my two sons, Daniel and Timothy; other members of my family and friends; and the hundreds of people in Elizabeth whose confidence and faith in me as the person who could do this job never faltered. Finally, I thank you, Mr Speaker, other members of this House and the staff of Parliament for their warm welcome and their willingness to help me settle in quickly and easily. I look forward to working constructively with you all for the benefit of South Australia.

We live in a State where women have had the right to vote and to stand for Parliament for 100 years. We were the first place in the world to legislate for women to have the right to stand, and our country was one of the first in the world to extend these rights on a national level. After 100 years we would expect that women, making up 52 per cent of the population, would therefore comprise 52 per cent of our Parliaments. But we are a long way from true and equal representation of women in this State, all other Australian State Parliaments and the Federal Parliament. Indeed, the figures indicate that in all Houses of Parliament in Australia the population of women members is well below 50 per cent and in most cases well below 20 per cent. Even in achieving these gains, post-suffrage progress has been pathetically slow. It took two decades for the first woman to be elected to a State Parliament; four decades for a woman to be elected to the Federal Parliament; 6½ decades before the first woman Minister was appointed and the first women were elected to the South Australian Parliament; 7½ decades to acknowledge that female candidates would not repel the male vote; eight decades to establish at least one woman in Cabinet; and nine decades to come to a position of acknowledgment that women are entitled to more than tokenism.

Since 1894 many changes have improved the position of women in society. I am proud to say that Labor Governments, both State and Federal, have introduced most of them. They include: the provision of equal pay for women; EO legislation in relation to discrimination; laws which protect women's rights in relation to property and inheritance; expanded child-care; and family law. But, despite those positive changes, men overwhelmingly still make the daily decisions in all levels of Government, particularly those that relate to finance. Women, who do most of the work in these areas, are not equally heard about health, welfare and the provision of resources or services. The law courts display an ignorance and suspicion of women which must be challenged and changed.

Violence by men towards women is still a most serious problem, stripping women of a most fundamental freedom and denying them power over their lives. Within most families, men's careers and interests still come before those of women and children. Aboriginal women, under far greater stress than white women, share with white women the responsibility for children, with few resources, no hope of employment, uncertain housing and constant racism.

So, is this a problem? Does it really matter? The current state of affairs is counter to the essence of democracy, for Government of the people, for the people, by the people is in reality Government of the people, for the people, by half of the people. The decision-making bodies of a society must be representative of all the people they serve. Harvard professor

John Rawls in his book *A Theory of Justice* talks about two principles of justice applying to the basic structure of a democratic society. The first concerns freedoms of the individual, concerning speech, thought and political liberty. The second relates to the distribution of income and wealth and to the design of organisations. He says the first principle always overrides the second and that therefore 'the distribution of wealth and incomes and the hierarchies of authority must be consistent with both the liberties of equal citizenship and equal opportunity'.

In a recent address, Lilian Holt, Principal of the Aboriginal College at Port Adelaide, looked at it differently. She linked sexism and racism. She said that they are about a process of exclusion and disconnectedness (as opposed to inclusion and connectedness), whereby we are all diminished. In other words, when we deny basic liberties within society, the society itself—its basic fabric, its core, its soul—is diminished and this undermines the whole. Lilian Holt says, 'To rail against them is not to be anti-white or anti-male but to be pro-human.' Even in a purely practical sense it is foolhardy to ignore the brain power of half the population. At present we are losing a vast pool of talent and wisdom; we are losing leadership.

Prime Minister Paul Keating has described the lack of representation of women in Australian Parliaments as 'the greatest anomaly of Australian democracy—the great flaw in Australian democracy'. He said, 'Equal representation of women is less an argument for women than an argument for the country.' How can good decision making occur without the voices of those affected being heard? Women need to be central to the debate, not on the margins. They must be equal partners in all decision making, in business, in the public sector, in community groups and especially in our Parliaments. Women themselves need and want to hear the voices of women being part of the solutions.

So, despite the passing of a law of entitlement 100 years ago, the undeniable justice of equal representation, its significance for a cohesive society and good decision making and the inherent efficiency of the utilisation of resources that equal participation brings, the reality is that it just is not happening. The situation is in fact much more complex than this, because enormous obstacles have lined up against women realising this: centuries of tradition; women's lack of economic independence; lack of any real power within or access to the power structures of society; and the ingrained culture of a woman's place in the home with all the emotional blackmail and guilt feelings that entrenched it so solidly in the psyche of women themselves, in the minds of men and in the reinforcement by powerful institutions, including the justice system, the church and above all the media.

So, how can we change this situation? I refer to the process that I was part of as a member of the Education Department in addressing the participation of girls in education. It had some useful parallels for us in addressing the participation of women in politics. In the early to mid-80s it was acknowledged that schooling did not meet the needs and aspirations of girls and that the outcomes for them were significantly lower than those for boys. Extensive research was conducted into the experiences of girls in our schools. Many girls were interviewed about their daily lives in our classrooms and schoolyards. Teachers and parents were interviewed, too.

We found that curriculum content, the way it was taught and the processes used in assessment did not suit the way in which girls preferred to operate. They were often alienated

from the learning processes, they were invisible and often overlooked. We also found that sexual harassment was a major impediment to girls learning and that it happened to most girls a lot of the time, demeaning them, intimidating them and destroying their confidence.

Policy makers, teachers, administrators and school communities took up the challenge of addressing these issues. At the same time it was acknowledged that female role models were important for girls so that they, in taking a more active part in their own learning, could see other females taking an active part in school management and decision making. Affirmative action measures introduced for women workers enabled the huge imbalance in those holding leadership positions in schools to start to be redressed. Support networks, mentoring and work shadowing began to occur as women worked together to gain the confidence to expand their horizons.

Over this time there have been significant improvements in women's access to education. The number of young women completing year 12 has nearly doubled to 80 per cent; the involvement of women in higher education has grown by 77 per cent; and women now make up more than 50 per cent of higher education students. However, females are still under-represented in courses such as engineering and in most apprenticeships, and their employment opportunities and their access to economic security are accordingly restricted in comparison to those of males. We know, too, that poor women and Aboriginal women are doubly disadvantaged in terms of positive educational outcomes. There is more work to do in our schools and it is not the time to say that we have fully addressed the issues for girls in education, but we have made progress.

The process that occurred, recognising that a problem existed, investigating the dimensions of the problem, committing all parts of the organisation to action, changing structures, providing training and development to teachers and information to parents, measuring progress and evaluating outcomes has enabled significant gains to be made. It has brought new ways of operating into our classrooms, schoolyards and our school decision making forums; ways that value female skills and styles of operation, collaboration, team work, communication, cooperation and consensus that enable women and girls to be highly successful and highly committed to solving problems and getting tasks done. These are ways that enable a greater range of males to participate, too. It has enabled schools to be places where girls are more likely to succeed and where increasing numbers of women are contributing at all levels within the organisation.

The issue of increasing the representation of women in Parliament needs the active commitment of all of us who have been elected to Parliaments, because we hold positions of influence within our Parties and within the community at large. As a group we have a real image problem. References to the 'kids on North Terrace' are all too common in our media. The public perception of politicians behaving like a bunch of naughty boys is not something that is likely to attract women to our ranks. In the other direction, just this morning on radio I heard reference to a paper put out for potential female Liberal candidates in New South Wales.

The paper, which is called *Take Your Seat*, advises potential candidates to 'smile and laugh a lot. Remember, it is not the real world—it's only politics.' But politics is the real world and few women will be attracted to it if it is portrayed as divorced from reality with women essentially fulfilling the role of social butterflies. We must market a life

in politics as an honourable profession, where women's skills, knowledge and life experiences are valued, where women will be heard and where their contributions to the major issues of the day are valued.

We need to educate the public about decision making, the complexities of issues and how the parliamentary process works. We must examine our procedures, our ways of operating and ask the questions: are they honourable and are they open to all? Many talented people, especially but not only women, are put off by the culture of parliamentary debate and decision making by what they see as putdowns, confrontation, the win/lose mentality and grandstanding.

After all, politics is about making the best decisions and not about having the best fight. We need to consider the responsibilities that women and men have in relation to their families and examine our procedures and operation. Without this, most younger women will always be excluded from politics as a career and most male politicians will continue to be the absent parent or partner. We need to ask whether Parliament has marginalised itself by its practices. But the biggest challenge of all lies in changing the processes of preselection for parliamentary seats.

In our political Parties we must introduce measures to ensure that the preselection practices change. I am proud that the Australian Labor Party has moved to do this and that we will have a specific quota to achieve, a time line and a clear sanction that will operate if the target is not met within that time frame. The precise quota of women contesting winnable seats by the year 2000 will be decided this year. The introduction of quotas does not mean abandoning the merit principle: it is acknowledging that the merit principle has not worked in politics.

However, quotas are not enough. Successful managers and organisations set targets, devise strategies and tasks to achieve them, determine the qualities they need in the people to do the tasks and then go out and get the very best people. They do not wait for someone to come off the street or pick a certain percentage of people from among their friends and relations; they advertise, headhunt, mentor and support those with talent in a range of different ways. And for women they provide this support in the ways that women say work for them.

As to the motion itself, it is proposed that a joint committee be appointed to inquire into and report on three significant areas of female participation in Parliament. It will do what a number of other groups are doing both at a State and national level. However, as a parliamentary committee it will signal to the community the concern of the highest decision making body in the State about this issue. It will give status to the issue and the committee's findings. It should provide a blueprint for action for the future, but the real test of our resolving this matter lies with all of us—both women and men—working within our own political organisations and in the community at large to promote and use the work of this committee and to have the will, strength and determination to implement the strategies it arrives at so that our Parliaments are truly representative of both men and women as soon as possible. A quotation from a tombstone in England states:

A task without a vision is drudgery. A vision without a task is a dream. But a vision with a task is the hope of the world.

We have the vision. We have the task. Let us again, 100 years after the gaining of suffrage, have the courage to make it

happen. I support this resolution, and if it is agreed to I look forward to serving on the committee.

Ms GREIG (Reynell): I support the motion for the joint committee on women in Parliament to be appointed. In this year of the Women's Suffrage Centenary I cannot think of a better time for the motion to be before the House. I congratulate the member for Elizabeth on her maiden speech and welcome another female colleague on board. Some of those here today who are more chronologically gifted than I may be able to recall the days when a motion such as this would have been laughed out of the House. The very notion of a woman in the House was incomprehensible. Women have fought hard and worked hard for a right that was already ours: the right to be considered equal. It is disappointing that even after 100 years in a State that was the first in the world to grant full democratic rights—the right to stand for Parliament and the right to vote—we still have only a very small number of women elected to our Parliament. As already mentioned in another place, womens' numbers are increasing in the professions, middle management and the work place generally, but few women are to be found in the forefront of decision making in either the private or public sector.

While I commend the motion, I think it is also important to add that women—and being a member of the gender I believe I can speak with some authority—do not want to be placed in a position of responsibility just because they are female. We want to take our position equally alongside our male counterparts on our own merit. We are not asking for tokenism. We are asking for the blinkers to be taken off, the barriers removed and women to be selected in their own right because they are competent, have ability and a point of view. If we were on a level playing field we could even say we were ambitious and determined to not only see change and be part of it but also to make change. We have moved a long way since 1894. On the surface we constantly say women have equal rights, and most men and some women will nod their head in agreement. But think about it: our rights are equal providing we can fit them around home duties, the children, husbands and also cope with the constant guilt thrown at you for being selfish and not being at home with the children. These are the barriers that still, after all these years, stand in our way.

Women make up 52 per cent of the population, and Government's should reflect this. Looking at the minority of women in decision making positions indicates the less than effective use of resources within our society, a lack of recognition of the talents available, even by women themselves at times, and to a degree a failure on our part to accept responsibility for the Governments of our States, Territories or even nationally. Rightly or wrongly, most women feel there are not enough of us in any level of Government for all sorts of reasons: economic, social or political. We still form only a small proportion of elected personnel. Good Government in a democracy requires all sections of the community to have access to decision making, and in this regard it is crucial that women have a strong presence in the political arena. Women bring different and important strengths to Government, and without a balance how can we as a State, as a Parliament, reach our full capacity? Historically, women have been under-represented, and we now have recognised this. This is an issue and it needs to be addressed. I look forward to being part of the making of change and the outcome of the joint committee report.

Mr WADE (Elder): The Minister for Transport (Hon. Diana Laidlaw) has moved a motion in another place to establish a joint committee to inquire into impediments to women entering Parliament and to introduce measures to facilitate such entry. The statistics are clear and undeniable: under 19 per cent of South Australian parliamentarians are women. The question is: are there impediments that prevent or deter women from presenting themselves as candidates for preselection and gaining a seat in Parliament? If so, what are they? Are these barriers quantitative? Are these barriers based on cultural or social expectations of the role of women in our society? What is the male view of women seeking parliamentary seats and, more importantly, how do women themselves view women entering the political arena? Perhaps most importantly, how do women view politics and politicians?

We gain some clue by referring to today's *Advertiser*, as follows:

The recruitment guide, *Take your seats, guide for women seeking selection in the NSW Liberal Party*. . . It further warns candidates against being impetuous, abusive, selfish, racist, emotional, indecisive, intolerant, sexist and vain.

Perhaps that is how some women in our population view politics and politicians. It could be an excellent reason why they are keeping very clear. Attitudinal barriers are the most difficult to define, and even where certain attitudes are defined it has been well proven that one cannot change someone else's attitude.

Mr Atkinson: Where did you get your sociology degree?

Mr WADE: The member for Spence seeks information regarding my degree, and I inform him that I gained my psychology degree from the University of Adelaide. I hope my credentials are well proven. People change their own attitudes, and they will do so if they experience a supporting environment that fosters that desirable attitude. The committee must assess the prevailing comfort zone of our social and cultural environment and recommend the type of environment needed to facilitate an attitude of interest and participation in our parliamentary democracy by all citizens, and in particular our female population. It is no good focusing our attention purely on the Parliament and the complex political process that selects and endorses candidates. Parliament has its own idiosyncrasies of location, days spent in this chamber and long hours. Electoral office duties are a world unto themselves, a hub of varied activities, high pressure and long hours.

Is it for these reasons that women are not considered or choose not to be considered for preselection and election to this House? The percentage of women to men in the Legislative Council is nearly 32 per cent, almost one-third. Legislative councillors do not have electoral offices, but few would doubt the long hours both within and outside Parliament, the lengthy travel undertaken and the extreme pressures involved in the preselection and election process. The water becomes even murkier if we look at local government. Local government meetings are structured well in advance. Council chambers are located within the councillors' community. Councillors spend more time with their families than do politicians. I have been a councillor and I am aware of the differences between the two duties. One would expect that local government would attract far more women than State Parliament if any or all of the aforementioned political job requirements were excluded. However, only 21.7 per cent of women are local councillors compared to the 18.8 per cent of women who are politicians.

The issue of women's non-involvement is not restricted to State Parliament: local government has the same dilemma. In fact, a female member of the Southern Region of Councils is currently seeking funding to inquire into exactly the same dilemma as referred to in this motion, that is, why are more women not becoming involved in any level of government or, if they are involved, why are they not involved at the councillor and politician level? The committee needs to make contact with the Federal committee set up for the same purpose and local government to combine resources, to prevent duplication of effort and to compare results of their studies before any recommendation comes before this House.

Some people have suggested that a fixed percentage of women should be allocated to Parliament: a figure of 50 per cent has been mooted. I cannot support a fixed percentage approach. I would support 100 per cent representation of women in Parliament if each and every one of those persons was the right person for the job. I support the motion, and I support the committee's objectives to ensure that no barriers shall exist that prevent women having an equal opportunity to enter government, whether that be at a local level, the State level or the Federal level.

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD (Leader of the Opposition):

In this week's issue of the *European*, there is an article that refers to female representation in various Parliaments. It talks about those Parliaments that were the first national Parliaments in the world to introduce female suffrage, but it fails to mention South Australia at all. I was saddened by that, because South Australia was the fourth legislature in the world to allow women to vote, and it was the first in the world to enfranchise women to stand for Parliament. That very impressive record has clearly been seriously overlooked by that noted international newspaper, and I intend to write a letter to the Editor.

However, there is a point to be noted: in failing to mention South Australia, what they went on to mention was the Parliaments that then proceeded to elect women members to their legislatures. They spoke very highly of the legislatures of Scandinavia, for example. I think it was Iceland that was one of the first to elect women members of Parliament in the very first decades of this century. Therein lies part of the rub of the problem that we are faced with in South Australia. We certainly were leaders in the world in the entitlement to stand for Parliament. We have been leaders in the world in many other ways in terms of parliamentary democracy. We were the first to introduce the secret ballot. We were the first to introduce the general enfranchisement of males. Long before the discriminatory provisions of the Federal Constitution, we provided for the enfranchisement of Aborigines in this State in 1856.

However, that entitlement to vote, that entitlement to stand for Parliament, took until 1959 to be translated into reality in terms of female members of Parliament being elected. In that year, as we know, Jessie Cooper and Joyce Steele were both elected to the South Australian Parliament. Yet notwithstanding the fact that it was some 65 years after Parliament in this State voted that women should have the right to stand for Parliament, we find that somebody contested the right of the Hon. Jessie Cooper to be a member of another place, and the basis of that legal contest was the definition in the Act of 'a person'. The person contesting the matter believed that the definition of 'a person' in the Act did not include women. I think there is a very important message to be learnt from that episode in our history.

The important message is that it is on the one hand clearly an important thing to do to open the starting gate, to ensure that people have the chance to go through the starting gate, but it is yet another matter to ensure that people actually feel enabled to make the passage through that starting gate. Clearly, while we did have some women in South Australia who stood for Parliament prior to that, the fact that it took until 1959 for two actually to be elected to the Parliament and that in 1959 there should be a contesting of the right of one of those women when she won her seat indicates that the enabling of people to stand has not been well done.

I can make a similar point in another area. I recently had the great pleasure to attend the opening of the new facilities of the Working Women's Centre of South Australia, called the Augusta Zadow centre. Augusta Zadow is a noted woman in South Australia's history. Amongst her other qualifications, she had on her CV the role of being the first female factory inspector in South Australia. She may have well been the first female factory inspector in the world: of that I am not certain. The fact is she was employed inspecting the factories of the employed seamstresses and others in South Australia, and she was an aggressive woman standing up for the rights of those in the workplace, ensuring that they were given fair working conditions. There were some other female factory inspectors who came after her in the following decades.

However, there was then to be a drought: a number of years were to pass when there were no female factory inspectors at all. In the early 1980s, after a drought of some decades, a female factory inspector was appointed once again, Michelle Patterson. The great irony is that, notwithstanding Augusta Zadow's appointment as the first female factory inspector in 1896, there were people in the early 1980s who opposed the appointment of Michelle Patterson as the modern equivalent of a factory inspector. There were people in this Parliament who likewise opposed that. Fortunately, that opposition was to count as nought, because she was ultimately confirmed in her position and serves very well indeed. But it highlights the point once again that the starting gate had been opened, yet the actual opportunity, the actual enabling of women to take part in that, was to be a very rocky road indeed; there was to be a long period of time when women would be excluded from the position and would then have to face the argument that they were not suitable for appointment to it.

I come back to the point that we have a proud history in this State in terms of these starting gate decisions. For example, it was the South Australian Parliament that in 1878, I think, approved regulations from the Senate of the University of Adelaide that would allow women to attend courses and obtain degrees at the university. That matter was then forwarded to the Parliament of Great Britain, where in those days in our colonial status it had to go, and it was returned for our further consideration with the strong suggestion that we should consider removing the right of women to obtain degrees. Unfortunately at that point, the men of the South Australian Parliament caved and withdrew the recommendation that women should be enabled to obtain degrees from the University of Adelaide. They then sent back the amended version.

However, in the interim period, the British Parliament, perhaps under the suggestion of Queen Victoria, had changed its mind and Queen Victoria sent back an instruction that perhaps the South Australian Parliament would once again allow women to be admitted to degrees of the Adelaide University. So, after a bit of to-ing and fro-ing, Adelaide

University became the first university in what was then the British Empire to enable women to obtain degrees. The first woman who did obtain her degree—I sadly forget her name—was a science graduate from the University of Adelaide.

Recently I was interviewed on a television program, along with my Deputy Leader, the member for Ramsay, and a question was put to us about what we thought of the feminisation of Australian politics that was presently under way. I strongly rejected that concept of calling what is presently under way in Australia and what is under way by virtue of this motion the feminisation of Australian politics. I do not regard a situation where only 23 women members have served in the South Australian legislature as being the feminising of the South Australian political scene. If we had a situation where over 50 per cent of the membership of this legislature were women and the goal was to go higher, then maybe the term feminising or the feminisation of the legislature might be appropriate. But to refer to feminisation when half of our population, or as some members have pointed out 52 per cent of our population, should be so grossly under-represented in our Parliament is a gross misuse of the term.

I have five children. The Premier said today that one of South Australia's problems was the lack of population growth rate. He may accuse me of many other things, but I am not guilty in relation to the lack of population growth rate. On that issue I claim that he should reconsider his criticisms of me. My eldest child is a 15 year old by the name of Emily—not Emiline as in Pankhurst, although they are very similar temperament—and I will have to deal with that one later. Some time ago she told me that she wanted to be the first woman Premier of South Australia. I retorted that I hoped that she would be wrong—not that I hoped she would not enter Parliament at some stage standing for a Party of her choice (hopefully my Party) but that I hoped that, when she did ultimately enter Parliament and with good political fortune have the opportunity to become a Leader of Government in this State, she would not be the first female Premier of this State. Given that she is only 15 years old, it would be a sad commentary if it were to take that long for this State to have a female Premier.

There are some who say that the issue is entirely to be decided on merit. I concur with the comment of the member for Elizabeth who said, I thought very pertinently indeed, that the merit principle has not worked. Her maiden speech was an excellent presentation on this matter and detailed very important issues in regard to not only female representation in Parliament but generally the role and opportunities of women in society, and she used very powerfully a phrase that I think should be borne in mind by all in South Australia: it is not sufficient to say, as the member for Elder a moment ago said, that we would be happy for 100 per cent of the Parliament to be female representation if it was based on merit, because the clear facts are that our system has not provided for the merit principle to apply in its totality. I make that statement quite firmly. The very fact that we have had only 23 female members of this Parliament over the history of this legislature is an indication of that.

The facts are that women throughout the world have served with distinction. They are proof of the significant contribution women can make in the variation legislatures of the world, let alone in this State. It does nothing but debase the issue to mention people like Madam Ciccolino of the Italian Parliament when talking about female representation.

I would rather cite the many great examples of significant women in other countries, but obviously in the time available to me I cannot mention all of them because they are too numerous. I could easily mention all of them in the South Australian Parliament in the time left to me, but I could not mention all of them in the world.

We have such great women as the very first female Prime Minister of any country, Mrs Bandaranaike, the then Prime Minister of Ceylon (now known as Sri Lanka). Many others followed—Indira Gandhi, Golda Meir, Benazir Bhutto, Gro Harlem Brundtland and Cory Aquino, and may I throw in Maggie Thatcher and the Prime Minister of Turkey, Tansu Ciller. One could add other names as well. In each of those cases I believe that people on either side of politics would have to acknowledge the skill which those people exhibited in reflecting their personal ideologies and then translating them into a capacity to govern—and in a number of cases to govern in exceptional difficulty.

Of course, Benazir Bhutto has governed in a country that has had very antagonistic attitudes towards opportunities for women, yet she has been able to overcome that. Likewise, notwithstanding that, since the time of Kemal Ataturk, Turkey has been a secular society and a society that has offered opportunities to women, the Prime Minister of that country has, I believe, made an exceptional achievement in reaching the top.

This resolution asks us to establish a committee to examine ways in which we can ensure that in the centenary of the enfranchisement of women in this State and in the centenary of what was a world-leading achievement we can see that translated into a more effective outcome, so that we can say in the years to come that the scorecard is much better than the 23 female representatives elected to this Parliament in the first 100 years. I make the criticism as roundly of my own as I do of other Parties in this State, that we have failed previously to address that problem.

There are many who feel uncomfortable with the issue of targets, of quotas, of percentages, but the reality is that perhaps that is the method that will most readily ensure that women have the opportunity to be considered appropriately for representation in Parliament. The starting gate in the legislative sense was opened in 1894. The starting gate, in the sense of women feeling enabled to stand, still remains only partly ajar. The starting gate remains only partly ajar to some extent by the attitude of many women themselves who count themselves out as being able to make the grade in Parliament, or as being able to make it through the gauntlet of male domination of the legislature.

But it equally as much if not more so stands mainly closed by the attitude of men, who still hold significant positions of power in all Parties in this State. I look forward to the time when we in the Labor Party have achieved the goal of a proper representation of women in our parliamentary Party and that, by all statistical account, will be 50 per cent. The National Labor Women's Conference held last week in Adelaide—and we were pleased to see that convened in South Australia—set a target, after long discussion, of 40 per cent by the year 2000. That is a target towards which we must drive ourselves.

As was mentioned at that conference and in other fora, it is not simply a matter of saying that the seats hardest to win can be the ones on which you can prove yourselves; rather, they should be a reasonable cross-section of all available seats: those that will be easy to win, as well as those that will be hard—and some very hard—to win. I am pleased to be a

Leader of a Party that has an excellent team, albeit a small team, in the Caucus, and I am very proud that that team brings talents of both genders. I would like to see the situation where we will bring more talent from women to our Party in the years to come.

This committee offers an opportunity to examine how collectively—without a partisan spirit but in the true spirit of trying to reach out to reflect the entire community—we can do that. I come back to a point made, I thought so powerfully, by the member for Elizabeth when she talked about the community being represented by half the population, and that is an issue we have to address. It has been ignored for too long. That is why we ended the drought from 1894 to 1959; that is why we were not mentioned in this week's article in the *European*, notwithstanding our significant achievements 100 years ago. Let us hope that we do not have to wait a further 100 years to be given a proper recognition for the pioneering spirit that was involved in that first legislation 100 years ago. I commend the motion to the House.

Mrs KOTZ (Newland): I rise to support the resolution to form a Joint Committee on Women in Parliament. Before I actually address the intent of the motion I, too, would like to publicly place on record my welcome to the member for Elizabeth to this Parliament. I have already done so privately, I now do so publicly, and congratulate her on her maiden speech. It is a most appropriate time for a maiden speech when we are discussing an issue that is more than welcome and one which has been perhaps far too long in coming to this Parliament, and that is removing the impediments to women who present themselves to become representatives of their community.

In researching the history of women's suffrage in South Australia it is most interesting reading to look into the backgrounds of women from so long ago, who worked so hard, through many difficult times, to present a strong enough front to the society of their time that enabled women's enfranchisement to Parliament to take place 100 years ago. But, in researching some of the stories that came out of the women's movement at that time, there was another aspect in the history of Parliaments that caught my interest.

There was an apparent aspect of giving women the vote in South Australia that caused a great deal of consternation to those known as the founding fathers of our Federal Constitution, men such as Isaacs, Deakin and others of the same ilk who put together the Federal Constitution through and prior to the period of Federation, and after women had gained the vote in South Australia. That consternation arose because South Australia was the first State to allow women the vote. By enabling adult suffrage to take place in South Australia we had effectively doubled the voting population, which, of course, would affect Federal voting when Federation was pronounced.

The difficulty that the Federal fathers encountered was how to deal with in the Constitution an arrangement that would sort out this inequality of votes. What also amused me was the terms of discussion that took place. Apparently, one of our Federal fathers suggested that the women's vote should be totally discounted. As it would be rather difficult to discover which were women's votes and which were men's votes it was assumed that some other pattern would need to be introduced to identify the two. It was suggested that perhaps coloured ballot papers be used and that would identify the women's voting papers from the men's voting papers.

It was also apparent that the men considered that this might confuse the women and so two lots of ballot boxes would be required that identified the women who voted as opposed to the men who voted. I believe that attitudes such as that have changed over the years, although I think all of us, and particularly women in Parliament, recognise that although changes have been made those elements and those components that were very evident in the thoughts and decisions that were taken by men all those years ago are still, to a degree, quite readily recognisable in our society today. The effect of those discussions on the coloured paper and the ballot boxes is still evident in section 128 of the Federal Constitution at the moment, which states that 50 per cent of the vote in States that had adult suffrage would be the figure excluded until all States attained adult suffrage.

I want to refer to an opportunity that I had in 1992 when the Parliament elected me as a delegate to represent the State at the 38th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conference. It was an international conference. The historic moment within that conference of 50 nations throughout the world which had congregated to join in the discussions in the plenary sessions of that conference was that, for the first time, the Commonwealth Women's Parliamentary Group was formed. It was formally recognised at that 38th conference and it was agreed that the agenda of all subsequent annual conferences would include business meetings of women Parliamentarians. I was elected to serve on the steering committee as a representative of the Australian region and also co-opted to the executive committee. I have already pointed out that the association embraces 50 sovereign nations, and therefore one quarter of the world's population.

During the conference a special plenary session was set up in which the subject of women's participation in Parliament was discussed. At that stage we addressed the under-representation of women within our Parliaments throughout the world. The practical issues raised at that conference that presented a real barrier to women were nominated quite simply as availability of time. This related to the still common expectation endorsed across all cultures that women remain the homemakers, the principal care givers to children and the elderly and the domestic managers. It was recognised that women must gain more skills and training through education so that they can be as capable as men of holding political office.

As this was an international conference, we were discussing this in terms of third world countries. Sometimes this involves breaking down the barrier of women not being willing to vote for other women. Only when women are accepted by men as equal and by other women as equal will something close to the 50 per cent representation naturally occur.

If any conclusion could be drawn from the discussions I have had with women throughout our communities, it would be the widespread recognition that barriers exist to increased participation of women in the political process and that those barriers can be removed only by men and women working together. Sharing power equally with women is not only fair and just but good common business and political sense as women have considerable knowledge and experience to offer. However, these ideals need to be pursued and achieved within the social framework of our individual societies and jurisdictions.

During that conference women delegates from developing nations highlighted that the majority of women in their countries do not have a choice of family and/or career. The

necessary gathering of food, fuel and water to feed, clothe and house their children perpetuate survival as their only choice. Both women and men delegates contributed to that debate, reinforcing the view that removing the barriers to change cannot be achieved by women alone. Men need to accept that the barriers exist and to be committed to getting rid of them.

The Party preselection process for candidates seeking to enter Parliament was seen to advantage men and to create institutional discriminatory barriers to women. We noted the token gesture of preselecting more women candidates, but only in winnable or marginal seats. Again, as I am talking about an international conference, it is obvious that what is happening in South Australia as we discuss this resolution is already happening world wide.

Of all the women parliamentarians whom I met during that conference, I was particularly impressed with the freedom fighter from Zambia who was equally at home with a Russian Kalashnikov rifle protecting her three small children or articulating women's rights at an international conference. The clear message in the ongoing debate about women in Parliament is that we cannot continue to ignore half the wisdom and knowledge of society; that is, the 50 per cent of the population who are women. I support the resolution.

Ms HURLEY (Napier): I want to speak only briefly because the member for Elizabeth has covered the topic very well in her maiden speech. I just want to express my view that basically, if enough women were elected to Parliament, in the nature of things that would make Parliament more friendly to women. I think this is the critical thing and I fully support the Labor Party's current discussions of affirmative action proposals to ensure that more women are preselected into winnable seats.

The most effective way to ensure an increase of women in Parliament is to ensure that Parties preselect women. However, in the meantime and as an adjunct to these measures, I support this move to have a joint committee to discuss the matter. For those of us already in Parliament, hopefully it will speed up the process.

In my maiden speech I touched on the issue of making parliamentary hours fit in with family and community life. Speaking as the mother of a young child, it is particularly important to me, and I believe it will be very important for fathers of young children who are also members of Parliament. However, I wish to stress the aspect of involvement with community activities. Reducing the number of evening sitting hours would enable members to keep in continuous contact with community groups which usually meet at night. I believe that women in Parliament frequently arrive in Parliament as a result of a history of community activism and they would feel more comfortable maintaining that activism and continuing their career in that respect.

In my maiden speech I also mentioned the rules of the House being made more friendly to family and children, opening it up to allow families to wander about more freely. I sometimes wonder whether members of Parliament might be similar to doctors who have done their internship and encountered all the difficulties and trials involved and who think that everyone else should suffer the same. They get used to it and they do not believe that new people should escape the consequences either.

Although this resolution applies particularly to women, I think that any changes that ensue might also benefit other groups in our community. I am thinking particularly of those

from a non-English-speaking background and others who might be less familiar with the rules and traditions of our Anglo-Saxon derived Parliament. When we think of the contributions of the Greek and Italian communities to modern life in Australia, it is amazing that there are not many members of Greek or Italian origin in our Parliaments. I know there are some, but not enough. I think the same might be said in a few years of Vietnamese and Cambodians. I hope that the measures outlined by this committee's deliberations will improve the situation for those people.

Debate adjourned.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Deputy Premier): I move:

That the time for moving the adjournment of the House be extended beyond 10 p.m.

Motion carried.

WORKCOVER CORPORATION BILL

Returned from the Legislative Council with amendments.

RACING (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Returned from the Legislative Council with amendments.

CRIMINAL LAW CONSOLIDATION (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT

Adjourned debate (resumed on motion).

Mr LEGGETT (Hanson): I very much support the resolution for the appointment of a joint committee to inquire into and report on matters regarding more opportunities for women in Parliament, and again I speak to the three points: first, the reason and extent of any existing impediments to women standing for Parliament; secondly, strategies for increasing the number and effectiveness of women in the political and electoral process; and, thirdly, the effect of parliamentary procedures and practice on women's aspirations to and participation in the Parliament of South Australia. I again join my colleagues in acknowledging that this year celebrates the centenary of women's suffrage in South Australia, and in doing so at this time I congratulate the member for Elizabeth on her election to this House and on her maiden speech this evening.

History records that women in South Australia were the first women in the world to have full democratic rights, but I think we have lost ground in the past 100 years. Winning the vote for women in 1894 was a milestone in South Australia's history, and obviously this pioneering legislation was an inspiration to women in other States of the Commonwealth and also in other nations, particularly throughout the western world. One realises just how progressive we really were in 1894 when history records that women in the United States of America did not vote until 1920 and women in the United Kingdom over the age of 21 had to wait until 1928. All of us are privileged to learn about the resoluteness of women and how they courageously fought for their rights, especially for their right to vote 100 years ago.

I fully support the appointment of a joint committee to look into increasing the numbers and effectiveness of women in the South Australian Parliament. Today, 100 years after the vote for women was adopted, I am sure that many men and many women who fought so very hard for these rights so many years ago would be disappointed and frustrated with the small number of women who have been elected to our Parliament in South Australia. All the women elected from all political Parties in this Parliament have made significant and strategic contributions to the life of our Parliament but, sadly, they are still very few in number. I am very much aware that, despite the great start that was made 100 years ago when we led the world through the progressiveness, endeavour and commitment of the early pioneers, there has been a general back flip and lack of recognition of the ability of women throughout the community. This has not just been a lack of political opportunities but it has also occurred in many other areas in the wider community.

To highlight what I am saying I draw the attention of the House to the church, the ordination of women and the drama and controversy that have existed there over many decades; entrance into major sporting bodies, in terms of presidencies and so on; and the legal system. They are just a few areas where there has been a monumental struggle for women to gain the recognition and equality that they so richly deserve. It is nice to know that, as the Deputy Premier mentioned, we now have women jockeys, and they take the same risks as men jockeys; they will come off and be hurt in exactly the same way. We have very successful women trainers in the racing industry (although racing is not my game), and women trainers in football clubs who are recognised for their ability and skills. This did not happen during my football days—not as far back as 1894, but a long time ago.

No-one likes to admit that they are wrong, but for over 100 years there has been a gender imbalance, and the establishment of a joint committee such as is proposed should see a continued re-education in our thinking. I am talking here specifically about the male. The history of this Parliament highlights what I am saying. There have been very few women members of Parliament who have been Ministers of the Crown, and they are: Joyce Steele, Diana Laidlaw, Jennifer Cashmore, Barbara Wiese, Anne Levy and Susan Lenehan. All Speakers in this House have been men and, if I may say, they were fine men too; and, with the exception of the Hon. Anne Levy, all Presidents in the other place have also been men.

With regard to members of Parliament in general, a survey conducted by the International Parliamentary Union in 1991 found that women made up 11 per cent of the world's parliamentarians and men 89 per cent. The South Australian average is slightly above the world's statistic, at about 18 or 19 per cent. As the Hon. Carolyn Pickles stated some time ago and as has been mentioned in other speeches tonight, it took 65 years to get women into Parliament, and only 22 women have been elected. Since Ms Pickles said that, the member for Elizabeth has entered this place as well. Currently, women hold 14 out of 69 seats.

Party machinery from whatever political persuasion has traditionally been geared to men. For most of this century, Parliament has traditionally been a boys' club; whether or not men will admit it, that is a fact. The strategic position of women in the family unit and their commitment to the nurturing of children has obviously prevented many from pursuing a political career, and more is the pity. A great number of women have excellent educational qualifications

and gifts which would benefit the legislative procedures of this State in a very real way. If their family situations could be integrated, they would be very effectively used in the political arena and could make outstanding contributions. It was the former British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, a role model for women throughout the world, who said that in politics if you want anything said, ask a man; if you want anything done, ask a woman. Her statement is of course very general, and fortunately there are exceptions to the rule.

Again, many people would struggle with the comments of Ms Dorinda Haffner who said, 'Give an idea to a man and you give it to an individual; give it to a woman and you give it to a nation.' Nevertheless, compared with men, women throughout Australia's history have had few role models. That is disappointing; men have many role models whom they can look up to and learn from. It is rather a radical statement, but I believe that the real role models in the South Australian Parliament are the 14 women who currently hold office, especially the newcomers elected in 1993, many of them with very young families, and in 1994 we also have our new member who is also a role model. These women have valuable insight and ideas on how to cope with the family.

This is the international year of the family, and ideally no job should interfere with the life of the family, whether the job is occupied by a man or a woman. Every man and woman with family responsibilities must determine what works out best for the benefit of the whole family, especially, in this case, the children. It is not just a question of equality between the sexes. I would like to present the following example to clarify what I am saying.

In the family, if a woman or mother is a member of Parliament and her husband is a prominent businessman in a job with a high level of stress, the family suffers because the children have little access to both parents. There has to be good family management so that the family unit does not break down. Traditionally throughout history men have been the breadwinners, and often their expectations of women have been unrealistic. In the past men have had the freedom to pursue a career of their own choice, but in my opinion men are now much better educated in understanding women's needs than in the past, and couples share roles more readily and willingly than they did before.

For women looking after young children it has been almost impossible to embark on any time-consuming career, whether or not it is as a member of Parliament. It is also well documented that women who ran for Parliament in the first half of the century were women who did not have children or who could afford domestic help. There were certainly no child-care centres then. This is something that each individual must consider according to his or her situation. It is only when Parliament is seen to be working in a bipartisan way to ensure that women are truly a representative body that there will be true equality.

It is true that 100 years ago women fought for their rights and, through tremendous hard work and endeavour, they won. They won the right to vote and gained full democratic rights. I very much support the motion and stress strongly that we carry on vigorously and energetically to complete the job that was started back in 1894.

Mrs ROSENBERG (Kaurana): I will speak briefly in support of the motion. Many statistics and much comment have been put into *Hansard* already and there is no purpose in my repeating it. I congratulate the member for Elizabeth for speaking most eloquently. Certainly, if the bipartisan

support being expressed here tonight is reflected when the matter is considered by the committee, we can look forward to many more women being elected to Parliament after the next election. I certainly hope that the speeches we have heard here tonight carry much further than this evening.

In South Australia, as has been said, women have had the right to vote and be elected to Parliament for over 100 years. However, it then took 65 years for the first woman to be elected to Parliament, and in that year two women were elected—Joyce Steele and Jessie Cooper. In Australia the 52 per cent of women in the population are represented by 15 per cent of women in Australian Parliaments. I cannot accept that the lack of representation in Australian Parliaments by women is due to women's lack of ability. That means that there must be some impediments facing women, which is why I support the first paragraph in the motion, which is to look at what impediments are in place.

It is not the role of this debate to examine all the impediments that exist but, rather, it is the role of the committee, once it is set up, to look at that area. Therefore, I will simply say that one of the key issues the committee needs to address relates to the greatest impediment confronting women entering Parliament, that is, society's expectations of women in society. Advances will not be possible until society accepts an equal sharing role for men and women in all responsibilities in life, and then we will see more women in Parliament. I refer not just to the area of work but also the area of the home, recreation and caring for family needs.

It is important that the opportunity is there to share equally all responsibilities that women, whether or not it is their choice, take on as total responsibility. The true democracy that ought to exist in our Parliaments would be that if anyone chose to stand—male or female, ethnic or Australian born, Aboriginal or any other person—there would be no impediment in their way. I support that part of the motion strongly. I support the second paragraph of the motion, which seeks to make us much more effective when we do reach this area. Therefore, I support the comments of the member for Napier, who quickly put down well all of my thoughts, emphasising the sorts of things that happen within this arena with which we probably all have problems, but women more so because we tend to analyse things in a much more statistical and critical way. The second paragraph will be extremely important for us. Democracy means that all people—women and men equally—who have an ability, a desire and something that they can truly offer to Australia through a role in Parliament have no impediment to entering this place and are able to work effectively when they reach this arena.

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): First, I pay tribute to the member for Elizabeth for her inaugural speech, not just in terms of its powerful eloquence but also for its wisdom and insight. The member for Elizabeth referred to the processes of this Parliament. The inquiry is not just about the preselection process (although I want to address that later), but also as she put quite cogently the very processes and way that we conduct ourselves. Certainly, I hope that the committee will look at both the processes and procedures of the Parliament and our political Parties to ensure that they invite rather than impede, and include rather than exclude, women's participation. A range of areas on a practical level, such as child care, need to be addressed squarely if we are to make major headway in this area.

Apart from raising important questions about the way that we do business in this Parliament, which by its very nature

has been both male dominated and male in import, the member for Elizabeth indicated that the merit principle had not been applied in its true sense, and she is absolutely right. The merit principle has not been about merit but about mediocrity and maintaining the *status quo* from any outside threats. Certainly, I hope the committee will not just touch the surface of the issue but look deeply about why it is that in Australia we fall so far behind many other parts of the world and how we can lift our game.

A few weeks ago I mentioned that it would take more than a century before women could achieve 50 per cent of participation in Australian Parliaments if political Parties continued their current preselection practices, that is, if we continue to act and move forward in the way we have during the past 100 years, and it would take another 100 years or more—some say 200 or 300 years—before women achieve 50 per cent participation. We have a pitiful record in Australia of electing women to Parliaments compared to other nations. As I pointed out before, only 8.2 per cent of members of Parliament in Australia are women. We are behind Syria, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Angola, Vietnam and Indonesia, but we are way behind Germany with 20.5 per cent, China with 21 per cent, Cuba with 22.8 per cent, Denmark with 33 per cent, Finland with 39 per cent, Norway with 35.8 per cent, Sweden with 33.5 per cent and the Netherlands with 29.3 per cent.

I certainly hope that through our Party, the Australian Labor Party, substantial moves will be made this year at the national conference to ensure that there is a realistic, hard-edged effort rather than just rhetoric put into a major movement to preselect more women for the ALP across Australia. I also believe that here in South Australia the ALP should again set the agenda for the country by adopting whatever quota is nominated by the national conference. I hope that we will go to the next State election with a record number of women in Australian history in terms of candidates for safe seats as well as marginal seats. It is quite clear that, unless our Parliaments change in composition and style, they will become and we will become increasingly irrelevant to the every day existence of ordinary Australians. It is not time now, as we face the new millennium, for incremental change: it is time for some bold strokes and brave thinking.

I believe that by preselecting women from all walks of life we will enrich and invigorate our political Parties and Parliaments across the country. Our Parliaments will become not only more representative but also more qualified. For so many years the soft option has been for political Parties to put women forward in the most marginal seats where it is said in the back rooms—decided by men—that their understanding of family and community issues makes them stronger candidates. That in its very nature is tokenistic and we have to ensure that this cause we are embracing is one that is bipartisan and one that we put a great deal of action into. Too often factional concerns have overridden community needs when it comes to preselecting women and hundreds of reasons have been put forward about why a woman candidate would not be right for the job, wherever the seat is—whether it is in Elizabeth or any other part of the State.

Across Australia political processes, Parties and institutions have conspired against women's involvement in politics and as a result we are wasting a huge pool of talent. I hope that before the next State election there will be more women in the South Australian Parliament and I trust that next week we will be able to welcome a new member to this Parliament. The Leader of the Opposition said that his eldest daughter

Emily was interested in a political career. I am not sure what career my own daughter Eleanor, who will turn four later this month, will engage in. It is far too early for that. She is a strong willed character, very bright and smart. I hope that she and her friend Millie, who is seven today and equally talented and strong willed, if they do run for Parliament, will be amidst 50 per cent of women in this Chamber and, if they do not, they will be well represented. If they decide not to enter Parliament, I hope that the impediment will not be their gender.

Mr BROKENSHIRE (Mawson): I am delighted to speak in favour of this resolution. One of the things that has pleased me has been the Liberal Party's genuine desire, over some time now, to see more women enter politics not only in the parliamentary arena but also in the organisational arena. That is clearly supported by the State President of the South Australian Liberal Party, Vicky Chapman, who led us from an organisational point of view to a very successful election last year. Vicky Chapman epitomises much of what many people regard highly as qualities needed to run a successful business—be it a family—and to be a person and mother, while being involved as President of a large body such as the Liberal Party.

We also have a successful women's council which not only plays a support role within the organisational structure but is very influential in policy formation. In the Parliament we see eight women representing the Liberal Party, three in the Legislative Council and five in the House of Assembly. We have a Minister who is responsible for women's issues and recently, under the direction of Di Davidson, we saw the Women's Advisory Council come into being.

Down in the south we have combined together and are working on getting more youth into our Party. It is pleasing to see that there is a good representation of women involved in the formation of that Young Liberal area. In fact, during my campaign, three in particular who had just finished university and who gave up a considerable amount of time added many abilities and skills to my campaign. They were one of the reasons why I was successful in Mawson.

We know that South Australia has shown the way in the past with respect to getting more women into Parliament, and we have seen that this year through the women's suffrage centenary; South Australia led the way in getting women into Parliament in Australia. It is pleasing to see that there has been an increase in the number of women in the Parliament this year—a most significant year for South Australia. I welcome the member for Elizabeth on the other side and congratulate her on her maiden speech.

The Liberal Party preselection process is something that I believe others could have a look at, because it offers a fair and equal opportunity for women to be preselected. That has been illustrated by the fact that down south two women were preselected for the last election—the member for Reynell and the member for Kaurna—as well as two men—the Premier, Dean Brown, and I. I know that in the processes those women were given every opportunity to become involved in preselection; they competed against men and won on their own merit. I will refer to that later.

Whilst I made clear that I am not keen to see lots of money spent on upgrading the House, I understand that we have to spend some money. If we are serious about getting more women into Parliament, maybe in that reconstruction and refurbishment we should consider a few basic amenities for them, such as toilets. That would be a sensible way to

show that we are serious about getting more women into the Parliament.

In my previous employment I was in a commercial service sector where we had an opportunity to employ both males and females. There were different roles within that and we were heavily involved in the rural sector. Experiences to the present time and for the past 20 years had seen it dominated mainly by males. That is now changing as women attend university courses and are more hands on in their farm work and general understanding of the rural sector. On the other side of my business, that is, the construction of housing, the women had a much better success rate, were more reliable and had more skills to offer that industry than the men. As the years went on we recognised this and were able to capitalise on that by employing more and more women each year. In fact, by the time I finished in that practice about one-third of the staff were women, and they all contributed well.

The point I make tonight is that I agree that we must provide more opportunities for women to come into the Parliament but I do not believe—as I said in my maiden speech and as I would like to reinforce tonight—that we should be talking about a percentage, whether 40, 50 or 60 per cent. I really believe that we are on the wrong track and that we will disadvantage the opportunity to get more women into this House if we are emphatic about having 50/50 representation. That is not what it is all about: it is about getting women in here to give more balance and input to the Parliament to better the State.

Women these days have a lot more access and opportunity to go to university and TAFE. They have proved to be successful business leaders and they are family managers at home. Therefore they already have the qualities and ability. It is perhaps just a matter of making a few more opportunities for them rather than setting a target. I do not think it matters whether there are 70 per cent or 80 per cent women or 60 per cent men and 40 per cent women, we must remember that we have to get people who will give their heart to this State when they come into the Parliament. We must remember that during the preselection process. Let us make the opportunities easier but not set a particular percentage.

Another advantage I see for the State if we were to get more women into the Parliament would be a fairer balance in debate and decision making, particularly with respect to social justice issues. As the member for Kaurna said, quite often women are more persistent but also more perceptive and they can deliberate reasonably well, and I see that as an advantage in this House, particularly with social justice issues. At the end of the day, the women have had to bear the brunt of that for a long time.

I said in the House earlier that women do have some special qualities, and I talked about my own wife. Having been in this House now for four months and having to put extra pressure on her, I can back up my point: if you give a woman a job, she will go out of her way to do it to the best of her ability. When you have to bring up children, support committees and communities within the electorate, and run businesses you still have when you are a member of Parliament, you put a fair bit of pressure on your spouse. In my case, it is a woman, and she is doing a brilliant job. I know she would be the sort of woman who would do well in this House also.

We do need to examine any existing impediments to women standing for Parliament. In regard to the participation of women in parliamentary procedures, I believe we need to assess the opportunities for women in the Parliament and

their inclusion in the procedures of our Parliament. In conclusion, I support this resolution because I believe that, at the end of the day, it will be in the best interests of South Australia, but we must remember always that we also need to make sure that we have the best possible people in the Parliament to do the best possible job for South Australia.

Mr BRINDAL (Unley): I have pleasure in following the member for Mawson and other speakers who have made a great deal of sense. I join others in congratulating the member for Elizabeth on her inaugural speech. However, I would differ from my colleague the member from Mawson by saying better that she were on this side of the House than on the side on which she sits, but that is an accident of fate, I suspect. I would just like to pick up a few of the points ably made by the member for Mawson, so I will not detain the House for long. Like other Government members, I strongly support any investigation on impediments which exist to stop women from equal participation in this place.

I hope when that committee investigates, we will not fall into the traps that were inherent in some of the speeches that were made tonight. I hope that this debate does not devolve into a battle between the X and the Y chromosomes but that we consider some points that were touched on by the member for Elizabeth, who said that what we are talking about is the sharing of power and of the adequate right of all people to participation in power. The member for Elizabeth mentioned Aborigines. It is not only women who are under represented in this place: it is Aborigines and people of ethnic backgrounds—generally unempowered minorities. If you look in this place, you see that the predominance of white Anglo Saxons, be they male or female, is frightening.

When we are looking at impediments for people representing groups within this Parliament, let us not merely get stuck on the gender issue. Let us look on the politics of empowerment, as the member for Elizabeth said. She also talked about exclusion rather than inclusion, and that is important. The committee will look at how to include not only women but all groups who are unempowered in our society. It should devolve into not a gender issue but an issue of the right of everyone to equal participation. I agree totally with the member for Mawson and hope it will not degenerate into some sort of quota system or legislative fiat which says that, because there are 52 per cent of women in the population, there must be 52 per cent of women here, or 3 per cent of Aborigines, or 5 per cent of people of Italian origin or from any other group.

Whilst we must remove the impediments, we cannot legislate for the perfect society. There have been many attempts to legislate the grand social order, and each and every one of them has failed. We are by nature human. We are by nature frail. We will continue to struggle and we will continue to make mistakes. There will continue to be differences between us because we are different people, we are different genders and, within any gender, each of us is a different and separate individual. We must always acknowledge that. Whilst I support any motion which seeks to share power among all members of our society and make this place truly representative of the people it serves, let us not fall into the trap of diatribe, of saying there is a percentage of people in the population so that percentage must be represented in the Parliament and, if they are not represented in the Parliament, then somehow this Parliament has failed.

One of the comments I too heard on 5AN this morning—and I know the member for Elizabeth was listening careful-

ly—was that perhaps many women at the end, when all things are made equal, may choose consciously not to pursue politics as a chosen profession. Provided they have the right to make that choice, freely and in good conscience, we have done as much as we can do. The member for Elizabeth pointed out that women have gained, if anything, an over-representation now in entrance to our universities, but they are under-represented in apprenticeships and engineering.

I put to the member for Elizabeth that, if they are becoming over-represented, as they are, in medicine and the law, that is because those women who because of their score could choose engineering and would be able to go into engineering as they have the required score to do so would rather go into medicine or the law. That is the choice they are making. Perhaps if there were some social reason that precludes them from going into engineering, we should look at that. I agree with that if there is a social reason but, if they are making that choice because they are doing so well, if they could choose the two professions that most men would also choose and if they choose to be lawyers and doctors rather than engineers, they should have the right to do it. If that means we end up with a law or medical profession composed entirely of women, so be it.

If we get equal opportunity in our society, with people going into roles which they choose for themselves without any impediment because of their gender, I think we have achieved a lot, and I do not think we need to do it from quotas. I know that the member for Elizabeth comes from a teaching background, and I know that in the teaching profession, probably more than many professions, strong gains were made for equality between different genders, because it has long since been accepted that a good teacher is a good teacher is a good teacher, and a good male teacher is no better than a good female teacher, and a good teacher of either gender is perhaps a very rare animal.

I think that that has been long accepted. In the teaching profession a lot of those barriers have been removed, but where those barriers were removed artificially some ill-effects resulted. I think the Education Department is an example of both good practice and the worst practice in affirmative action. This Parliament should be very careful before it goes down the track of assuming that it can legislate for the well-being of its people. I commend this motion to the House and I congratulate members, especially the member for Elizabeth, for their participation in the debate.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Deputy Premier): The member for Unley stole my thunder. He thanked all members for their contributions to this debate, and I, too, thank all members for their contributions to the debate. A number of issues were raised. Merit was obviously an important issue, and every member of this Parliament would recognise that when one is in a competitive situation merit is the prevailing principle. However, as everybody here would recognise, and it has been stated in the House, there are some natural log jams in the system, mainly in some of the institutional arrangements that have been in place. Perhaps it is an attitudinal problem for some people.

I believe that there is still not a widespread acceptance of the demand for the Parliament to be more representative of its people. I thank all members who have given the debate due consideration. I am sure that the committee will have the opportunity to review those contributions, and will seek widespread representation from a variety of groups and individuals who wish to put a point of view to it. I commend

the work of the committee, and I thank all members for their participation.

Motion carried.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Deputy Premier): I move:

That the House be represented on the joint committee by three members, namely, Mrs Greig, Mr Leggett and Ms Stevens, of whom

two shall form a quorum necessary to be present at all sittings of the committee.

Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

At 10.33 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday 4 May at 2 p.m.