HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 28 May 1996

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

BANK MERGER (BANKSA AND ADVANCE BANK) BILL

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

ASSENT TO BILLS

Her Excellency, the Governor, by message, intimated her assent to the following Bills:

Business Names,

Civil Aviation (Carriers' Liability) (Mandatory Insurance and Administration) Amendment,

Community Titles,

Correctional Services (Miscellaneous) Amendment,

Education (Teaching Service) Amendment,

Evidence (Settlement Negotiations) Amendment,

Expiation of Offences,

Financial Institutions (Application of Laws) (Court Jurisdiction) Amendment,

Gaming Machines (Miscellaneous) Amendment,

Legal Practitioners (Miscellaneous) Amendment,

Motor Vehicles (Miscellaneous) Amendment,

Motor Vehicles (Miscellaneous No. 2) Amendment,

National Parks and Wildlife (Miscellaneous) Amendment,

Public and Environmental Health (Notification of Diseases) Amendment,

Racing (Miscellaneous) Amendment,

Rail Safety,

Road Traffic (Directions at Level Crossings) Amendment,

Road Traffic (Exemption of Traffic Law Enforcement Vehicles) Amendment,

South Australian Meat Corporation (Sale of Assets),

South Australian Timber Corporation (Sale of Assets),

Stamp Duties (Miscellaneous) Amendment 1996,

Statutes Amendment and Repeal (Common Expiation Scheme),

Statutes Amendment (Community Titles),

Summary Procedure (Time for Making Complaint) Amendment,

Supply,

Travel Agents (Miscellaneous) Amendment,

Wills (Wills for Persons Lacking Testamentary Capacity) Amendment,

Witness Protection,

Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation (Dispute Resolution) Amendment 1996.

URBAN BUSHLAND

A petition signed by 14 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to ensure that effective legislation is enacted to protect urban trees and/or bushland from destruction was presented by the Hon. G.A. Ingerson.

Petition received.

MUSIC SCHOOLS

A petition signed by 847 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House urge the Government to retain the music program at special interest music schools and present staffing levels was presented by the Hon. W.A. Matthew.

Petition received.

BOAT REGISTRATIONS

A petition signed by 208 residents of South Australia, requesting that the House urge the Government to remove the extra levy on boat registrations implemented for the construction and maintenance of boat ramps was presented by Mr Lewis.

Petition received.

Mr LEWIS: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. I am unable to hear the petitions. I think the microphone system is probably not working.

The SPEAKER: The Chair is having some difficulty. The honourable member is also aware that the building is still in the course of considerable renovations. The Chair and the officers who assist the Chair will do their utmost to endeavour to rectify the matter.

SHOOTING BANS

A petition signed by six residents of South Australia, requesting that the House urge the Government to ban the recreational shooting of ducks and quails was presented by Mr Meier.

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 61, 65, 66, 69, 71, 74, 77 to 79, 84 and 86; and I direct that the following answers to questions without notice be distributed and printed in *Hansard*.

DOGS

In reply to **Mr QUIRKE (Playford)** 28 March.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: The Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 recognises and protects the rights of responsible dog owners in South Australia who keep and maintain a dog for their own protection and that of their property. With all rights go responsibilities—an owner or keeper of a dog is required to register the dog and ensure it is effectively controlled to ensure that people and/or other animals are not subjected to attack; harassment or chasing; dogs wandering at large; or nuisance barking.

The Act provides an owner with general defences against an offence.

The Act provides the mechanisms whereby irresponsible dog owners can be brought to account for actions which may involve their dogs in any contravention of the Act.

The keeper's or owner's liability for dogs is covered under Part 6 'Civil Actions Relating to Dogs' of the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995. The general rule is that the keeper of a dog is liable in tort for injury, damage or loss caused by the dog. This section sets out various circumstances where strict liability gives way to the principles set out in relation to liability for other animals in the *Wrongs Act 1936*:

. if the dog is provoked;
. if the person attacked is a trespasser;
. if the dog was being used in the reasonable defence of a person or property;
. if the dog has been taken from the keeper without the keeper's consent.

Section 17 of The Summary Offences Act 1953 may also have relevance to the member's question as it addresses the issue of 'Being on premises for an unlawful purpose'.

In relation to the Glenelg dog issue, the council's responsibility is to act in the interests of public safety and under the provisions of the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995.

The series of steps taken by the City of Glenelg are in accordance with the provisions of the Act, ie.

. the impounding of the animals in the interests of public safety (section 30 (2) (d)
. the proposed issuing of a Control (Dangerous Dog) Order (section 50 (b).

I am advised that the dogs have now been returned to the owners and are being kept at a country property secured to the satisfaction of the owner and the council of that area.

At this time the matter is in the hands of solicitors representing both parties who are attempting to negotiate a satisfactory resolution. It is unclear whether any civil action will eventuate between the person involved in the dog attack and the owner of the dog. It would be inappropriate to provide extensive details in the matter as it may prove to be prejudicial to any contemplated civil action.

PETROL PRICES

In reply to **Mr ATKINSON (Spence)** 3 April.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: Wholesale prices of petroleum products are subject to the price justification procedures of the Australian Consumer and Competition Commission (ACCC). The commission sets a uniform maximum endorsed price which applies in all capital cities. The Commissioner for Prices (SA) does not take an active role in monitoring wholesale prices but accepts the wholesale prices endorsed by the ACCC.

In relation to retail pricing, the ACCC undertakes extensive monitoring and supplies this information to the States on a regular basis. The Commissioner for Consumer Affairs has not fixed prices of any petroleum product at the retail level for 20 years. Rather, he or she has relied on a combination of monitoring of prices at the wholesale level and a competitive retail market place to ensure consumers pay a fair price for petrol.

There are two inquiries into the petrol industry at present, one at a State level in relation to multi-site franchising and one at a Federal level into pricing. A submission was made to the ACCC, detailing concerns about petrol price increases during holiday periods, prior to a public hearing in Adelaide on 30 April 1996. Therefore, it is considered inappropriate to set up a third inquiry which would only duplicate what is currently being done.

Petrol pricing is a national issue which is being investigated by the ACCC, and is not a matter that can be successfully tackled on a State by State basis. The ACCC sets wholesale prices to which retail margins, freight factors and State franchise fees must be added to determine the final retail price. Extensive discounting and competition have kept pump prices well below this price for most of the year. When company rebates to retailers are reduced prices appear to rise significantly.

PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

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

Regulations under the following Acts—
- Building Work Contractors—Principle
- Fair Trading—Code of Practice—Prepaid Funerals
- Liquor Licensing—Berri
- Liquor Licensing—Wallaroo
- Native Title (South Australia)—Commencement of Sections

By the Treasurer (Hon. S.J. Baker)—

Public Corporations Act—Regulations—TransAdelaide—
- Mile End
- St Agnes

By the Minister for Police (Hon. S.J. Baker)—

Firearms Act—Regulations—Restricted Firearms

By the Minister for Mines and Energy (Hon. S.J. Baker)—

Mining Act—Regulations—Special Mining Enterprises

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

Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act—
- Regulations—Fees

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

- Jam Factory Craft and Design Centre—Report, 1995
- Regulations under the following Acts—
  - Harbors and Navigation—Kingscote
  - Passenger Transport—Fees
  - Passenger Transport—Community Transport Service
  - Road Traffic—Exempt Vehicles—Police
- South Australian Ports Corporation—Charter

By the Minister for Health (Hon. M.H. Armitage)—

- Social Development Committee—Eighth Report—Rural Poverty—Response by the Minister for Health

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

- Coast Protection Board—South Australia—Report, 1994-95
- Environment, Resources and Development Court Act—
  - Regulations—Commonwealth Minister

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

- Department for Education and Children's Services—
  - Report, 1994-95
  - Children's Services Division—Report, 1994-95
- Regulations under the following Acts—
  - Fees Regulation—Overseas Students—Tertiary Institutions
  - Vocational Education, Employment and Training—Empowering Minister to fix Fees.
- Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia—Report, 1995
- Teachers Registration Board of South Australia—Report, 1995

By the Minister for Primary Industries (Hon. R.G. Kerin)—

- Fisheries Act—Regulations—
  - Fishery Management Committees
  - Recreational Net Fishing Ban

By the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations (Hon. E.S. Ashenden)—

- Development Act 1993—Report on Amendment to Development Plan—
  - Interim Operation of the District Council of Mount Pleasant General No. 2
  - Interim Operation of the Rural City of Murray Bridge—Residential (Deferred Town Centre) Zone
- Regulations under the following Acts—
  - Development—
    - Approval Exemption
    - Private Certifiers Insurance
  - Local Government—
    - Superannuation Board—Various
    - Performance of Councils—Prescribed Criteria.

FIREARMS

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Deputy Premier): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I wish to inform the House of recent developments in relation to gun law reforms. As the House would be aware, the Firearms Act in South Australia has been the subject of a major review. Although South Australia has some of the strictest gun laws in the nation, further changes were proposed. The proposed amendments

were close to being finalised; however, that process has now been overtaken.

The Port Arthur shootings on 28 April 1996 has shocked the nation and focused the attention of the entire community on the issue of gun control. The Prime Minister announced a special meeting of the Australasian Police Ministers' Council and set the agenda for sweeping reforms of gun controls in Australia, including the banning of automatic and semi-automatic firearms.

South Australia has been at the forefront of previous attempts to introduce uniform national gun laws; however, the reluctance of some jurisdictions to embrace the need for uniform minimum standards has foiled those attempts. Without national gun law reform, South Australia remains vulnerable with dangerous and prohibited mail order firearms entering the State from other jurisdictions with lax gun control.

On 10 May 1996, in an historic move, the special Police Ministers' Council meeting agreed to a series of resolutions to introduce national uniform gun control. The resolutions include:

· effective nationwide registration of firearms;
· genuine need for owning, possessing or using a firearm;
· basic licence requirements;
· training as a prerequisite for licensing;
· grounds for licence refusal or cancellation and seizure of firearms;
· permit to acquire firearms;
· uniform standard for the securing and storage of firearms;
· recording of firearm sales;
· mail order sales control;
· compensation and incentive issues.

South Australia, unlike a number of other jurisdictions, has had these types of measures in place for some time. However, effective nationwide control of firearms is essential. The events of Port Arthur could easily have happened here. Although the gun reforms cannot guarantee against similar events in the future, it does represent a fundamental shift in thinking which is supported by the wider community; that is, the ownership of a gun is no longer a right: it is a conditional privilege. As part of the agreement, the Commonwealth Government has agreed to implement the following measures:

· to extend the current import prohibitions to encompass all automatic and self-loading long arms and pump action shotguns;
· to ban the importation of any ammunition for a banned firearm, in particular ammunition for the Chinese manufactured SKS and SKK self-loading rifles;
· to repeal the Australian Rifle Club regulations to ensure that all persons are subject to the firearms laws in the State or Territory in which they shoot;
· to coordinate legislation to control the inter State-Territory trade in firearms—
  limiting the sale and transport of firearms and ammunition to a licensed dealer to dealer basis;
  transport of prohibited and restricted firearms will be subject to prescribed safety requirements;
  prohibiting the commercial transport of ammunition with firearms;
· to contribute financially to the development of a national training package and to a public education campaign.

Each State will be required to introduce its own legislation to implement the national agreement and to incorporate the minimum national standards for firearms control. Many of the measures have been in place in South Australia for a number of years. The resolutions include five agreed categories of firearms. South Australia has had detailed categories for all firearm types since 1 January 1980. These categories were reviewed and amended on 1 September 1993. All the firearms that appear in the new nationally agreed categories are already accounted for in the South Australian system. However, amendments are required to reflect the new categories.

In terms of the national agreement and what it means for South Australia, I should like to make some comment on each of the resolutions.

RESOLUTION 1—Bans on Specific Types of Firearms.

First, the council resolved that all jurisdictions ban the sale, resale, transfer, ownership, possession, manufacture and use of those firearms banned or proposed to be banned from import other than in the following exceptional circumstances: the only need for the use of automatic or semiautomatic long arms would be military, police or other Government purposes, or occupational categories of shooters who have been licensed for a specified purpose, such as extermination of feral animals.

Secondly, the council resolved that all jurisdictions ban competitive shooting involving those firearms banned or proposed to be banned from import. Automatic firearms are already banned in South Australia. A person may possess and use an automatic firearm in South Australia only for theatrical or cinematic purposes, and then only after obtaining authorisation from the Registrar of Firearms. To bring South Australia into line with the new categories the following firearms will now fall within new licence category C, in which possession is prohibited except for occupational purposes:

· self-loading .22 rim fire rifles with a magazine capacity no greater than 10 rounds;
· pump action shotguns with a magazine capacity no greater than five rounds;
· self-loading shotguns with a magazine capacity of no greater than five rounds.

The new licence category D, in which possession is prohibited except for official purposes, will include the following firearms:

· self-loading .22 rim fire rifles with a magazine capacity of greater than 10 rounds;
· self-loading centre fire rifles;
· self-loading shotguns;
· pump action shotguns with a magazine capacity of greater than five rounds.

On 16 May this year, as an interim measure, the South Australian Government amended regulation 10 of the firearms regulations 1993 to include within the term 'restricted firearm' those firearms which the Police Ministers Council has resolved to prohibit except for occupational or official purposes. As a consequence, a person who now applies for a permit to purchase such a firearm will need to satisfy the Registrar of Firearms that special circumstances exist justifying the granting of a permit. To date no such permits have been issued.

RESOLUTION 2—Relates to the Effective Nationwide Registration of all Firearms.

New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania are required to immediately establish a registration system for all firearms in consultation with the National Exchange of Police Information (NEPI). Victoria, ACT, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory are to work with NEPI

in reviewing existing systems to ensure compatibility. All jurisdictions are to link their registration with NEPI. New South Wales, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia are to immediately place the names of all firearms licence holders in their State on NEPI's police reference system.

Members may be interested to learn that South Australia has had some form of firearms registration since the Firearms Registration Act 1919. It has been a requirement for many years in South Australia that all firearms be registered. Further, since 1995 the South Australian Police Department has been connected with NEPI, inputting details in relation to each firearms licence holder. The Firearms Section of the Police Department regularly obtains a print-out from the NEPI Anti-Violence Notification System which alerts the section of any firearms licence holder who has come under notice in relation to a serious crime or court order. Clearly, such information is most useful in assessing a person's suitability to obtain or continue to hold a firearms licence.

RESOLUTION 3—Genuine Reason for Owning, Possessing or Using a Firearm.

The council resolved:

· that personal protection not be regarded as a genuine reason for owning, possessing or using a firearm.

The classifications used to define genuine reason are:

· sporting shooters with valid membership of an approved club;

· recreational shooters/hunters who produce proof of permission from a landowner;

· persons with an occupational requirement such as primary producers, other rural purposes, security employees and professional shooters for nominated purposes.

In terms of collectors, the council resolution includes the following requirements:

· firearms in a collection which have been manufactured after 1 January 1946 must be rendered inoperable;

· collectors may not possess ammunition for a collection firearm;

· no prohibited firearm may be included in a collection;

· any attempt to restore firearms in a collection to a useable condition should be regarded as a serious offence and subject to severe penalties.

I point out that, in South Australia, since 1 January 1980, personal protection has not been regarded as adequate justification for possessing a firearm.

The council classifications relating to 'genuine reason' are virtually identical to those which already appear in the South Australian legislation under the term 'purpose of use'. Regulation 12 of the firearms regulations 1993 requires that a firearms licence must be endorsed with a purpose for which the firearm of the class authorised by the licence may be used by the licence holder. Accordingly, only a minor amendment to this provision is required in order to reflect the exact content of the council resolution. This resolution places severe restrictions on collectors of firearms especially in terms of rendering valuable firearms inoperable.

I am conscious of the impact that permanent deactivation of a collectible firearm has upon its value. Accordingly, I am examining options that may allow for the permanent conversion of a firearm—be it a collectible or not—to a single shot, thereby enabling the owner to retain possession of some of these firearms. I am also examining the option of allowing owners of firearms who come under the newly banned categories to permanently deactivate those weapons rather than surrender them for destruction. This sort of measure may be appropriate for firearms that are never used but are considered a family heirloom. However, it must be permanent—a firearm cannot be reconverted.

RESOLUTION 4—Basic Licence Requirements.

This resolution of the APMC seeks to introduce national uniformity with respect to the issue of any firearms licence. In addition to the demonstration of a 'genuine reason', a licence applicant is also required to:

· be aged 18 years or over;

· be a 'fit and proper person';

· undertake adequate safety training.

In terms of the licence itself:

· a licence must bear a photograph of the licensee;

· be endorsed with the category of the firearm;

· be issued after a waiting period of not less than 28 days;

· be issued for a period of no more than five years;

· be subject to immediate withdrawal of licence and confiscation of firearms in certain circumstances.

Aside from a '100 point' system to establish identity, South Australia already meets the requirements proposed for firearms licence applicants. South Australia will soon move to a five year photographic licence, and that licence will contain appropriate reminders regarding licence holder responsibilities. In the spirit of the council resolution, I will be considering the level of penalty—in addition to licence withdrawal and confiscation of firearms—that will apply for failing to comply with security and storage conditions. The issue of supervision of underage shooters is yet to be discussed—and a number of them are training for the Olympics.

RESOLUTION 5—Training is a Prerequisite for Licensing.

The council resolved that all jurisdictions require the completion of an accredited course in safety training for firearms for all first time licence applicants. Since 1 September 1993, it has been a requirement in South Australia that any first time applicant for a firearms licence must undertake a training course that has been approved by the Registrar of Firearms. All such courses are conducted by accredited instructors from DETAFE, recognised firearms clubs or the security industry. South Australia's firearms training courses are already of a high standard, and we have put forward our course as a possible national standard.

RESOLUTION 6—Grounds for licence refusal or cancellation and seizure of firearms.

The council agreed that all jurisdictions would implement a uniform minimum standard of circumstances, to be set out in legislation, in which applications are to be refused or licences cancelled. These minimum standards for licence refusal or cancellation include: general reasons—not of good character, conviction for an offence involving violence within the past five years, contravene firearm law, unsafe storage, no longer genuine reason, not in public interest due to (defined) circumstances, not notifying change of address, and licence obtained by deception; specific reasons—where applicant/licence holder has been the subject of an apprehended violence order, domestic violence order, restraining order or conviction for assault with a weapon/aggravated assault within the past five years; mental or physical fitness—reliable evidence of a mental or physical condition which would render the applicant unsuitable for owning, possessing or using a firearm.

A multijurisdictional working party, including health officials, police and medical representation, has been set up to examine possible criteria and systems for determining mental and physical fitness to own, possess or use a firearm. South Australia has had legislation in place since 1 January

1980 to enable the Registrar of Firearms to refuse an application for a firearms licence or to suspend or cancel a firearms licence in certain circumstances. The criteria upon which the Registrar would seek to take such an action are almost identical to the standards proposed by the council. The legislation also provides a mechanism for an appeal against a decision of the Registrar.

Members may also be aware that, since 1 September 1993, medical practitioners in South Australia have had a duty to inform the Registrar of Firearms of any patient whom they have reasonable cause to believe holds a firearms licence or intends applying for a licence and who is suffering from a mental illness that is likely to make the possession of a firearm unsafe. The medical practitioner attracts no civil or criminal liability in complying with this legislation.

RESOLUTION 7—Permit to acquire a firearm.

The council resolved that a separate permit be required for the acquisition of every firearm; and that the issue of a permit should be subject to a waiting period of at least 28 days to enable appropriate checks to be made on licensees in order to ascertain whether circumstances have occurred since the issuing of the original licence which would render the licensee unsuitable to possess the firearm or which would render the licensee ineligible for that type of firearm. In South Australia separate permits have been required for the purchase of every firearm since 1 September 1993. Applications for permits give the Registrar an opportunity to review the suitability of the licence holder, as well as the need to purchase each firearm and to check whether the firearm to be purchased is stolen or subject to an inquiry.

This is yet another example of how South Australia has been well in advance of most other States and Territories in its endeavour to control the possession and use of firearms. This resolution also introduces the concept of a 28 day waiting period to allow the appropriate checks to be made of firearms licence holders. The firearms section of the South Australia Police already conducts checks on a person's suitability to own or possess a firearm, not only in relation to each permit to purchase a firearm but also with regard to domestic violence orders and restraint orders. Given South Australia's access to relevant databases, our experience is such that such checks can be done in a much shorter period than 28 days. Clearly, the ability to conduct appropriate checks is dependent upon the resources of the agencies.

RESOLUTION 8—Uniform standards for the security and storage of firearms.

Since 1 September 1993 South Australia has had some of the strictest standards in Australia in relation to the storage of firearms. Accordingly, the storage conditions proposed by the council are largely similar to those already existing in South Australia. Only minor amendments to our current legislation will be necessary to accommodate all the provisions proposed in this resolution.

RESOLUTION 9—Recording of sales of firearms.

The council agreed that all jurisdictions should legislate to ensure that firearms sales be conducted only by or through licensed firearms dealers (that is, act as a recorder) and that firearms dealers should be required to record and maintain details of each weapon purchased or sold against the identity of the seller or the purchaser.

The resolution also covers the sale of ammunition only for those firearms for which the purchaser is licensed and seeks to place limits on the quantity of ammunition that may be purchased in any given period. On the purchase of ammunition, the relevant licence must be produced. While the notion that all firearms sales will be transacted only by or through licensed firearms dealers is new to South Australia, the principles which underpin the recording of such transactions have been in place in South Australia since 1 January 1980. In fact, South Australia is one of the few States which require dealers to supply details of all firearms transactions. It will now simply be a case of South Australia allowing access to this data by the NEPI system.

In relation to the purchase of ammunition, it has been a requirement in South Australia since 1 September 1993 that a person, first, must produce a firearms licence before purchasing ammunition and, secondly, can only purchase ammunition for those firearms for which he or she is licensed. The only new element in this resolution is the placing of limits on the quantity of ammunition that may be purchased in a given period.

RESOLUTION 10—Mail order sales of firearms.

As adverted to in resolution 9, it is the intention of the council to ensure that firearms sales are only conducted through or by licensed firearms dealers. This principle also extends to the mail order purchase and sale of firearms. This resolution will require new legislation in South Australia. The legislation will also provide a means by which people living in the country for whom a firearms dealer may not be readily accessible will be able to transact the sale of the firearm possibly through a police station where the information can be recorded and hence accessed by the NEPI system.

RESOLUTION 11—Compensation/incentive issues.

The council resolutions include:

· that a common basis for fair and proper compensation be agreed between jurisdictions to prevent gun owners from offering their firearms to the State/Territory which offers the best price;

· that a 12 month national amnesty be established, during which the public education campaign would persuade firearm owners to comply, and warn of severe penalties where firearms are not voluntarily surrendered;

· that, after the amnesty is concluded, each jurisdiction has severe penalties which to the extent practicable should be uniform for breaches of the firearms control laws.

The Commonwealth Government recently announced that the compensation scheme for the buy-back of newly banned firearms would be funded by an increase in the Medicare levy. The Senior Officers Group of the Australasian Police Ministers Council has formed a working party which is meeting today to discuss the valuation of those firearms which are proposed to be banned. The working party, chaired by the Commonwealth, comprises the Commonwealth Valuer General, a dealer in firearms, an Australian Federal Police superintendent of police and a representative from Western Australia who will provide ballistics expertise. That working party is due to report to the Commonwealth within the next two weeks.

As mentioned earlier, I fully recognise that many firearms owners are in possession of valuable firearms. The national agreement of 10 May 1996 has had an immediate and significant impact on the livelihoods of shop front gun dealers. It is my view that the issue of compensation for this group must be dealt with as a matter of priority. I wish to advise the House that I have written to the Prime Minister urging that the Commonwealth Government give urgent consideration to the issue of compensation for shop front gun dealers.

Members may be aware that on 13 May this year the South Australian Government announced an immediate 12

month amnesty to remove unwanted and illegal guns from the community. We are urging people to take advantage of the amnesty to hand in illegal guns—no questions asked—or to get rid of guns which they no longer need or want. We also want people who own firearms which will come under the newly banned categories to hand them over. However, if owners believe the firearms have value for which they want compensation, they will have to hold onto those firearms until the buy-back scheme is in place.

I have already announced that the South Australian Government will not pay compensation for illegal guns. Unlike other jurisdictions that have failed to put licensing and registration systems in place, in South Australia all guns are required to be registered, and anyone who has broken the law in this regard should not receive compensation. The Federal Government is yet to clarify its position on this matter.

The resolutions of the Police Ministers Council are comprehensive and, not surprisingly, there are a number of issues that require further discussions and clarification. I will be meeting with a number of firearm owner groups to discuss the changes and their effective implementation in South Australia. However, in summarising the recent developments, I want to make it clear that the South Australian Government is committed to implementing the national agreement and is planning to introduce draft legislation during the budget sitting of the Parliament.

The recent outrageous comments by some sectors of the gun lobby will not deter us. Their comments only add to the weight of evidence which supports the introduction of tighter gun controls. Threats and racist comments by particular individuals are outrageous. However, I do not believe that such comments in any way reflect the vast majority of responsible firearm owners.

I believe that the national agreement is in the interests of the wider community and that we have a responsibility to do everything we can to ensure that citizens are as safe as possible. The fact is that, despite the responsible behaviour of many firearm owners, firearms are stolen and used against members of the community. There are currently more than 400 000 firearms on the register in South Australia, including in excess of 60 000—

Mr LEWIS: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I move:

That an extension of time under Standing Order 107 be granted to the Minister to enable him to complete his ministerial statement.

The SPEAKER: It is the Chair's understanding that the Deputy Premier has gone beyond the 15-minute limit. I suggest that he seek further leave in order to conclude his remarks.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I so move, Sir.

Leave granted.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I repeat: the fact is that, despite the responsible behaviour of many firearm owners, firearms are stolen and used against members of the community. There are currently more than 400 000 firearms on the register in South Australia, including in excess of 60 000 semiautomatic firearms. I urge all members of this House to support the push for effective national gun controls so that Australia is remembered not for the events at Port Arthur but for its historic move in 1996 to finally deal with a problem which has been just too hard, for too long.

ASSET MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Deputy Premier): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I wish to update the House on progress being made by the Asset Management Task Force (AMTF) in its role of overseeing the sale of public sector assets. The original target set by this Government, as part of its recovery program to reduce debt, was to achieve $1.8 billion in asset sales over the four years to 1998. I am pleased to inform the House that the total value of assets sold to date, including BankSA, now stands at $1.6 billion, so that we are well ahead of our original program.

As part of the program, the AMTF has taken responsibility for the sale of the 333 Collins Street building in Melbourne from the South Australian Asset Management Corporation (SAAMC). Members will recall that the State inherited this building in August 1991 as the result of the disastrous put option taken out by SGIC when it was under the control of the Labor Government. This Labor bungle meant that the State had to purchase a largely vacant office building in the heart of Melbourne for the staggering sum of $465 million—for a building valued well under half that amount. As a result, taxpayers have footed the bill for substantial write-downs in the value of 333 Collins Street over the years. I am pleased to inform the House that we are now entering the final chapter of another sad and sorry Labor saga.

The Asset Management Task Force expects to appoint advisers shortly to sell 333 Collins Street, with expressions of interest likely to be sought by August of this year. As a result of an active campaign to lease up the building in preparation for sale, the property is now 76 per cent leased compared with a dismal 33 per cent when we came to office. Current negotiations are expected to take the occupancy to 80 per cent in the near future. This improved level of occupancy has restored value to 333 Collins Street and made it an attractive proposition to investors. It is expected that the sale should be completed by the end of 1996. The excellent work done preparing 333 Collins Street for sale is just another example of the effort being undertaken by various arms of Government in the asset sales process—a vital component of our debt reduction strategy.

The AMTF, under the Executive Chairman, Dr Roger Sexton, has been at the forefront in that regard and over the past two years has compiled an impressive list of sales. These include the Pipelines Authority of South Australia, SGIC, Austrust, Enterprise Investments, State Clothing and the *Island Seaway*, to name a few. Significantly, the AMTF was responsible for the successful $195 million sale and leaseback of the Government's light motor vehicle fleet earlier this month. Savings to the Government from this deal are of the order of $2.5 million per annum. And, while the assets sales program has eased the State's debt burden, it is important to recognise that the AMTF has insisted upon a process that provides the best overall outcomes for the State—including price, economic benefit and employment opportunities.

For instance, Tenneco is using the Pipelines Authority design, construction, management and operations expertise as a base for its Australian and regional activities. The purchasers of SGIC are investigating the establishment of a telecentre in Adelaide to service their direct marketing needs for the whole of Australia. These are just two examples of organisations which are keen to invest in South Australia and have confidence in the future. As a result, there has been minimal rationalisation by the new owners of these assets, despite fears to the contrary. The approach of the AMTF and the expertise of its board and staff have been well and truly

validated by the excellent results which have been achieved over the past two years.

The work by the AMTF has been recognised as highly professional and competent by many sections of the business community, as well as bidders alike. The AMTF has played an important role in putting some much needed respect back into the way South Australia conducts its financial affairs. Clearly, we are heading in the right direction and I congratulate the Asset Management Task Force on its part in getting the State's economy back on track.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

The SPEAKER laid on the table the seventeenth report of the committee on the economic and financial aspects of the operations of the MFP Development Corporation for the year ending 30 June 1995.

ENVIRONMENT, RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The SPEAKER laid on the table the twelfth report of the committee, being an interim report on the establishment of artificial reefs.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Mr OSWALD (Morphett): I bring up the twenty-third report of the committee on the Wirrina Cove Resort marina and public access road and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

Ordered that report be printed.

Mr OSWALD: I bring up the twenty-fourth report of the committee on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital psychiatric facility and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

Ordered that report be printed.

QUESTION TIME

FEDERAL FUNDING

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Premier. Given the Premier's talks with the Prime Minister, what are the precise terms of the assurances the Premier has received from John Howard about the level of general purpose grants and specific purpose grants and contributions from the Commonwealth to South Australia for the coming budget year, given that these supply 55 per cent of the State's revenue?

Mr Lewis: What do you think of Tim Marcus Clark?

The SPEAKER: The member for Ridley is out of order.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I am sure the House appreciates why there is any uncertainty in terms of Federal grants to South Australia. It is because the Keating-Beasley Government left an $8 billion hole in the Federal budget. Let us be quite clear—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Every Government of Australia has faced the problems that have arisen through the financial mismanagement of Labor Governments. We have had it here in South Australia; they have had it in Canberra, Victoria, Western Australia and up in Queensland. One clear thing that Labor does every time is that it absolutely messes up the finances of the Government.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Of course, there would not be any of this debate in Canberra if it was not for the $8 billion black hole left in the Federal budget after Paul Keating, as Prime Minister, gave certain assurances during the Federal election campaign. Those assurances given by Keating had no credibility.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I suggest to members on the first day back that they are not setting a very good example. I do not know whether they wish to see out the remainder of the sitting, but if they continue to interject the Chair will take action. The honourable Premier.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Let me assure the House that cuts in special purpose payments from Canberra in no way undermine the credibility and integrity of the South Australian Government budget to be introduced on Thursday. What this budget shows is that the Government has made enormous headway, as the Treasurer has just outlined, in fixing up the debt problem. We are something like 18 months ahead of schedule, put down just two and a half years ago, in reducing debt in South Australia. What it will show is that we will have those debt to GSP figures down to the lowest in the history of South Australia by the year 2000, and that is a huge achievement for South Australia.

The Government's budget to be introduced by the Treasurer on Thursday shows that there is, as we have indicated already, extra money for education, health and community welfare, and that could only be achieved because of the sound financial management imposed by this Government over the past two and half years. In fact, this budget will continue that. We are on track as laid down not just in the May 1994 financial statement but actually before the election. All those objectives that we said we had set out to achieve will be achieved.

STATE BUDGET

Mr SCALZI (Hartley): My question is directed to the Premier. Will the 1996 South Australian budget be a public relations exercise?

Mr Clarke: Yes, if you are honest.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: We heard the statements by the Leader of the Opposition over the weekend claiming that the budget will be no more than a public relations exercise. I assure the House that the budget will show the level of revenue and the level of expenditure of the Government during the coming year.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: It is interesting because, if the Leader of the Opposition had any credibility at all, he would have criticised the Carr Government on exactly the same basis. Is the Leader of the Opposition trying to suggest that our budget on Thursday should make provision for cuts in special purpose payments by the Federal Government

when no decisions have yet been made by the Federal Government?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: If that is the case, why did not the Leader of the Opposition criticise his own colleague Bob Carr in New South Wales? That shows the lack of credibility of the Leader of the Opposition. If anything is phoney, it is the Leader of the Opposition.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I point out that the State Premiers have made a submission to the National Audit Commission. That submission highlights the very shabby treatment that the States received from the former Labor Government. Since 1982-83—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Chair has given its last warning. There is no need for members to continue to interject. They have asked their questions. This House treats private members far more leniently than does any other House in Australia. I suggest that, if members want to see the day out—and I am looking straight at the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—they should cease interjecting.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Under the former Labor Federal Government the grants to the States declined by 21 per cent or $8.9 billion from 1982-83 to the present day. At the same time the Federal Government, through its own expenditure, bloated its own level of expenditure. It grew by 12 per cent or $10.5 billion. During the period of the Labor Federal Government, all the States and Territories of Australia were starved of grants, but at the same time the Federal Government increased its own expenditure by an even greater amount than it cut the expenditure on grants to the States. That shows the hypocrisy of the Leader of the Opposition in the statements he has made over the past week.

FEDERAL PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYMENT

Mr CLARKE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Does the Premier now regret his statement calling for job cuts in the Commonwealth public sector, and will he now tell the Federal Government not to proceed with further cuts to jobs and services in South Australia? Last month, in the lead up to the meeting of State Premiers, the Premier said that 30 000 Commonwealth funded jobs needed to go. Figures obtained by the Opposition show that, since the Federal election, cuts of almost 1 000 Commonwealth funded jobs have been announced in South Australia with thousands of additional jobs likely to be cut before the Expenditure Review Committee has reported and before the Federal budget has been brought down. The Premier is reported as saying that, since the election of his Government, State public sector jobs in South Australia have been cut by more than 10 per cent; ABS statistics show that South Australia is trailing the nation in jobs creation; and that so far in 1996 10 000 full-time jobs have been lost in this State.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader has given more than a fair explanation.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: In asking his question, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition quite inaccurately quoted what I said in Canberra. I said that now was the time for the Federal Government—having just heard what I said about the Federal Government escalating its own expenditure—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Just keep quiet and listen and get the facts right for once. Just shut up and listen for a change.

The SPEAKER: Order! I understand that the Premier has had a continual barrage of interjections.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I suggest that members not test the tolerance of the Chair. I suggest to the Premier that his comments were unnecessary and unwise, and I suggest that in future he use other words.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Mr Speaker, I certainly will not repeat them. In Canberra I said that the Federal Government over the past 10 years has been escalating its own level of expenditure and growing very fat indeed, whilst at the same time the States have been reducing the size of their Governments and, if there was to be a reduction to meet the $8 billion shortfall created by the Federal Labor Government, that reduction should not be in the grants to the States but rather in the level of expenditure of the Federal Government itself.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Deputy Leader for the first time.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: At no stage, as claimed by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, did I say that the Federal Government should cut its own level of employment by 30 000 jobs. I did not say that: I said that, whilst the Federal Government had become very bloated, the State Governments had had to cut their expenditure and payrolls by more than 10 per cent. I also said that, if the Federal Government applied the same standard to itself, that would equate to a reduction of 30 000 jobs in Canberra.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Members must contain themselves. The Chair has been more than reasonable. The Deputy Leader has been warned once: twice more and he will be named. The Chair is not bluffing.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I stand by what I have said, and I stand by all the State Premiers who backed me.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader is warned for the first time.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The Federal Government must cut its own expenditure rather than cut grants to the States. That is what I said in Canberra; that is what the State Premiers said in Adelaide at the Premiers Conference; and that is what I continue to say.

STATE BUDGET

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): Will the Treasurer please inform the House of the Government's reaction to the United Trades and Labor Council's four point recovery package as an alternative budget to that which will be delivered in the House on Thursday? The United Trades and Labor Council is proposing that we need more Government spending in South Australia and not less to stimulate job growth.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: The UTLC has put forward its plans to manage the South Australian economy. It is the same as we had last time when the previous Government was in power. It is breathtaking in its lack of vision. There are four points to the plan. The first suggestion is that we develop a series of selective import replacement initiatives to boost jobs. This Government has done more on import replacement—in fact, turning it around to export—than any previous

Government. On numerous occasions the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Regional Development has clearly outlined to the House the advances that have been made by the motor vehicle industry in not only meeting domestic demand but taking South Australian cars out into the international marketplace. Through this Government's initiative programs we have seen numerous examples in South Australia of a dramatic turnaround not only in respect of import replacement but principally on exports. I do not know where the UTLC has been for the past 2½ years.

The next point is rather interesting: it suggests that big budget allocations should be made for all those wage increases. That is the second string of its suggestions for economic recovery. All its union mates are trying to push up wages, trying to cause chaos, at the expense of the clients it wishes to serve. It wants a wages bill that will bankrupt this State. The UTLC makes no bones about that, so the second string of its budget-led economic recovery is to bankrupt the State with wage rises.

The third string in its bow deals with public sector services. It wants to put them back where they were when we came into Government. We knew that a $350 million deficit was associated with the delivery of those services at that time. Not only does the UTLC want wages but it wants to take us back to the bad old days where the debt was mounting and we were becoming bankrupt. The fourth item provides for big spending, because it wants more money for the Housing Trust program.

If the UTLC is to make a meaningful contribution to this State, it can talk about enterprise bargaining negotiations that deliver the results that are in the best interests of this State. That means a wages level that is slightly lower than the national average so that we can attract industry to South Australia. It means that, when we enter into bargains, they are delivered, rather than the stupidity and the carry-on that we have seen in recent times by some of its representative organisations. It does not mean that we should return to the days of big spending and hope like hell that it will be all right at the end of the day. I suggest to the UTLC that it go back to the drawing board.

Mr QUIRKE (Playford): In the light of the Premier's advice to the Howard Government to cut deeply into Commonwealth spending, jobs and programs, what assurances can the Premier give that the State budget to be brought down on Thursday will not have to be superseded by a mini-budget or economic statement following the August Commonwealth budget?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The shadow Treasurer did not even bother to listen to the answer I gave previously. He obviously wrote it this morning, and he stood up like a parrot and read it out to the House. I have already said that, if the Federal Government cuts special purpose payments, in no way does that alter the integrity of the budget to be introduced in Parliament on Thursday, and that stands.

ETSA CORPORATION

Mr WADE (Elder): I direct my question to the Premier. Does the Government have any secret agenda to privatise ETSA Corporation?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I can assure the House that this Government is not proposing to sell ETSA. As the Minister for Infrastructure has said, all we are proposing to do is restructure ETSA but retain it in the ownership of the public or the Government.

The Hon. M.D. Rann: And sell it later.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Let us look at the Leader of the Opposition's position on this. Together with the member for Hart, he has been out there chirping, claiming that they are violently opposed to the sale of ETSA assets, particularly to any outside private organisation. I have a heap of documents that show that the former Labor Government was proposing to sell and lease back a large chunk of ETSA to the value of $1.5 billion.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: We have all seen the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Hart jumping up and down but, whilst the Leader of the Opposition was a Minister in the former Government, his own Government was looking at selling off and leasing back ETSA Corporation facilities. I am able to reveal that this process started in 1989. It proceeded with a proposal that was put forward to the then Premier and Treasurer, John Bannon. The document states:

> The proposal involves the following steps: the sale by way of hire purchase of ETSA transmission lines to a US lessor. Under this proposal after a 30 year period, legal title, that is, ownership of the assets, would have been passed to the US lessor.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: This was not just a lease: it was the actual sale and transfer of the title of the ownership, and these documents show that the Labor Government hoped to raise $1.5 billion. Whilst that was going on, the now Leader of the Opposition was a Minister in that Government. The member for Hart—

The Hon. M.D. Rann: And I opposed it.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will contain himself.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The now Leader of the Opposition, who was a Minister while all this was going on, is trying to wash his hands of it. I point out what John Bannon wrote on the bottom of one of the documents. He wrote:

> Approved following discussion with advisers and Cabinet consultation.

The member for Giles, a former Treasurer, was also planning the sale of Electricity Trust facilities for $1.5 billion. These proposals continued throughout 1989 and 1990 and were only terminated in 1991 after the crash of the State Bank.

The Hon. M.D. Rann: When I came into Cabinet; that's right.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I point out to the honourable member that there is no evidence that Cabinet rejected this proposal.

The Hon. M.D. Rann: It happened then, so it has been sold off, has it?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The talks just came to an end. There is no Cabinet document that shows that Cabinet rejected this proposal. What an embarrassment to the Leader of the Opposition.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The documents show that Cabinet endorsed the proposal, and that was handwritten by

Mr Bannon on the bottom of one of the documents. It also had the support of his advisers. We know who a couple of his advisers were: the member for Hart—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition has had more than a fair go.

An honourable member interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mitchell.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: One of the documents states:

> Understandably the public and the Parliament often express concern when they learn of the selling off of State assets. The economic rationale of previous financial arrangements of benefit to the State but involving the sale of ETSA's boilers and turbines to Japan has sometimes been difficult to explain and it has always caused anxiety in some quarters because the identity of the purchasers has been withheld.

That is an admission in these documents of the enormous public angst against what the Labor Government was doing. The documents show that the former Labor Government of South Australia, having leased out the boilers and the turbines in the power stations, was proposing to sell ETSA's transmission lines for $1 500 million and then to lease them back, but, at the end of 30 years, to transfer the ultimate ownership away from the people of South Australia to some overseas owner.

It was the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Hart and other members of that Government who betrayed the people of South Australia. The Leader of the Opposition's recent statements that he is dead opposed to it, having been a Minister in the Government that was actively moving to sell more than half of ETSA at the time, shows how hypocritical he is. Clearly he has had a conversion on the road to Opposition.

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Premier. Has the South Australian Government made or will it make a submission to the review of the Australian National Railways Commission due to report to the Howard Government on 19 June, and will the Premier meet with workers at Islington and Port Augusta to detail the Government's position on any possible sale of Australian National in whole or in part? Australian National, which employs around 3 000 workers in South Australia, including about 700 former South Australian Railways employees, has been reported as being under threat of losing hundreds of jobs in South Australia alone, particularly in regional areas including Port Augusta. The Federal Government announced a major review of Australian National on 18 April with terms of reference that include the options of further contracting out or the sale of all or part of Australian National's business. Where is your submission?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I indicate that the Minister for Transport has been to Canberra. The Minister was there only last week speaking with the Federal Minister and taking up these issues. She made a previous trip about four weeks ago and, equally, met the Minister and discussed these very issues. There is a detailed submission being prepared from South Australia—

The Hon. M.D. Rann: Being prepared—

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: As a follow-up.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I highlight that the Minister has been across and had two talks—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The Minister has been to Canberra to have two talks with the Federal Minister already on this very subject and a further submission will be made shortly.

NATIONAL DREAMTIME TRADE SHOW

Mrs HALL (Coles): Will the Minister for Tourism inform the House of the success of the recently held National Dreamtime Trade Show staged in Adelaide?

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: I thank the member for Coles for her question. After two years of planning, Adelaide hosted the Dreamtime from 28 April to 2 May. It is the single biggest Australian Tourism Commission incentive trade fair and involves all the world's leading travel incentive buyers and international journalists. It gave South Australia an excellent opportunity to showcase not only our wine and food but the magnificent destinations of Kangaroo Island, the Barossa Valley and Adelaide itself. One hundred and seventeen international buyers and airline representatives from 20 countries attended the event, which was staged at Exhibition Hall. The event attracted more than 100 inbound tour operators, major hotel chains, and convention and visitor bureaus. The two most important issues were the trip to Kangaroo Island and lunch at Government House. Many of the visitors were very happy and proud to have lunch with the Governor of our State.

The estimated economic benefit for the State is about $60 million and that sum came out of the previous Dreamtime in Victoria in 1994. I take this opportunity to put on public record the magnificent job done by the staff of ACTA. It is a very small organisation in South Australia in terms of staff and it was able to put together one of the most magnificent tourism journeys and exhibitions in South Australia. It was a magnificent exercise with some $60 million worth of potential economic value to South Australia.

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL

Mr CLARKE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Will the Premier rule out his Government's giving any agreement whatsoever to proposals by the Howard Government that would lead to a cut in jobs or services in Australian National, particularly in our regional areas? The provisions of the Railways Transfer Agreement Act require that the Commonwealth Government must seek the agreement of the relevant South Australian Minister before substantial changes are made to the operation of or employment levels in Australia National and that, if no such agreement is reached, the matter must be resolved by arbitration.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: We will not sell South Australia short, as the former Labor Government did. We all know that the former Labor Government allowed the closure of the passenger service to Mount Gambier without taking any action at all. It did not exercise its rights under the railway agreement. I point out that we will oppose any move by the Federal Government in relation to Australian National that is not in the interests of South Australia.

TRADE DELEGATION, SINGAPORE

Mr CONDOUS (Colton): Will the Minister for Industry, Manufacturing, Small Business and Regional Development report to the House on the success of his recent visit with the

business trade delegation to Singapore, Brunei and Sarawak and indicate what future export deals are likely for South Australia as a result.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The trade mission to Singapore, Brunei, Kuching and Sarawak followed trade missions undertaken by this Government over the past two years. In total, some 200 small-medium businesses in this State have been assisted in going into the international marketplace and to date contracts signed by those companies have amounted to $57 million. I represented the Premier in opening the Institute of Chartered Accountants Business Prospects State of Business in South Australia this morning and the theme of speakers from Southcorp, Hills Industries, Elders, Vision Systems, Robert Gottliebsen and Cliff Walsh from the Centre of Economic Studies was consistent with the policy thrust of this Government, and that is this—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: No, it is that South Australia has to develop an export culture: because of the low critical mass and economies of scale in our State, we simply have to reach into the international marketplace, win contracts and bring the business back to South Australia. The policy that this Government has had in place for 2½ years is underscoring that. In Singapore at the Asia hotel and food expo there were 1 769 exhibitors and 40 000 visitors each day. South Australia had a stand alone display in the area. Total sales generated by the end of the fair were about $6.5 million and there was investment to attract that $6.5 million of about $60 000 to assist those companies—that is, the rent of the space, the fair and the like—to present South Australia and showcase what we do well in horticulture, viticulture and the like.

In both Brunei and Sarawak we were looking at the provision of a range of goods and services from South Australia. The companies that were included in that mission were Ashford Hospital, the University of South Australia, Citibank, Quicktrack, O'Donnell Griffin, United Water, Adelaide Bank, Fisher Jeffries, Building Constructions, Richard Ellis, Golden Chef and many more. In fact, Laucke Flour Mills won a substantial order in Kuching, Sarawak, for the provision of flour from South Australia—something that it did not get but was a bonus following the Singapore visit.

So successful was the day in Kuching where the local Department of Trade had arranged business matching sessions for the small businesses from South Australia that they had meetings every 15 minutes during the day. So successful was it, so pronounced was the response from businesses in Sarawak, that the session went on into the evening simply because we could not get enough appointments during the day for businesses from South Australia.

Subsequent to that the Premier and I have both had letters from a number of people who went on this mission saying, 'This is a way to assist small business to get over that quantum step of the daunting task, almost the intimidating task for them, and to go into the export market.' It is a land bridge for them to build-up networks and contacts, and how to do it. That is coupled with what the Government has done over two years with our overseas offices to build up a network of support for South Australian businesses going into the market.

It is interesting to note that the Queensland Government is coming down to look at how we do it in terms of trade and support for small businesses going into these markets. It is also interesting to note that the only State in Australia that has been asked by Austrade to participate in sessions about export market potential for small-medium businesses at official level is the State of South Australia, based on the track record that South Australia is building up in these markets in Asia. The only State at a ministerial level regarding the Indonesian Ministers meeting to come to Australia was the State of South Australia, clearly underpinning the policy that this Government has now had in place for 2½ years. There are substantial and tangible runs on the board. The small business community is accepting and acknowledging the support being given, and the seed money that we are putting in and the rewards that we are getting are quite substantial for South Australia.

There is a whole list of individual projects and individual companies, whether it be in water purification systems, Shandong beef cattle, Antar Holdings and the Bolivar project, the Northern Territory Expo and the SA Water seminar at that expo, or Bizhelp: whatever the range of goods and services, South Australia has something to offer. We are re-marketing this State as a sophisticated manufacturing State and as a State with goods and services that go into the international marketplace. That is certainly, in a policy direction, underlying the theme of the accountancy profession and the business community in South Australia—the signpost of the future for South Australia. There is no doubt that this policy is reaping real rewards for small business in this State.

UNIVERSITY BUDGETS

Ms WHITE (Taylor): Has the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education obtained guarantees from the Federal Minister for Employment, Education and Training, Senator Amanda Vanstone, that proposed cuts to university budgets—including jobs for lecturers and support staff—and programs to help the unemployed will not proceed? The Minister, along with the Opposition, has placed on record his concerns about Federal Government cuts, particularly to universities and other training programs. However, the Premier has said that the Federal Government should follow South Australia's lead by cutting 30 000 Commonwealth jobs.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: Let us correct the last part of the honourable member's question first: the Premier was not talking about the university sector. The universities are not Government departments, and the member for Taylor should know that. Each university in South Australia has already undergone significant cuts in terms of staffing. I am certainly not saying that our universities should not be more efficient and effective, and the universities accept that, but it is my responsibility to go in to bat for our universities and I will continue to do that, because the universities are vital in South Australia. But I will always be seeking from our universities that they be more efficient and effective in the delivery of programs. Shortly, I will be introducing to Parliament measures to help ensure that the governance of the universities will assist in that process.

To this stage I have met several times with Senator Vanstone, and I make no apology for arguing the case very strongly for South Australia. But the Senator is in a very difficult position: she has probably the toughest portfolio in the Federal arena, and I have been very pleased with the audience that she has given me. She has undertaken to meet again with me in the very near future. I will continue to press South Australia's case not only for universities but for employment programs and across all areas relating to my portfolio.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

Ms GREIG (Reynell): Will the Minister for Health inform the House of any recent initiatives that will improve mental health services in South Australia?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: On Saturday I was very pleased to be associated with the official opening of the first clubhouse in South Australia, known as Diamond House, at Kilkenny, and I acknowledge the presence there of the local member (the member for Spence), the member for Price and the shadow Minister for Health. I am sure that they will acknowledge that there was an enormous spirit of goodwill and of optimism at the opening. It was an example not dissimilar to that of the week before, when I opened the mental health resource centre for community groups at Mile End. That provides four to five community groups with a base from which to provide support.

Reverting to the clubhouse exercise, the South Australian Government, through the South Australian Mental Health Service, provided a capital grant of $250 000 for the purchase of a church and pool, and a $60 000 salary grant for a coordinator and for covering set-up costs. Diamond House is not a traditional mental health service where a range of mental health professionals provide services: in fact, it is, as I said, a clubhouse. Members themselves are actively involved in organising the range of activities that might be offered by the clubhouse, which include social, recreational and, very importantly, employment opportunities. The benefit of membership obviously revolves around assistance with communication problems, skills that might raise self confidence and self esteem and, as I mentioned before, employment opportunities.

The fact that we are now able to put in place a clubhouse following a worldwide movement for these ventures is very positive and highlights that, whilst people with a mental illness have medical needs, they are actually no different from other members of the community in that their primary needs are personal, social and communal. What clubhouses find is that the biggest obstacle facing people with a mental illness is stereotyping, and there is no greater example of stereotyping in recent times than after the Port Arthur massacre where, with absolutely no evidence whatsoever, segments of the media immediately branded the alleged killer schizophrenic. Not only was this carrying on stigmatisation of the worst possible kind but it also meant that many innocent, caring and loving members of society were then ostracised by other members of society because of that stigma. That is simply not acceptable in the 1990s and as we move into the next century.

If the community will give people with a mental illness room to move back into the community, they are happy and willing to do so. Obviously, clubhouse is the type of thing that will allow them to do that. The Government's enthusiasm for this clubhouse reflects our commitment to community based care for people with a mental illness. And we have been unwavering in our support for the process of deinstitutionalisation. We took it over from the previous Government. We made sure it was viable, because it was not viable when we took it over, and the Parliament needs to know that, after years of hard work and preparation, we are now at the end of the realignment process of moving to area based mental health services, which is what the community and the consumers want.

I am concerned at Opposition members' continual harping about mental health, because what this does is to cause doubts about their commitment to deinstitutionalisation and raises on their behalf the spectre of stigmatisation.

MORTGAGE REFINANCING

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): Will the Premier act to ensure that South Australian home buyers do not miss out on cuts to interest rates on their mortgages because of the high fixed costs of obtaining refinancing, in particular State Government stamp duty? Last week the New South Wales Labor Government of Bob Carr removed the stamp duty on the refinancing of home loans. The removal of this duty in New South Wales is already putting pressure on the banks to lower their variable mortgage rates, not just for those who are refinancing but for all borrowers. As the banks' South Australian customers still face the fixed costs of stamp duty if they refinance, they may judge that their customers in this State are locked in and that they do not need to offer cheaper home loan rates here.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I think that the honourable Leader will find that the New South Wales Government has done no more than propose: it was in the budget. We do not have the details of it yet. The South Australian Government—

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: —is looking at that issue and will report accordingly when it has done so.

MOUNT LOFTY

Mr EVANS (Davenport): I direct my question to the Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources. What efforts are being made to protect vegetation on the Mount Lofty summit during its reconstruction?

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I am delighted to have the opportunity to respond to some of the criticism that has been levelled at this very important project in recent times. The Mount Lofty summit development builds on South Australia's unique advantages in a number of ways. It is creative, exciting and particularly innovative. It is the most sensitive and unobtrusive of all previous proposals for this site and represents the work of some of the best architects, planners and builders in this country. There has been some comment in recent times about the missing Mount Lofty understorey taken from a small area adjacent to the actual summit. In fact, the understorey has not gone missing; it has not been bulldozed: it has been carefully lifted, potted and stored to be replanted at the completion of the earthworks. In other words, it will be put back.

In this project the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has gone to considerable lengths, which I believe have not been undertaken previously in Australia. Even the topsoil that has been removed has been stored to be spread back, allowing the natural revegetation of bulbs and seeds. Revegetation and rehabilitation of the summit are crucial components of the development; in fact, more areas will be revegetated than will be cleared. If you go up there and recognise the amount of revegetation that will take place on and adjacent to the summit you will understand how pleased we are about the progress of this development.

There are many degraded sites around the summit, and at the end of the development we will have a better Mount Lofty than we have had for years. Members might be interested to know that as part of this program 4 630 plants have been propagated from cuttings; 3 490 seeds from plants and

grasses have been collected and germinated in trays and are expected to be transplanted in tubes within a fortnight; 6 427 species have been potted—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: —and a very good electorate it is, too—and held at a temporary nursery close to the summit, and they will be replanted as soon as the earthworks have been completed. So, do not let anybody say we do not have respect for the environment as far as this project is concerned. In total, nearly 15 000 plants will be available for revegetating the summit when it is completed. In addition, pest plants such as blackberries, olive trees and broom are also being removed. They have been a problem in the area for some time. Dumped building rubble found at the site of the new car park has been taken off-site and, to protect the surrounds, walking trails will also be upgraded. The summit development again shows that South Australia is moving forward and is doing so in a way that is giving due care and consideration for environmental issues. To those who believe that this development brings with it environmental vandalism, I suggest that it does anything but that. It is probably one of the most sensitive developments we have seen in South Australia for many years.

FERRIS, MS J.

Mr CLARKE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I direct my question to the Minister for Primary Industries. On what date did the now Liberal Senator-elect Ms Jeannie Ferris leave her position as Chief of Staff for the Minister for Primary Industries; from what date did she cease receiving remuneration from the South Australian Government; and which one of you lot dobbed her in in the first place?

The SPEAKER: Order! I call upon the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to withdraw that last comment. It is unnecessary, unwise and very foolish. If he does not do so without qualification he will be named on the spot. Let me just say to members opposite that the Deputy Leader and the Leader have taken it upon themselves today to continue to defy the Chair. If they want to go down that track, that is fine with the Chair. That includes the member for Spence, while I am on my feet. I will have no hesitation in running this Parliament as his colleague does in New South Wales, and then he will know what it is like to be thrown out of the House on a daily basis. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr CLARKE: I withdraw, Sir.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: I do not know the dates off the top of my head, but I will obtain the relevant information. As for the last part of the question, I think it was totally improper.

PRISONERS, TRANSPORT OUTSOURCING

Mr LEGGETT (Hanson): Will the Minister for Correctional Services inform the House on the latest developments to outsource prisoner and young offender transportation in South Australia?

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I thank the member for Hanson for his question and for his ongoing interest in contributing to more efficient Government. The member for Hanson has had some involvement in the behind the scenes work on this project as a member of my Correctional Services Advisory Committee in Government. Last week, tenders were called for the management of offender transport throughout South Australia and also in-court management. The specification of tenders has been a particularly time consuming and complex process, as it involves four Government agencies and a very complex web of work and management.

Currently the transport of prisoners and in-court management is undertaken by the Department for Correctional Services, the South Australian Police Department, the Department for Family and Community Services and the Courts Administration Authority. The contracting out of this process has been overseen by the Correctional Services Department, utilising the same staff who have overseen the very successful contracting out of the management of the Mount Gambier prison.

Four companies have been invited to tender for the contract, having been selected from those who submitted their registrations of interest when such registrations were called for in October last year. The final agreement will cover the management of prisoner transport and in-court management across those four agencies. Currently, those agencies are responsible for the transport of some 50 000 prisoners across the State per annum and also the management of 10 000 prisoners in our courts system. Tenders for the contract close on 11 June and the initial implementation of the contract is due to begin by about the end of September of this year. When it does, South Australia will become only the second State in Australia to outsource its prisoner transport operations and the first State in Australia to outsource its total operation.

A specific requirement of the Audit Commission report handed down in this Parliament in 1994 was that the Correctional Services Department explore in detail the outsourcing of various support and security functions with the aim of reducing costs to Government and introducing greater efficiency. Similarly, recommendations were made in a similar vein about the Police Department. While the movement of prisoners throughout our State is vital to the efficient operation of the judicial system, at the same time it is a very costly and time consuming business. Presently, because of the involvement of four Government agencies, there is considerable overlap between those four agencies in the services provided, and that overlap can be eliminated by the outsourcing of the operation to just one service provider. The services to be contracted out briefly include inter-institutional transfers; movement of prisoners to and from various courts; movement of prisoners from the Police Department principal charging stations; movement and management of prisoners from some appointments; movement and management of prisoners at hospitals; and in-court management, except those at Sir Samuel Way Building courts, across the metropolitan and country areas.

Some of the value for money improvements which are expected as a consequence of the contract that will ultimately be signed for an integrated service include a scheduled transport service, rather than the relatively uncoordinated service that has been running for many years; timely production of prisoners at various courts (the judiciary are well aware of some of the difficulties encountered from time to time when prisoners are not at the court at the time they are required); and minimal time spent by prisoners in court holding facilities, which again is a costly management exercise. Presented as a single package, the movement of prisoners and young offenders is seen as an attractive proposition for private sector organisations to make a core business. There has been intense interest in this outsourcing from companies around Australia. It will ultimately provide good news for South Australians as we have the opportunity

to better manage this operation and, at the same time, reduce the cost to the taxpayer.

TRAINING FUNDING

Ms WHITE (Taylor): My question is directed to the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education. What guarantees has the Minister received from his Federal counterpart, Senator Amanda Vanstone, regarding the maintenance of funding to South Australian based job training programs and work placement schemes? Funding applications for programs for the unemployed such as New Work have already been frozen by the Federal Liberal Government, and other programs such as Skillshare have been delayed. In addition, prevocational training programs such as those involving literacy skills have stopped, affecting 'those most disadvantaged in the community', to quote John Howard.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: I remind the member for Taylor that the people of Australia voted in the Federal Government and that it has the responsibility to formulate its budget, and it is in the process of doing that. It is quite inappropriate for me to indicate whether or not the Federal Minister has given any guarantees. The member for Taylor will in due course hear the outcome of the deliberations on the Federal budget.

GAMBLERS REHABILITATION FUND

Ms HURLEY (Napier): My question is directed to the Minister for Family and Community Services. Why is only $1.1 million to be allocated this week from the Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund when documents from the Minister's office indicate that $2.263 million remains unspent from the last two years' receipts? On 24 May it was reported that the Minister will this week announce grants totalling $1.1 million from the Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund and that $700 000 would be left in the fund, making a total of $1.8 million. A note from the Minister's office dated 22 December 1995 indicates that only $1.237 million of a total fund of $3.5 million had previously been allocated at that date. The Minister gave an undertaking to the House on 10 April to provide details of amounts paid out of the account, but this information has not been received.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: As far as the last part of the question is concerned, I am quite happy to make that information available to the honourable member. All she has to do is ask for it: I am quite happy to make it available. As the honourable member is probably aware, $2 million of funding from the Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund is to be announced this week. Expressions of interest are also being called for additional services including specific services for people of non-English speaking backgrounds and Aboriginal people: those areas have not been serviced appropriately in the past, and it is important that that should be the case. Expressions of interest have also been called for the creation of self-help groups, and further calls are to be made in the area of research.

I will address some of the false perceptions to which the honourable member has referred and which are constantly being spread by the Opposition. For example, over a long period the Opposition has been saying that some of this money is finding its way back into Consolidated Account, and that is obviously behind the question that was asked today. I again point out that that is not the case. Also, I point out that this is an industry sponsored program; it is dependent on industry making this funding available and is overseen by an independent body, and the Opposition tends to forget that that is the case.

The Opposition is very keen to place blame on everybody else. It is an independent committee which is determined to ensure the best possible services in not only the metropolitan area but also country areas. Services are tendered in geographic blocks to ensure that there is no duplication and that services are well planned and not *ad hoc*. Again, I point out that South Australia is regarded nationally as being at the forefront of gamblers' rehabilitation services, and that South Australia has moved more swiftly than any State to bring these services into action—another point recognised nationally. Following a review into the implementation of these services, my department is now embarking on a program to ensure recurrent funding over a multiple funding cycle. That point has been raised by the Opposition on a number of occasions. The $2 million represents a change from a one-year funding cycle to a two-year funding cycle, and that is something that has been very well received by the agencies which are being assisted.

Finally, I am pleased to recognise that we need to take care, in the management of the fund, that the recurrent service provision does not expend the $1.5 million allocation, otherwise it could lead to shortfalls in future years, and we are very close to that figure of $1.5 million at the present time. Recognising that, as background to this whole issue, I am prepared to look at the specifics of the question that was asked by the honourable member and provide a detailed response. I reiterate my concern about the misinformation that is continuing to be pedalled by the Opposition on this matter, particularly when so much of the decision making is the responsibility of an independent committee, and it is important that that should be the case.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

The SPEAKER: The question before the Chair is that the House note grievances. The honourable member for Hanson.

Mr LEGGETT (Hanson): The whole nation has been mourning the death of 35 people at the hands of a gunman who killed his victims in a murderous rampage at the historic site of Port Arthur in Tasmania on Sunday 28 April. Memorial services have been held throughout the country, including a State service at St David's Anglican Cathedral in Hobart which was attended by the Governor-General, the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and other representative community leaders. It was one of many attempts to deal with the deep sense of grief at the shocking loss of innocent lives and the trauma of the families who have been bereaved in one of the worst tragedies of its kind in the history of Australia.

Trauma counsellors have been available to assist families, as well as those who witnessed the senseless slaughter and the many who provided the urgent emergency services. People are trying to understand why it happened. They wonder whether a similar tragedy could recur, as it has in the past in this country, and what could be done to prevent it. It is most helpful that these concerns should be talked about openly, and there have been plenty of opportunities for that

in a public way on the many talk-back radio programs throughout Australia. It has also been suggested that it is right to express anger at what has happened, but that needs to be a positive expression.

Extreme gun lobbyists deserve the anger of many in the community, but it is wrong for them to have their lives threatened. It is right to be angry with the alleged perpetrator of the crime but not to deny him the medical treatment he needs or to threaten the hospital staff, which tragically did occur in Hobart. It is never helpful to express anger against God by blaming Him for not intervening to prevent such a tragedy. God has given us free will to use for Him or against Him, to obey or disobey Him, and in this way at least humankind is distinguished from the rest of creation. Without this gift of free will it would be impossible for the human personality to develop and be made in the image of God. With this gift we could not make moral choices, so there would have been no development of character.

In a sense, God has limited Himself by giving us the freedom of choice. If a person deliberately abuses this freedom and harms other people, as in the case of murder, theft or rape, the consequent misery and loss logically follow. Obviously there is a responsibility upon all of us to do everything possible to prevent the abuse of the free will which each person has. Gun control is one way of doing that, and there must be a complete ban on heavy weapons and a full register of all firearms throughout this country, and that matter has already been put in motion. As legislators and politicians we must be held accountable for immediate and appropriate legislation and must not ever be hoodwinked by the spurious argument that people and not guns kill.

Excessive violence on television and videos, in films and also in cinemas must also be banned. If the film industry is reluctant to make the necessary changes, the people themselves must boycott these films. In this way, everyone will be responsible to bring about change. There needs also to be more careful supervision of any people with psychological illness, with a propensity to violence and irrational behaviour. One reason for the shock in the community is the general expectation that everyone is naturally good, and that the inherent bias to evil in human nature does not exist. This arises from a lack of belief in God and, if this bias to evil is not brought under control by some conventions established by the Christian ethic and personal faith in God, it leaves the community more vulnerable to abuse and more shocked when tragedies happen. The final resolution of the problems is with God Himself. He comes alongside those who suffer.

At the memorial service at St David's Cathedral, the words of Christ were read, 'Come unto me all who travail and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Tony Kisten, a fine Christian who attended church regularly and was involved in a Bible study group, was one of the tragic victims at Port Arthur. As he lay bleeding and dying in the arms of his wife, his last words were, 'I am going to be with God.'

Ms WHITE (Taylor): Senator Amanda Vanstone, the woman who speaks for John Howard on education and training matters, the woman who effectively holds in her hands the future of many young South Australians, is a South Australian, and the public face of the Liberal Government's cuts to university budgets. But she is just that—the public figurehead, the one who decided to stick it to the Vice Chancellors by letting slip the Liberal's intention to slash 12 per cent off university budgets. Let us be under no misconception. Despite the pre-election promises a couple of months ago and the sanctimonious excuses by the Liberals now, these cuts to universities and the proposed slug on students through massive increases to HECS, an expected 30 per cent, are the Liberal philosophy for higher education.

The State Further Education Minister was quick to protest. He said that he would argue against his Liberal colleagues. However, once we get past the words he uttered, what has he achieved? Today in Question Time he confirmed that he had not managed to achieve any guarantees for South Australia at all. Indeed, how could he argue from any position of strength, given his own cuts last year of over $10 million? A 12 per cent cut to South Australian universities would mean a loss of tens of millions of dollars and a loss of hundreds of staff from the very institutions that are providing us with the research and teaching that we need to address our chronic school shortages in this State. There is no doubt that the quality of teaching and learning in South Australia will be harmed.

This is not a simple budget cut that can be made up in subsequent budgets without effect. The effect on the education and training infrastructure in this State will be seriously damaged, and it will seriously damage our ability to maintain existing industries in South Australia, let alone the impact it will have on our prospects for attracting new industries and having the capacity to improve our innovations for export.

Governments do have long-term obligations to students who begin university courses. Sudden cuts of the nature proposed by the Liberals now ignore those responsibilities and treat those students as guinea pigs in the Liberal experiment. In the long term, there is an even more sinister outcome as a result of this Liberal plan for higher education. The massive increase to HECS charges that the Liberals are proposing will ensure that those most disadvantaged in the community have an extra hurdle to overcome if they are to aspire to university training. So much for John Howard's pledge that those people most in need will not be disadvantaged by his budgetary measures. So much for the pre-election promise not to increase the higher education charge. So much for the pre-election promise to spend more—in fact, $129 million over three years—on research grants and post graduate scholarships, and to maintain current levels of university operating budgets.

One of the most disturbing aspects of the events over the past week is the realisation by the community that the Liberal vision for South Australian higher education is devoid of any strategic thinking about what we need to do to position South Australia well for the future. Rather, it is clear that the Federal Liberals see support for higher education as a burden rather than a strategic investment. In fact, the new Liberal Minister's first statement about the future of higher education in Australia was an attack. She has no interest in maintaining a strong and accessible higher education system. All she is interested in is to act in accordance with the familiar ploy of State Liberal Governments to hide behind the excuse of debt reduction to achieve what is fundamentally a Liberal philosophy: abolition of public funding for education. The Federal Liberals have no better teachers than the State Liberals sitting in this Chamber in that regard.

Mr VENNING (Custance): I rise to speak on a very important issue, that is, the Government's selling off of the grain bulk handling loading facilities. As a grain grower, and therefore a member of Cooperative Bulk Handling, I declare an interest in this matter. I am pleased that the Government has taken up the option to negotiate with South Australian

Cooperative Bulk Handling, and I thank Treasurer Baker and Minister Laidlaw for their cooperation.

The Government has authorised the Asset Management Task Force to enter into negotiations with South Australian Cooperative Bulk Handling Limited for the purchase of all bulk handling loading facilities in South Australia. It has been well received by everybody in the industry in South Australia, particularly the farmers, the South Australian Farmers Federation, Cooperative Bulk Handling itself and the marketers, that is, the Australian Wheat Board and the Australian Barley Board.

My late father, Howard Venning, as a previous Chairman of Directors of SACBH, was always concerned that the farmers—and I remind the House of how important the farmers are to the economy of the State and in getting us out of the economic mess we are in—did not have control of the vital link between the storage—that is, the silos—and the ships carrying the produce to our overseas markets. It always was a great concern, but at least it was an independent hand in relation to Government. Heaven forbid that it should ever fall into the hands of anybody else with other interests.

It is very important that we do not lose control of our own destiny, and it has been on the agenda for many years. At last, a Government has decided that it does not need to own the facility. I often wondered why it did in the first place. Admittedly, the Government does own the land they stand on, because they are on the wharves of our ports. I am pleased that the Government has chosen to ask Cooperative Bulk Handling first, to see whether a deal can be negotiated. Anybody who understands the system, as I do, would agree that no other option can work. All we have to do is agree to the price. Occupational Health and Safety has rendered some of the belts unsafe. The recent Ports report, as you would be well aware, Sir, has suggested that only three of the ports have a future, because it recommends that only three be upgraded—Port Lincoln, Port Giles and Port Adelaide. If the report is to be believed—and I do not—the other four will eventually be for land storage only.

Many of the belts are way below acceptable capacity for 1996 and in need of expensive upgrade. The ports currently using the belts are Port Adelaide, Port Lincoln, Wallaroo, Port Pirie, Port Giles and Ardrossan. I hope that the Asset Management Task Force and SACBH can come to an agreement for the overall good of the taxpayer of South Australia, with the Government realising the proper price of one of its assets, and that the industry—that is, the growers, the handlers and the marketers—will be realistic. If they cannot come to an agreement, the other options in my opinion are unworkable and not in the best interests of the South Australian grain industry.

The Government will ensure, and a new owner will guarantee, third party access. The major user is the grain industry, but at Thevenard we also have gypsum and salt on the belt. The belt at Ardrossan is owned by BHP, and we share it with that company. I am fully aware of what will happen if an agreement cannot be reached: it will be offered to open tender. I sincerely hope that we are not forced to pursue that option because growers—my constituents—will be very concerned. Because of my declared interest in this matter, I will not be taking any active part, but I am certainly a very interested bystander. I will watch the proceedings, just as you will, Sir. I am hopeful that SACBH will take over ownership of the grain handling belts and be granted a long-term lease over the ground on which they stand. I congratulate the Government on this commendable strategy.

In relation to the Ports report, which was released a couple of weeks ago, I point out that it contains many matters with which I do not agree. I certainly agree with maintaining Port Adelaide as a port, although I wonder whether it should be Outer Harbor and not Port Adelaide. I agree that Port Lincoln should remain, but I am concerned about Port Giles: I think it should be Wallaroo.

Mr BECKER (Peake): I thank the Parliament for the opportunity to represent the House of Assembly at the 8th Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar which was held in Hong Kong from 13 May through to 18 May 1996. The seminar provided the opportunity for 19 nations within the Commonwealth to come together to share experiences and assist one another. Forty-five delegates were present at the seminar and a wide range of topics were discussed, including parliamentary procedure, accountability of government, and the operations of the various legislatures within the Commonwealth.

It is a significant time for Hong Kong and the Chinese Government. On 1 July 1997, Hong Kong will come within the ambit of China, the lease having expired with Great Britain. Whilst the transition from the present parliamentary democracy system will take 13 years, Hong Kong will no longer be part of the Commonwealth of Nations. At the conclusion of the conference the delegates agreed to the following statement which was issued by Sir Colin Shepherd, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association:

> As Commonwealth parliamentarians attending the 8th Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar hosted by the Hong Kong Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, we congratulate the branch and the secretariat of the Legislative Council for the excellence of the arrangements made and for their warmth of the welcome and hospitality.
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> We are grateful for the opportunity afforded us to discuss in Hong Kong the matters of parliamentary practice and procedure which are of such importance to us in pursuit of our objective of furthering the positive ideals of parliamentary democracy. Coming as we do from 28 branches in 19 different countries, large and small, we reflect very much a cross-section of the Commonwealth of nations and, irrespective of race, religion or culture, we are united by community of interest, respect for the rule of law and human rights and freedoms. Our discussions this week have served to enable all participants to reaffirm their commitment to these ideals.
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> We acknowledge that after 30 June 1997 the Hong Kong branch will be required to leave our membership but we note the commitment to the continuing development of the Legislative Council with the election of all members by universal suffrage and we hope that this will occur with expedition. We also hope that Hong Kong's future legislators will wish to maintain contact with parliamentary associations such as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.
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> We ask the people of Hong Kong to accept our best wishes for the future.

On the final day of the seminar, all of us felt very deeply when we spoke about the future of Hong Kong, but I have no doubt that very little will change, that Hong Kong will remain in safe hands provided the Legislature is allowed to continue, and that those who are elected by universal suffrage will continue to improve the conditions of the six million people living in Hong Kong including the three million people who have no true identity or no true passport of identity other than that they are from Hong Kong or are refugees of Hong Kong. There are some difficulties still to be dealt with. We feel very strongly that the future of Hong Kong is a very important part of South-East Asia. It is a close neighbour of Australia and will always be a valued and respected member of Asia. The States of Australia wish Hong Kong and its people a long, happy and eternal life.

Mr CLARKE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I should like to make what almost amounts to a personal explanation with respect to a question that I asked of the Minister for Primary Industries concerning the Liberal Senator-elect Jeannie Ferris. My throw-away line—which I retracted—'Which one of you lot dobbed her in in the first place?'—was not meant to cast any aspersions on any member of the parliamentary Liberal Party in South Australia as being the person who may have dobbed in Senator-elect Jeannie Ferris and thus caused her so much grief. When I said 'you lot', I thought I was referring to the faction within the Liberal Party to which the Minister for Primary Industries belongs.

As I understand it, the person who dobbed in Senator-elect Jeannie Ferris came from the same faction as the Minister for Primary Industries. In fact, it is believed that the Federal Minister for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (Amanda Vanstone) dobbed in her colleague from South Australia and caused so much grief for Ms Jeannie Ferris. It is unfortunate, Sir, that members of your own political Party, because of their personal hatreds and internecine warfare, are prepared—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Ross Smith that he was required to withdraw his comments. He withdrew his comments. It is not proper for him to qualify his withdrawal by further comment during the grievance debate. It is also possible that this matter will reach the courts. I ask the member to be cautious.

Mr CLARKE: I will swiftly move on, Sir. It indicates the underlying tensions within the State Liberal Party. There is a whole host of challengers at the preselection level within the State parliamentary Liberal Party. I understand, Sir, that even your good self may be under some threat with respect to preselection.

Mr Brindal interjecting:

Mr CLARKE: I note that the member for Unley—for the time being, the Liberal member for Unley—nodded his head and said, 'No, you are not under threat, Sir'. But we know that the current Liberal member for Unley is under threat and serious challenge with respect to his preselection.

Mr Brindal interjecting:

Mr CLARKE: Now he cheers me on because he wants me to say these kind words about him in order to assist his case with respect to his preselection. Here is a person who stood up to the Hall dynasty insofar as the Liberal Party is concerned in this State and defied it by backing the current member for Boothby in a preselection battle. The member for Unley is expected to pay the ultimate price by losing Liberal Party endorsement.

Even the Speaker is under attack in the seat of Stuart. The Speaker hopes to be the member for Stuart after the next election but he is under threat in his own area. I have indicated to the Speaker that I am prepared to offer my good offices to do whatever I can to assist him in respect of his preselection problems. There is difficulty with the member for Custance, who wants to run for the seat of Schubert. He is under preselection threat, as is the member for Ridley, who wants preselection for the seat of Hammond. The list seems endless. We all know of the tensions between the leading Cabinet Ministers within this Government and the desire by a significant but as yet minority body of Liberal Party members who want to replace the Premier.

Only a couple of months ago, we thought that we were to lose the member for Morphett. The member for Hanson, having been thwarted in his attempt to move into the 20 per cent plus seat of Morphett—he was repelled by the member for Morphett—has now declared in a leaflet to his electorate, 'I want to stay with you. Having jilted you at the altar, I want to remarry you, if at all possible.' I do not think that will wash with the people of Hanson because he has clearly exposed himself for what he is.

Mr BRINDAL (Unley): On behalf of this side of the House, I congratulate the Deputy Leader on his speech. My grandson was one year old on Sunday and in 12 months he has managed to dribble less than the Deputy Leader of the Opposition did in five minutes. I wish to speak today on a very serious matter, that is, offences committed against the elderly. I have written to the Attorney-General about this matter, and I do not think that anybody in this House would not correctly consider it a serious matter.

Recently in the local press a spate of crime was reported, especially against the elderly, and I asked the Attorney for some figures, which he was kind enough to supply. He pointed out that, although 19.1 per cent of the population is aged 65 years or over, the proportion of crime committed against such people falls below that 19.1 level, so the argument is that they are not over-represented but under-represented as a crime statistic. That is very good news, but that was used as an argument that we should not offer the elderly in our society greater protection. I disagree with the Attorney-General on that point but I hasten to add that this is a matter which I seek to debate in this Chamber. It is not a matter of any great rift: it is a point of debate that I think this Chamber should address.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

Mr BRINDAL: I hope that the member for Ross Smith will listen because I know that he has a number of elderly people in his electorate. While crimes against the elderly may be less than the elderly are a proportion of the population, as a society we must analyse the impact on the victims. I put to all members in this House that those people who are most involved as victims of crime—that is, the 24 to 39 year old age group—are also the group who, because of their adult status and physical fitness, are perhaps the most capable of dealing with such trauma as crime presents. The effect of a robbery, especially a robbery with violence, an assault or any other crime on a person who, because their physical capacity is starting to diminish, feels more vulnerable has to be weighed up as part of this equation. I am afraid that, at present, the law does not take enough account of that.

Under the Criminal Law Sentencing Act, the judges are asked to look at a number of matters when fixing sentence. That is important. However, what I object to is that no matter is any greater than any other matter. I acknowledge the step forward that was made by the last Government and I hope that is being built on by this Government in its insisting that victims of crime impact statements and the consequences of the crime to the victim are looked at, but at present under criminal law sentencing they comprise only one factor in 15 and they are not given any prominence. I suggest that it is about time that the victim was given more prominence in the equation of sentencing.

I found this matter most worthy of bringing to the attention of the House because, when looking at the law on common assault, we find that, if the common assault is perpetrated on a child under the age of 12 where the victim is a family member, the maximum provision rises from two years to three years. In other words, if a person assaults a member of their family who is under 12 years of age, they get

a greater maximum sentence. In the case of assaults occasioning actual bodily harm where the assault was on a child under 12, the maximum sentence changes from five to eight years. There is an important provision that this Chamber has made: because children are vulnerable they deserve more protection. I would say that the elderly are equally vulnerable; they deserve greater protection too.

As a starting point, we should look at sentencing. Where the victim is an elderly person, the courts have not only a right but almost a duty to say, 'This is a person who is vulnerable; therefore the act is more cowardly.' They need more the protection of the State, and Parliament should enact a law that offers more protection and greater feelings of safety to those who are vulnerable at the elderly end of their lives.

BANK MERGER (BANKSA AND ADVANCE BANK) BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 11 April. Page 1489.)

Mr QUIRKE (Playford): The Opposition supports this legislation. I will not take up too much time of the House this afternoon and I indicate clear passage of this legislation in the other place. As I understand it, this measure stems from the sale of the bank to Advance Bank. As a consequence, it seeks to sort out some of the problems that are further downstream from the decision to sell the bank. Indeed, I take this opportunity to wish Advance Bank well with its purchase. We hope that it becomes a key South Australian player, because the Bank of South Australia has a very obvious presence in this State, both visually and financially. In the household finance market and in the rural sector, the Bank of South Australia has played a very important role for a number of years.

I wish Advance Bank well, although I remonstrate with it for one thing. I thought that I had finished with BankSA and I took out a housing loan with Advance Bank; I have been quite satisfied with it so far, but then it went and bought BankSA.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr QUIRKE: A very acceptable service. The problem is that, my having made a decision to get away from the Bank of South Australia, I wind up back there again. That is my dilemma, but I am satisfied with the Advance Bank service.

On behalf of the Opposition I extend to the Bank of South Australia, under Advance management, all our best wishes. The hope is that it will be able to compete in the home loan market—which is becoming more and more aggressive by the week—in the same way that it has in the past. Apart from being the market share leader, it is also responsible for something approaching 40 per cent of all mortgages in South Australia. With those few remarks, I point out that the legislation before the House has the Opposition's support and so too do the amendments that I understand will be moved by the Treasurer in Committee.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Treasurer): I thank the Opposition for its support. As the member for Playford suggested, this is part of the process. It was always agreed that at some stage during the sale there would have to be a merging of accounts. The issue of operating under a single licence has now been satisfied. A request has been made. We are more than happy to process the request and we are doing so with this Bill. Two amendments will be moved in Committee and they relate to the schedule and certain assets that will not be transferred: they will remain. I will move those amendments in Committee.

Everyone was well aware of the process at the time. The initial sale took us through a process where there was distinct separation. We still have a right regarding our liabilities relating to those accounts that are in existence at the time of sale and the extent to which the guarantee will remain, given that we preserve the deposits of individuals. Most of that is winding itself out very quickly, and so that the Government does not face a horrendous bill if something goes wrong—of course, it will not—we will still be able to track that level of liabilities that remain in the system, which are contingent, should something untoward happen, so that the rights of those people who are depositors of the bank have been preserved in the process. I thank the member for Playford for his support for the Bill and I will deal with some minor amendments in Committee.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 22 passed.

Schedule.

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

Page 12—

Lines 4 and 5—Leave out paragraph (a) and insert—

(a) BSAL's rights and liabilities under leasing and finance plan types 43, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54 and 56 and under managed plan types 55 and 57;

Lines 8 and 9—Leave out paragraphs (d) and (e).

I explained the first amendment during the second reading debate. There is the addition of two items.

Amendments carried; schedule as amended passed.

Title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

WILLS (EFFECT OF TERMINATION OF MARRIAGE) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 11 April. Page 1490.)

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

A quorum having been formed:

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): Although marriage revokes a will, divorce does not. The Bill has caused the Opposition to consider this longstanding principle carefully. The effect of the Bill is to strike from a will the name of the former spouse after divorce. It should be as if the former spouse had predeceased the testator. Other bequests will continue and the former spouse's share will fall into residue to be distributed as the will otherwise demands. The Bill has been debated in lively style by the parliamentary Labor Party. Divorced members of the Party were vocal and their approach differed depending on their attitude to their former spouse. Indeed, the liveliness of the debate surprised me. We discussed the Tasmanian law by which the whole will is revoked upon divorce.

We have resolved to support the Government on the Bill. If we did not change the law, there would be a risk some divorced people would, upon their death, unintentionally bequeath and devise property to a former spouse he or she

loathed. We think there is a high likelihood of gifts to a former spouse under a will executed before divorce to be against the testator's later intentions.

If we followed the Tasmanian Parliament, we would avert the risk I just mentioned of the cost of rendering invalid gifts to relatives and charities that the testator intended to be effective. The estate would pass according to the law of intestacy. The Government's Bill follows the law in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland. Clause 3 inserts new section 20A in the Wills Act. It provides that, when the testator's marriage is ended after he or she has made a will, a disposition in favour of the former spouse is revoked, appointment as executor is revoked and so is a power of appointment exercisable in favour of the former spouse.

The Bill's essential point can be overcome if it is clear from the terms of the will that the testator intended to benefit the former spouse despite the divorce. The Bill does not defeat a former spouse's opportunity to lodge a claim for testator's family maintenance on the ground of need and service rendered to the testator. With those remarks, the Opposition supports the Bill.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Deputy Premier): I thank the member for Spence for his explanation of the Bill: it is an accurate representation of what the Bill attempts to achieve. Sometimes the member for Spence does get it right, and he has actually done his homework diligently—which he does on most Bills—and I must commend him for that. In terms of the issue of whether a will has standing after a divorce, that has been a matter of contention for years. There is a view that, once the settlements have been made, a person has no right over the estate of a person who is later deceased after the divorce, and therefore the law as we change it here would be consistent with what most people would presume to be the will of the deceased person.

There are mechanisms available should a person believe that his or her ex-spouse is worthy of further consideration after the knot has been untied. That is a matter that can be sorted out with a new will or, indeed, with an old will before divorce if the intention is clearly stated and that person is named as the beneficiary in an element of fondness, regret or whatever the circumstances may be. It is in keeping with the law changes interstate, and I thank the member for Spence for his support.

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

STATUTES AMENDMENT (MEDIATION, ARBITRATION AND REFERRAL) BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 11 April. Page 1491.)

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): The Bill before us is another utopian yearning, but the Opposition is prepared to acquiesce in it. Owing to the fallen nature of man we have disputes and, in civilised societies, try to resolve them by the rule of law. It is in human nature to disagree. When we do disagree there has to be a means of resolving the dispute, and the courts are the means we have chosen. Although the great majority of legal disputes are resolved before trial in a court or on the day of the trial, litigants rely on the law and its application by the courts. If they settle by conciliation, however rational or calculated that may be, they will never know what they might have achieved by the strict application of the law by a court after submission by lawyers. Approaching lawyers and the courts is their fundamental right.

Populist pressure in the 1920s led to the Conciliation Act 1929, by which it was hoped that conciliation (or mediation, as we now call it) might supersede the cost and delay of the law courts. It did not happen. Although enthusiasm for conciliation (or mediation) came and went during the next 65 years, conciliation could not deprive lawyers of their customers and was hampered by some legalistic court decisions on conciliation. The Bill before us puts an end to the Conciliation Act 1929 and the Government claims that no conciliation courts have been established since the Act was enacted in 1929. But the Government makes new arrangements for court annexed mediation.

What the Government proposes by the Bill is that the District Court, the Supreme Court or the Magistrates Court could refer the whole or part of a civil proceeding for mediation with or without the consent of the parties; that evidence of anything said or done during the mediation would not subsequently be admissible in the proceedings if the matter came back to court; and the Government says that a judge, master, magistrate or other judicial officer who takes part in an attempt to settle an action, presumably by mediation, is not disqualified from continuing to sit for the purpose of hearing and determining the matter. The Bill also provides for referral of any question for report by an expert in the relevant field.

The Opposition has no objection to that. Indeed, we would encourage litigants to turn to what we hope would be a more inexpensive way of resolving disputes. However, we have no optimism that, suddenly, man will cast off his fallen nature and settle for conciliation instead of trial by the courts. Nevertheless, we welcome the attempt by the Government to promote mediation and we look forward to the kind of success that the Conciliation Act 1929 did not have.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Deputy Premier): I thank the member for Spence for his support of the Bill. It is an exercise in commonsense, I think, to believe that, when we have two people who either dislike each other or just want to get money from each other or to defend themselves from each other, invariably the court processes are very expensive. They can quite often be lengthy and can in many cases lead to solutions that are not necessarily applauded by one or both parties, simply because someone has to make up their mind on the balance and make an award accordingly. I have found that as MPs we have to mediate disputes over a whole range of areas including those between neighbours, which are the worst.

I have found that in mediating between neighbours the only way to get a solution is to get them both hating you so that they can actually find some common ground. I found that very successful on occasion; that we have actually reached a resolution and they have both sworn at the mediator, namely me, but the solutions turned out to be very satisfactory. So, there is good commonsense to seating parties around a table, outlining the extent of their potential problems if the court case continues, the level of established fact and the degree of success that may prevail on behalf of one or other party, but not to the extent that you affect the mediation.

I am always reminded of a particular case I was mediating that was going along famously when a so-called expert was called in who actually ruled on one side, therefore a court case flowed and many thousands of dollars were spent, and the particular individual who decided he wanted an expert—

and the expert should have known better, given that it was a neighbourhood dispute—was very thrilled with this expert's opinion about his tree problem. The upshot, after many thousands of dollars had been spent, was that neither party was necessarily right, which we all conceded from the outset. It was a matter of bad blood between the two neighbours, and both neighbours felt hurt by the outcome because neither won in the process. Sometimes the getting together and belting of heads early in the process can lead to a far more satisfactory outcome.

However, there are more skilled negotiators and mediators than I who can plough their way through the antagonisms that exist between parties and cut across the information to the point where people can get a much greater awareness of their capacity to succeed. Half the problem I find with people who come to my office with legal difficulties is that they have always come to me after they have lost the case. They come to me and ask, 'What are you going to do, Mr Baker?'

Mr Atkinson: Six inches of papers.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: That's it. They bring their files and are very dissatisfied. On occasions I have asked, 'Why did you hire that lawyer? You have just been badly represented.' Sometimes I will say, 'Why don't you cut your losses? You've made a mistake; why don't you accept your mistake, walk away and put it down to experience?' Some of them do, but most of them go to their local MP—and if the local MP is a Minister it gives greater weight to their argument—and they keep going if they do not get any uplift from their local member. Once the court case is through it is far too late. I have found a number of cases where with very good representation the decision would have gone in a different direction. However, that is the legal system that we have today.

I believe that if we give greater guidance in some of these cases the outcomes will be better for all concerned, because people will not be guided by lawyers or their representations. They will not necessarily have to ask, 'What is my chance of success?' and hear, 'It is good' or, 'Pay me some money and I will tell you.' All these things are very unsatisfactory for a person who has a grievance. The worst way to fix a grievance, particularly a civil grievance, is through the courts if there is a better way of doing it. I thank the member for Spence. I have some further amendments made by the Attorney to clarify the issue of evidence received during this mediation phase—the extent to which it cannot be used in any subsequent hearing of the court. I commend the Bill to the House.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 3 passed.

Clause 4—'Mediation and conciliation.'

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

Page 2, after line 10—Insert new paragraph as follows:

(ba) by inserting in subsection (3) 'by mediation' after 'action'.

This amendment is obviously meant to clarify the issue of evidence, so that the evidence that comes forward in a mediation process cannot be used in subsequent hearings. It is meant to clarify that subsection, which would now read:

Evidence of anything said or done in an attempt to settle an action by mediation under this section is not subsequently admissible in the proceedings or in related proceedings.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clauses 5 and 6 passed.

Clause 7—'Mediation and conciliation.'

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

Page 3, after line 4—Insert new paragraph as follows:

(ba) by inserting in subsection (3) 'by mediation' after 'action'.

This is consequential and deals with the same subject. I would like to reflect on these amendments, because what the Attorney-General is doing here is absolutely right. If I did not like the mediation process and I had some information that was damaging I would throw it in through the mediation process and then strengthen my case for the formal court proceedings.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clauses 8 and 9 passed.

Clause 10—'Substitution of ss. 65 to 70.'

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

Page 3, line 37—Insert 'by mediation' after 'settle a proceeding'.

It is the same issue: it inserts 'by mediation' to ensure that the inadmissibility of evidence relates only to the mediation process.

Amendment carried.

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

Page 4, line 19—Insert 'a referee who is' after 'report by'.

Again, this is a matter of clarification relating to one of the Supreme Court rules vesting the court with the power to appoint an independent expert for the purpose of providing a report for the court where the court believes that independent evidence is required. The expert in the latter case does not become an officer of the court but simply provides independent evidence to the court. The amendment seeks to make a clear distinction between an expert appointed pursuant to section 67 and an expert appointed pursuant to rule 82.01, hence the insertion of the words 'a referee who is'.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clause 11—'Rules of court.'

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

Page 4, line 34—Insert '(whether appointed under section 67 or otherwise)' after the 'expert'.

This is consequential.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clause 12 and title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

COMPETITION POLICY REFORM (SOUTH AUSTRALIA) BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 11 April. Page 1501.)

Mr QUIRKE (Playford): This Bill was designed to protect the interests of consumers from abuse of market power by individuals and organisations, including State Government monopolies, which were previously exempt from the Trade Practices Act. The result will be lower prices, more choice and better service for South Australian consumers and improvements in the efficiency of Australian business as a result of increased competition.

With achieving those objectives in mind, it is good to see the Brown Liberal Government bringing legislation into the House to implement these changes; it is one of the most important structural reforms achieved by a Labor Government. For almost a whole century since Federation, parochial interests have been allowed to stand between our nationhood as well as commonsense in thwarting the development of truly national markets for both products and services. In achieving these reforms, the former Federal Labor

Government had a choice—to go it alone as far as it could using the Commonwealth's corporate powers under the Constitution or to seek consensus with the States to extend the reach of a coherent national competition policy into areas, such as the professions, which were clearly within the constitutional jurisdiction of the States.

It pursued the latter course and achieved that consensus, although the conservative States were a little slow in comprehending what this was all about and coming to an eventual agreement. The States demanded significant Commonwealth payments before they would agree, and they have retained some control over both the Conduct Code for competition policy and the way in which State Governments operate State-owned businesses, provided that is consistent with the competition principles.

The Premier noted in his second reading explanation that over $1 billion (in 1994-95 dollars) will come to South Australia between 1996-97 and the financial year 2005-6 as part of the package. The Commonwealth has often been willing to pay the States to achieve good policy outcomes. It will be very interesting to see whether it will pay for another policy outcome, which I think is currently much on the mind of members. It has been an enduring feature of the interplay in State-Federal financial relations—the balancing and rebalancing of responsibilities and funding. However, I think we are about to see a departure from this at the forthcoming Premiers Conference and in the Federal budget, where we will see the Commonwealth inflicting bad policy outcomes on the States and potentially cutting State funding. It will be a demonstration of just how much clout the Premier of South Australia has with his Federal Liberal colleagues. It is South Australia's worst fear that he has no clout at all in those circles.

It is an open question whether the $1 billion in competition payments over the next decade will be enough to offset the cuts that Mr Howard will inflict on other areas of State funding while he remains in office. However, today we are not here to discuss the money—we are here to discuss the important objectives that this Bill is intended to achieve and how its provisions may be administered in South Australia by the current Liberal Government.

For the first time the Prices Surveillance Act will apply to State-owned businesses. However, there is a significant limitation on its application. A finding that another jurisdiction has been adversely affected by a State monopoly's pricing is required before a Commonwealth Minister can declare the business for price surveillance. Where a State-based prices oversight regime is in place and complies with the principles set out in the Competition Principles Intergovernmental Agreement the Commonwealth law will not apply. The Government has decided to set up a Competition Commissioner to make recommendations on the prices to be charged by Government enterprises with monopoly power, but responsibility for the determination of those prices will still remain with the Government.

The Labor Party is concerned about any abuse of market, whether it is by a private or public sector monopoly. It would seem that the State Government will have a degree of latitude in relation to its own monopoly businesses so long as it does not adversely affect another jurisdiction. We will closely scrutinise the prices which this State Liberal Government sets to ensure that it does not use its monopoly for back-door taxation. However, the fact that there will be some scope to apply some constraint on State Government abuses in this area is a positive feature of the Bill.

The competitive neutrality principles are designed to ensure that Government businesses do not enjoy a net competitive advantage as a result of Government ownership. This implies imposing tax equivalent regimes on Government businesses and the application of similar regulations as those applied to the Government business enterprises private sector competitors. The Opposition notes the Government's intention to publish next month a policy statement on the implementation of these principles.

I give the Government notice now that in its interpretation of the competitive neutrality principles it should ensure that there is a level playing field between the public and private sectors. When they are competing with private operators, public sector service providers should not be loaded up with the extraneous costs of Government which are not relevant to the provision of the service so as to render them uncompetitive in the marketplace. Unlike the Liberal Party, the Labor Party believes that the public sector can provide quality services at competitive costs.

Competition policy is silent on the question of public ownership. Some conservative Governments with a privatisation agenda, such as the Victorian Liberal Government, have tried to imply that competition policy and privatisation are the same thing. Margaret Thatcher clearly demonstrated that that is not so. In Britain, Mrs Thatcher privatised monopolies with little or no attention to how they might abuse their market power when they were no longer answerable to Government. In fact, she went further: she privatised monopolies at artificially low prices so that the buyers would receive a capital gain and the financial markets would regard the floats as a success—a success for the buyers but not necessarily for the taxpayer. Labor totally rejects any suggestion that competition policy justifies privatisation.

The Government will be obliged to conduct a review into the structure of any public monopoly before it introduces competition or privatises it. It must separate out regulatory functions from the monopoly and consider alternative structures which would deliver benefits by enhancing competition. It is a great pity that this requirement was not operating when the Brown Liberal Government made its decision to contract out, on secret terms, the State's water supply. To create a private sector monopoly for the provision of water services was one of the most short-sighted and silliest decisions of the Brown Government. Any meaningful examination of alternative structures would have resulted in the rejection of this option.

I note that the Government's request to the Industry Commission for advice on desirable changes to the structure of ETSA did not produce anything like the Government's own model for the EWS. The Government promises that by next month it will produce a timetable for the review by the year 2000 of all legislation which restricts competition. The legislation identified through this process will be reviewed to determine whether the benefits to the community justify the costs of the restriction on competition and whether those benefits could be achieved without restricting competition.

There are, of course, provisions in many Acts which have been inserted over the years and which confer anti-competitive benefits on one group or another at the expense of the community, and it is desirable that they be removed. The question is: who will undertake the review to determine what is and what is not in the community interest?

It is obviously desirable that the process be as public and as open as possible, and that any committee which advises on those questions has broad representation. By 'broad

representation' we do not mean a broad collection of bureaucrats who of course have their own vested interests in what is and what is not desirable in terms of regulation. Nor is a review an appropriate vehicle for attacking the conditions of workers in relation to such things as occupational health and safety. Effective competition requires third party access to the sorts of infrastructure which create natural monopolies. This is a major reform.

However, there are certain limitations which leave significant responsibilities in the hands of the States. The Commonwealth regime only applies to facilities that are not subject to some other effective access regime which is consistent with the principles set out in the competition principles agreement. The States can exempt specified conduct from the provisions of the competition code and, in evaluating the public benefits, the States must consider such issues as ecologically sustainable development, social welfare and equity considerations, and the interests of consumers and economic development. There is obviously a need for the close examination of the way in which the Government handles all these issues. I assure the House that the Opposition will subject the Government to the closest scrutiny in those areas.

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): I support the Bill with a certain amount of reservation and concern for the rural electorates of South Australia and certainly for the people living in my electorate of Flinders. I acknowledge the need for competition and for the competition rules that cover both Government and private industry to be the same. I am concerned that the competition code that will apply to all businesses operating throughout Australia will not always take into account the variables such as the tyranny of distance and the low population density found in the country. We know that these impediments impose unavoidable additional costs on the provision of services. Huge distances and the sparse population of country South Australia are always a severe limitation in providing competitive services.

My electorate is one of the biggest in the State after that of the Speaker, whose electorate takes up almost the whole of the north of the State. My electorate covers 34 000 square kilometres and it can take many weeks to visit all the scattered communities. By comparison, in the city, it is often possible to walk around some electorates before lunch. This sparse population density factor makes competition very difficult to achieve whilst at the same time providing adequate services to the community.

Part of my electorate takes in Kangaroo Island. This in itself means it has its own unique problems that result from its being an island. Higher transport costs are inevitable, with air and sea being the only means of access. This adds to all the costs of island living. It has an adverse effect on any business trying to provide a competitive service. Eyre Peninsula, the other part of my electorate, is also unique. As its name implies, it is almost an island, in that all road transport has to go around the top of Spencer Gulf before reaching the population base. This adds six hours of driving. Alternatively, the other transport option is by air over two gulfs from the capital city.

It is inevitable that these two regions that make up my electorate will not meet the benchmarks set by city operations. Many services just cannot be made as viable as those provided in the city. The delivery of power, water, telephone, mail, banking, education and health services over great distances to few people will inevitably not be cost effective when compared to services delivered in city centres. There are 22 000 voters and their dependants in my electorate. To service the needs of these people there are eight hospitals, nine local government bodies and about 58 education centres, including Institutes of TAFE. Already, many services in my electorate can be accessed only by travelling to the city, particularly those relating to specialist health and tertiary education.

I hope that the adoption of a competition code will not result in an additional requirement for people in my electorate to seek additional basic services in the city. I applaud the studies which suggest that the competition policy will have substantial economic benefits for the State, and I am heartened to see country concerns being addressed. However, if benefits are achieved at the expense of people living in remote regions of the State, I believe that, in the final analysis, little will be saved. The economic benefit to Australia of the primary industry exports that leave Eyre Peninsula and Kangaroo Island are considerable. Grain, fishing, sheep, cattle and aquaculture are a few which produce major income for all Australia. It must be realised that the people who produce this real income must not be penalised further than they are already or we will not keep them in the country regions. I support this Bill which I sincerely believe can be of great benefit to all Australia.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Deputy Premier): I thank both members for their contribution to the debate. The member for Playford gave a very good summary of the provisions of the reform Bill, and the member for Flinders raised the issue of how competition affects areas outside the metropolitan area. One of the issues with competition is the extent to which those areas can receive a level of service which is commensurate with their city counterparts. It is an issue that I believe has to be seriously considered because, in full competition mode, it is doubtful whether those services would be provided or, if they were to be provided, it would be at some extraordinary cost.

There has already been a commitment by the Government that the level of cross-subsidy, if you like, or the level of community service obligation that we have to our rural counterparts, will be sustained. If that was not the case, whether it be electricity, water or many of the services provided in rural areas, under this contestability competition policy we would see those services either priced far greater than they are today or slowly eroded over time until they disappeared. The Government recognises the concerns of the member, and I do congratulate her on bringing them to the attention of the House. In a competitive model, we will find that those people who participate in the model in the free market will generate to the areas with the greatest population centres the greatest demand, and therefore they will have the capacity to deliver services at a competitive price.

Once we get beyond those borders, the price of the delivery of those goods and services increases considerably—almost exponentially doubling every 100 kilometres—and the quality of the service must reduce if the price regime is to be maintained. If the competition policy is there without any reservation, I believe we would see a great diminution in service to country areas. That is not the case. This Government has a commitment to its rural constituencies, the people in the country who in some cases have to battle extraordinary conditions. They do not have the same benefits that we have in the city, and to tie a large increase in costs for what we regard as the basics would be untenable. So, I congratulate

the member for Flinders for her contribution on that very serious issue.

There is no doubt that, when it set up COAG, the Federal Labor Government was motivated to reform the Australian economy, and it concentrated much of its attention on Government. For far too long, the Government has delivered monopoly services in key areas which are inputs to industry, inputs to the cost of living and inputs to the very competitors of the country, and it has charged prices which are not commensurate with the level of services; and, in some cases, it has provided services that have been second rate. I commend the former Federal Government for its analysis of the Australian economy, at least in this part—and there are many other areas I would like to contest with the former Labor Federal Government. It indicated that, if Australia is to be competitive, all parts of the economy must be able to perform to their maximum capacity.

Quite clearly in government, with a monopoly status, monopoly rents and a monopoly pricing system, that reform was not possible. Therefore, Governments would operate under the old regime: 'Do as I say, not as I do.' That situation is not sustainable and it drags the country down. It has now been addressed. Dramatic changes have been put in place in this State to ensure that we are more competitive and that we price our services more effectively than in the past. The value of that can be seen in that some of our public utilities are now making a return to Government—utilities which have never made a return to Government and which have been a drain on the taxpayers' pockets. Those utilities are now making a return on the assets that have been provided over the years by the taxpayers of South Australia.

There is reform, but those reforms would have happened in any event without COAG or the Federal Government. We were committed to making every part of the State public sector more competitive, more effective and more efficient than applied when we came into government. It was our desire that each of the enterprises be subject to some form of competition, even if it was through the setting of performance standards. The successes that we see today are a clear indication of not only the Government's determination but also the reform processes.

The Federal Government has said, 'The States must repair themselves; they have to be competitive and they have to provide goods effectively and efficiently', yet it has been the worst practitioner. A great challenge for the Howard Federal Government will be to repair some of the more basic items of Government service—the wharves, the aircraft, the telecommunications system, and the rail and transport systems. Whilst Labor had been aiming at the States, it said that, as far as union support was concerned, some of the other areas were too hard. Fair is fair. The competition policy, the fact that we will provide goods more effectively and more efficiently, has to be reflected across the board. The Federal Government cannot walk away from that: the Federal Labor Government walked away from it.

We are throwing down a challenge to the new Federal Coalition Government to reform the wharves, the airlines, and the transport and telecommunications systems. It could reform many more services; it could reform the health system. It could go through all its areas of service delivery and responsibility and achieve massive reform on its side of the fence. The complete lack of willingness, prior to the change of Government, was quite astounding. The Government was indicating that it was important that the States do these things but that it should be exempt.

I am sure that the new Coalition Government, with its vigour, foresight and vision, will take up the challenges. There is nothing worse for a person who is trying to import goods into the country, or export goods out of the country, to find that they cannot get the goods off the wharves. It is a blight on this country. The examples of poor practice that we have seen on our wharves dramatically affect the reputation of this country.

South Australia has shown the way. Our performance on the wharves has been dramatically improved. I expect that under the new Coalition Government we will see changes to the monopoly power that has existed on the wharves across this nation over a long period of time. There are pluses and minuses in the reform. We want to deliver services to our constituencies in a fair and reasonable fashion. At the same time we must be competitive with those interstate.

The commitment of the Government is obvious. We commend this Bill to the House. There will be an oversight regime. From a Treasurer's point of view, I want the oversight regime to be kind in terms of interpretation and to deliver a price that will provide the rewards in the system and also a dividend back to Government. However, it remains to be seen as to how that power is exercised. I commend the Bill to the House.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 4 passed.

Clause 5—'Application of Competition Code.'

Mr QUIRKE: I have spent a month or two pondering some of the implications of this Bill. Does it mean that the gaming machines at the Casino will now return the same rate of tax as do all the gaming machines in the pubs and clubs in my area? This clause provides, in part:

> The Competition Code text, as in force for the time being, applies as a law of South Australia.

Many people would like to know whether the 700 gaming machines at the Casino will now have the same tax treatment as all the other gaming machines. I can smell a rort here. I do not need to find out who owns that building and who is trying to sell it, but I am puzzled by this. Will the Deputy Premier assure us that every gaming machine in South Australia will have the same tax treatment and that there will not be favourable treatment for those machines owned by the Government of South Australia?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: It has nothing to do with this clause at all, as the honourable member would be well aware. This clause deals with the right of South Australia to have its own oversight. The matter was fiercely debated at the Federal level. The Trade Practices Commission preferred that it had all power and it wanted to regulate hairdressers, lawyers, taxi drivers and all State instrumentalities.

Mr Quirke interjecting:

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: It probably had not even thought about the poker machines at the Casino, but I am sure that if time permitted it would have. That situation was unacceptable from the States' point of view. The Federal Government knew that for the States to agree it would be necessary to allow them to have their own competition oversight or competition commissioner who could judge the fairness of the conduct and the prices charged by State enterprises. This clause is about the application of South Australian law. In terms of the Casino, I can actually give the honourable member a tip—

Mr Quirke: You know I am not a gambler.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: On Thursday he might find there will be an even playing field.

Clause passed.

Remaining clauses (6 to 45) and title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

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

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr BASS (Florey): At the last Federal election, as was usual, exit polls were done in relation to who voted for whom, what their background was and to see whether there was any change in the way people have voted over the past few years. It is very interesting to look at a summary of the exit poll. The election saw the Coalition reclaim middle Australia, especially families and blue collar workers. Significant changes came to light. For instance, among women 25 to 30 years of age, the Liberals increased their vote by 5.6 per cent up to 38.8 per cent. With men 35 to 49 years of age, there was an increase of 7.8 per cent up to 49.2 per cent. Among women 50 years plus, we increased our vote by 9.2 per cent up to 59.1 per cent.

We won the blue collar workers by 8.5 per cent. The ALP vote for this group dropped from 49.8 per cent in 1993 to 38.8 per cent at the last election, and the Liberal-National vote increased from 42.2 per cent in 1993 to 47.5 per cent. We even got the religious people. We won the Catholic vote by 11 per cent. The ALP vote for this group dropped from 50.9 per cent to 37.2 per cent and the Coalition vote increased from 42 per cent to 47.7 per cent. The result amongst unionists is a very interesting statistic. The ALP's union vote decreased 16.3 per cent at the election from 62.3 per cent down to 46 per cent: 35.5 per cent of unionists voted for the Coalition at the last election, an increase of 5.8 per cent.

The ethnic vote saw a 6 per cent swing to the Liberal Party. They were defined as people who speak a language other than English in their home. The next one is a very interesting statistic: students have traditionally been Labor voters, but we even won the student vote by 7.5 per cent. Reaction was strong to Mr Keating's 'go and get a job' jibe, a throwaway line that helped him throw away the Prime Ministership. In 1993, the Coalition vote from students was 21.8 per cent and we increased the vote to 47.5 per cent at the last election, compared with the ALP on 40 per cent.

The unions really should take a lesson from what has happened and they should wake up to themselves. In the *Financial Review* of 14 May there was an interesting article entitled 'Unions tackle unhappy customers'. It stated:

> The New South Wales Labour Council will today urge the ACTU to rethink its strategies for halting the continuing decline in unionisation following new research showing significant numbers of unionists were disenchanted with their union. The Assistant Secretary of the Labour Council, Michael Koster, said opinion polling and focus group market research commissioned by the New South Wales peak union body showed that a significant proportion of the union movement's core blue collar constituency were not satisfied with unions. The national opinion poll of 1 200 people commissioned by the council for Newspoll showed that 50 per cent of current union members did not think unions effectively looked after their members.

Let me say—and I am sure that the member for Ross Smith will remind me—that I came from a union, one that actually worked for its members. We did not get involved in politics unless it suited our cause. When we needed to pressure the Government, we had the ability to lobby the Democrats, the Liberals and, in my case when I was there, the Labor Government. The Police Union represented its members. It was a voluntary union with a membership of 99.1 per cent. We had such a high voluntary membership because we did what our members wanted. We were a good working group for our members. We did not get involved in politics, and we did not give half our subs to the Labor Party. We just worked for our members. That is a good lesson to be learned by other unions throughout Australia. I am not anti-union at all, but I really believe that, if unions were to do what they should be doing, they would represent their members and not get involved in politics, and that is what three-quarters of the union movement does.

I was very pleased to get a flier in my letterbox a few weeks ago. I thought, 'I recognise the gentleman on the front of that,' and it was the Leader of the Opposition, Mike Rann. I thought something drastic must be going on, that he was going to resign or that he is being deposed, but it was a publicity brochure to try to up the image of the Leader of the Opposition.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Mike who?

Mr BASS: Mike Rann—R-A-N-N. It says, 'A Leader who listens'. The article further states all the nice things about Mike's being a parent—and I would say that Mike is a good parent and I do not criticise Mike for that. The pamphlet states:

> Rann against privatisation. Mike Rann has been leading Labor's battle against Dean Brown's privatisation of our water supply and hospitals.

Privatisation? Then on the back there is a photograph of the Leader of the Opposition standing in front of the Modbury Hospital, which is right smack in the middle of my electorate. The pamphlet states:

> Mike Rann opposed to hospital privatisation.

He is a nice sort of leader if he does not understand the difference between privatisation and having private managers running the hospital. We have not sold the hospital: all we have done is put in private managers, and the same with the water supply. We have not sold the water supply. We have people with expertise managing the infrastructure. We still own it. I suppose this pamphlet is a good attempt at trying to lift the image of the Leader of the Opposition, but I ask the Leader, if he is going to put it out, why does he not put it out with facts and not distortions. It is no wonder they call him 'The fabricator' when he cannot put a pamphlet out that has factual information. He has to tell untruths, and it is a very disappointing way to promote yourself.

Mr CLARKE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I will refer briefly this afternoon to a few points that were raised by the Premier during the parliamentary recess. Part of my remarks relate to the question I asked the Premier earlier today as to whether or not he regretted his comments calling on the Howard Liberal Government to slash Commonwealth public sector employment by 30 000 persons. It intrigues me when the Premier of this State goes to Canberra to tell the Prime Minister of this country to sack 30 000 fellow Australians. One would have thought that Australia had enough unemployed on its hands, and in particular the State of South Australia.

When the mandarins in Canberra set down to cut the work force, acting on the urgings of the Premier of South Australia, one of the points the Premier missed was that they cut the regions and a fragile economy such as South Australia can ill

afford any job losses. Members also have to consider that Commonwealth Public Service positions are overwhelmingly full-time career jobs and South Australia has too few of them. Since the Brown Government was elected in 1993 what growth there has been in employment in this State has largely been confined to casual, part-time or contract employment and that is not a very secure basis for those people to obtain housing mortgages and the like. The Premier tried to defend his stance in Parliament today by denying that he had ever said '30 000 jobs'. I have a media monitoring service dated 10 April 1996 on the *PM* program—

Mr Brokenshire: Read it all out.

Mr CLARKE: I will as the lance corporal, the member for Mawson, interjects. There is a question to the Premier by the reporter and the reporter, in part of the question, asks:

> So, we're talking smaller government. How much smaller, at a Commonwealth level?

The Premier responds:

> Well, if the Commonwealth Government brought about the reduction in size, in terms of its staff, in the budget section which the State Governments have achieved, then in South Australia we've gone well over 10 per cent reduction. And we believe, federally, there could be a substantial reduction in size, without interfering with the service delivered to the people of ... Australia, because of a lot of its inefficiencies and a lot of its duplications.

And I will return later to the word 'duplications'. The reporter continues:

> How substantial? How many public servants? ... Can we put any kind of figure on it?

The Premier replied:

> Well, it's not up to me to put that to the Federal Government. That's up to the Federal Government to make that decision. If there was a 10 per cent reduction in the size of the Federal Government, that's over 30 000 people to go, because the Federal Government has something like 360 000 employees across the whole of Australia. But it's up to the Federal Government. They're working out their budget. All I'm saying is that the State Governments, in a number of cases—South Australia, Victoria—have reduced their expenditure and the size of government by about 10 per cent; in our case, actually more.

The Premier referred in his press comments as well to the necessity, as he sees it, of saving money by eliminating duplications between Federal and State Government services. As announced on 26 April of this year these are the following Commonwealth agencies that have had cutbacks in staff—and this is before the Expenditure Review Committee has reported back to the Federal Government and before the Federal Government hands down its budget in August of this year: the ABC, 10; Australian National head office, 150; Australian National workshops, potentially 750—I say 'potentially', if those workshops are privatised; Australian Securities Commission, 15; Australian Taxation Office, 50; Customs, 35—that is only the first round; DEET, 150—first round; Department of Defence, 120; Department of Administrative Services, 35; Department of Finance, 15; Department of Industrial Relations, 8; Department of Social Security, 150; Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 5; Health and Family Services, 20; and Ombudsman, 1.

I would have thought that the only area in which one could say there might be a possibility of duplication between Federal and State services was health and family services, which only amounts to about 20 out of the 1 000 South Australians who are losing their jobs, jobs we cannot afford to lose and particularly as the Federal Government is a major employer of young people as a career start. They are not the duplications of services about which the Premier talks that are being cut because only the Australian Customs Service provides a customs service. There is only one ABC which is run nationally. There is only one Department of Defence, and the list goes on. The jobs being cut by the Federal Howard Government, as urged upon it by the Premier of South Australia, involve the sacking of South Australians who perform distinct and unique Federal Government responsibilities.

Let us consider the impacts. State members will know about them because of constituents complaining to them about cuts in Government services. In the youth area, it will result in the abolition of the Safer Young Australia Program, longer queues and lower levels of services with combined DSS and CES offices, increased class sizes, fewer places at universities and reduced access to DEET YA offices.

Regarding customs, there will be lower inspection standards, leading to increased importation of drugs, weapons and pornographic material through the abolition of shift work for specialist squads, greater numbers of illegal immigrants entering Australia, child abductions, arrest and bill evasions. Revenue collection will be affected and all inland revenue offices will close. The Tasmanian offices are to be downgraded, postal surveillance is to be reduced, and so on.

As regards migrants, there is to be full cost recovery of migrant English language programs, increased charges for a range of other services, and so on and so forth. The list is endless in terms of what it means to the people not only of South Australia but of Australia as a whole through these reductions.

Prior to these cuts constituents told me about phone calls they had made to the Department of Social Security. Every member has experienced similar problems of constituents waiting in those blasted phone queues for up to 50 minutes or more before getting through, only to be told that they have got the wrong person and must try all over again. Alternatively, they go to offices of the Department of Social Security and join a queue and wait for up to an hour before being seen by the appropriate personnel.

These are the end results of continuous cuts. Of course, there were cuts under the Federal Labor Government, but here is a State Premier saying, 'I am not content with South Australia having the second highest level of unemployment in Australia.' We have the highest level of unemployment in mainland Australia, but the Premier is not content with that; he wants South Australia to be the State with the highest rate of unemployment in Australia and, if possible, higher than any other OECD nation.

In terms of cuts to the Commonwealth public sector, these jobs have a compounding effect. You, Mr Speaker, as the member for Eyre, ought to be particularly concerned about the regional impact this will have in places like Port Augusta if the AN railway workshops are closed because of the privatisation moves by the Federal Howard Government. Even in CES offices and the like, it puts the question: if they can be serviced from Port Pirie or Whyalla, DEET will say, 'We may as well close the office in Port Augusta because it is more economic to do that than to run it with reduced staff.' That has a ripple down effect, Sir, as you would only be too well aware, because, if there are no public servants working at the CES office in Port Augusta, their children will not go to the local schools and that will affect class sizes and school numbers and the number of teachers who may be employed in that community. There is a whole range of other services which impact not only on Adelaide but also on our regional centres. We were supposed to have a Liberal Government

committed to regional development and rural South Australia, but it is a joke and a farce.

Motion carried.

DE FACTO RELATIONSHIPS BILL

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

COUNTRY FIRES (AUDIT REQUIREMENTS) AMENDMENT BILL

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

ADJOURNMENT

At 5.38 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday 29 May at 2 p.m.