



**ADDRESS IN REPLY  
9 August 1994**

**Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders):** I support the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply to Her Excellency's speech. The hard decisions are being taken by the new Brown Liberal Government and they are being implemented, but not without some pain. Fortunately, these decisions, while tough, are being tempered by reason and consideration for the effects on individual communities. This was evident when the Cabinet made the decision not to close the prison at Port Lincoln. Closing the prison would have had a huge impact on the economy of Port Lincoln, removing 34 jobs and 54 inmates, many of whom have families living in the city of Port Lincoln. The effect on the employees at the prison and their families would have been particularly severe as finding alternative jobs in the area is much more difficult than in larger centres.

The community made it clear that it wished the prison to stay, with the City Council and many individuals forwarding submissions to the Minister. The Minister visited the city and was impressed by this strong local support and, in particular, the willingness of the staff at the prison to make the changes necessary to achieve the Government's goals for efficiency within the prison system. It was a magnificent community effort and everyone benefited.

My electorate of Flinders is one that has been hard hit by the rural recession. Tourism, industry and manufacturing, and diversification in our primary industries will all be necessary in the future to help the region to survive. Recent good rains have helped farmers regain prospects of an average harvest in most areas, although some will be grateful to get back just the costs of their seed. With present grain prices, the return from an average crop is only break-even, and this is being eroded by the gradual increase in the exchange rate. There must be a much better understanding and better practical support from the Federal Government if this vital part of our economy is to regain its economic strength and play its part in reducing our internal and foreign debts. The State Government is doing its part, but it has limited resources.

The exemption from stamp duty on the transfer of the family farm from one generation to the next has been welcomed, particularly by the older generations. Also the ability for farmers to transfer mortgages from one financial institution to another free of stamp duty has been applauded by the farming sector. For the first time farmers have the ability to shop around for credit, and already some of them are benefiting from this fact. They are at last able to negotiate a better deal from their banks and reorganise their finances. These State Government initiatives have helped this important industry.

Many of the older farmers, who came through both the Great Depression and then the good times, are now again experiencing recession and are more than ready to hand on the current struggle to the young people. These younger farmers, who have the youth and enthusiasm, are best able to pick up the challenges necessary to work off the debt that many farms now suffer. Also, the young farmers incentive scheme, now backdated to 11 December, is helping to keep young people interested in an agricultural career during this difficult period. The scheme is aimed at assisting those young people who would have no chance otherwise of gaining a start in farming.

However, we are still losing too many of our young farmers who cannot see a future on the land. We have only to

look at the composition of some of our football teams in the country to see how rural South Australia is being eroded. Around the Wudinna area six football teams were playing in the league every Saturday, but now only three combined teams are fielded from the same region. At the towns of Arno Bay and Port Neill the situation is even worse. In the area between those two towns and the district of Wharminda seven teams were playing football, but now only one team can be filled.

Sadly, with the loss of farmers, the towns are imploding, some businesses are closing and some banks are being reduced or removed. There is a great need for regional development before these towns disappear altogether. I have been encouraged by the strong view of the Minister for Industry, Manufacturing, Small Business and Regional Development (Hon. Mr Olsen) that he wants to see regional South Australia progress as well as the city regions. This attitude and recognition that South Australia also exists beyond Gepps Cross is very refreshing.

Much has been happening in the bush in relation to conservation and better land management. The Government's land care initiatives have been most welcome, with more than 250 groups dedicated to better land management being formed in country areas. In the electorate of Flinders the endeavours of our farmers have been recognised with Roger, Margaret, Ricky and Katherine Neild from Cleve gaining the 1994 Commonwealth Development Bank Ibis Award. This is the State's major conservation award for primary producers. Mr Neild, who chairs the Eastern Eyre Peninsula Soil Conservation Board, was proud to say that conservation practices were becoming widespread on Eyre Peninsula. In another initiative to strengthen farm management and increase farming skills, the Government has increased the level of assistance provided to farmers for the drawing up of farm management plans. The Government is to be commended for increasing the funding for farm planning to \$2 000 to \$3 000 per farmer.

I wish to now spend some time talking about a different type of farming, namely, our tuna farming. Last month the Premier, Hon. Dean Brown, while he was visiting the Flinders electorate, signed an agreement with the Tuna Boat Owners Association. This will ensure the continued cooperation of the Government with the association, to enable the creation of much wealth and many hundreds of jobs in the tuna farming industry. An extension of the Adelaide Airport runway will assist this industry to become even more profitable for South Australia. It is encouraging to see that steps to increase the length of the runway are indeed well and truly on the Government's agenda. In all, 35 tuna fish cages have been established in Boston Bay. Valued at about \$1 million each, they contain approximately 1 500 fish or 40 tonnes to 50 tonnes of fish. This new industry is a world leader and people are coming from around the world to see it. This year production from the fish farms is valued at \$55 million. Two years ago it was \$2 million. This is an amazing growth for an industry in which I believe the best is still to come.

Aquaculture is also set to boom in Flinders, due to our expansive coastline which offers enormous scope for these enterprises and our clean, unpolluted water. We now have three onshore abalone aquaculture farms, and they are relatively close to producing shellfish for the cocktail abalone market. Attached to one of the abalone farms we now have an oyster hatchery which is starting its first season's production. This hatchery will provide oyster spat for the many oyster farms that are established and for those that are being planned in our coastal waterways. This will relieve our oyster industry's dependence on spat produced in Tasmania and the risk of spreading disease and predators.

The oyster industry is rapidly expanding its production and will soon need markets outside of South Australia. Only a few years ago there was a single oyster lease in Coffin Bay. It is an exciting time for the aquaculture industry in South Australia. The industries must continue to ensure that they supply a first quality product to local and overseas markets. One area that is still posing a problem is theft of the high value products from these leases. Through the cooperation of the aquaculture industries, the police and the State Emergency Service the position has improved considerably.

The rock lobster industry has recently experienced a lower catch but very good prices. It is well managed and continues to support the pot licence system for limiting the catch to sustainable levels. They believe that it is the only practical way to maintain control with the limited Fisheries inspectors available and the very large fishing grounds. A particularly important step in the fishing industry was taken by the Minister for Primary Industries, Hon. Dale Baker, with an undertaking to ban netting in Coffin Bay and to investigate netting closures in other bays throughout the State. It is my belief that the survival of many of our coastal towns will depend on increasing the stocks of King George whiting. It is clear that a fish is worth much more to the tourist and recreational sector than it is to any other sector of our economy. In addition to net bans in order to increase fish stocks, the activities

of illegal fishing must be crushed with stiffer penalties being imposed, including confiscation of equipment.

Talk of undersized whiting measuring 9½ inches netted from South Australian waters being sold to the Eastern States fish markets I consider to be based in fact. Viable line fishermen living with their families in our small coastal towns and a thriving tourist industry with the accompanying business, health and education services will ensure that these towns survive. These industries are therefore the best way to use the King George whiting resource. There is a real possibility of restocking our bays with whiting fingerlings bred in captivity. This new and exciting initiative would assist the fast recovery of the King George whiting stocks, which are presently at dangerously low levels.

All our hopes for the fishing and aquaculture development will be dashed if we do not protect our present clean water. In May, while in Port Lincoln, the Minister for Infrastructure, the Hon. John Olsen, opened the new sewage treatment works. This signalled the end of raw waste water entering the sea from South Australian cities, a great first in Australia. There are more local pollutants yet to be cleaned up, but the big risk to our clean waters comes from the ballast water dumped from overseas and local shipping. Tasmania has the Japanese *Sea Star* threatening its aquaculture and fishing industries, and already we have some introduced organisms in our coastal waters. Before the situation is irretrievable and our industries are ruined, we must ensure that ballast water disposal is regulated by national laws. A Federal task force to look into this threat has recently been implemented. However, I believe that this will not be effective without representatives from all States to unify our approach to this problem and ensure that the controls can be efficiently implemented and policed. The task force must work quickly, as any day could see the introduction of an organism or disease that will be devastating.

Of great concern to the commercial and recreational fishing communities and yachtsmen is the inadequate radio coverage provided for Eyre Peninsula and Kangaroo Island waters. The waters in the Bight are particularly badly serviced, with weather forecasts being not only inaccurate because of the limited information about sudden changes being available to forecasters but also impossible to pick up by radio. Transferring all forecasting facilities to Melbourne has created an information black hole as far as these brave key people are concerned. Similarly, I have been advised that, since the closure of Adelaide's facilities on 31 January 1993, there have been seven fatalities at sea, where there has been a strong perception that inadequate radio communication has proved to be a limiting factor in rescue attempts. It must be recognised in relation to the fishing industry that these people are in one of the highest risk occupations. This is a very unsatisfactory situation, which must be urgently addressed, and I urge the Government to lobby the Federal Government to ensure that adequate services are provided to our people at sea.

Tourism is another industry set to develop under the restructuring introduced by the new Government. Tourism is dependent on maintaining our clean environment, providing things to see and having plenty of fish to catch. However, it is also dependent on providing the ability for tourists to get to their destinations in relative comfort. In the Flinders electorate this means good roads, particularly the ring route on Kangaroo Island. With \$200 million to be spent on a resort at Wirrina, it is to be expected that the numbers of tourists on Kangaroo Island will increase dramatically. Already, the unsealed tourist road on Kangaroo Island is totally unsatisfactory and inadequate. The local council cannot be expected to fund and maintain the type of road that is necessary for a State tourism push. Perhaps a tourism category is needed in the arterial road funding criteria, or an increased budget should be allocated for roads under the Minister for Tourism's direction.

With our clean water and pure, white, sandy beaches, safe access is needed not only to the beaches but also to the sea. Boat ramps and jetties abound in the electorate of Flinders, and I believe it is time for a licence to be charged on all recreational fishermen who use these facilities. This fund could be administered by those who contribute, and used in a similar manner to the Parks and Wildlife trust funds. Initially this money could be made available for any compensation to net fishermen for fish stock replenishment programs, which restock the bays with King George whiting and other fish, and for boat ramp and jetty replacement and maintenance. Eventually, the fund would be available to be used for the provision of all services required for the enjoyment of our coastal environment.

This is particularly necessary in the electorate of Flinders, where so much of the area is devoted to national parks. We have Flinders Chase on Kangaroo Island and large areas on Eyre Peninsula that are wonderful tourist attractions that also preserve our natural fauna and flora. The Flinders Chase National Park, a planned walking trail from Port Lincoln to Coffin Bay, the Point Labatt sea lion colony, the viewing of the white pointer sharks and

the tuna farms are all tourist attractions of world-class standard that can be developed further in the next few years. I also want to devote some time to the initiative of groups in the electorate.

The Port Lincoln High School sailing team recently won the 1994 Epiglass National Secondary Schools Team Sailing Championship conducted in Geelong in Victoria. As the Australian winners they will compete against New Zealand in Port Lincoln in September. This win, the second in three years against the best from the other States, is a great achievement and a credit to the sailors, their coaches and the community that funded them. It will help to put our great State on the map. The achievements of our young sailors need to be given more media exposure. The people in the electorate of Flinders are resourceful and resilient, and I believe are an inspiration to other South Australians.

The Elliston Airport project, undertaken by the small community of 250 residents and 1 400 in the district, is memorable. They put in 5 500 hours of voluntary work valued at \$320 000 to build their new airstrip. This effort was rewarded in a tangible way by the Premier (Dean Brown) when he visited the town in July. As well as opening the airstrip he provided a cheque to the community for the lighting of the airstrip. This means that a small town now has a modern air link to facilitate exports and tourism in addition to the mantle of safety provided by the Flying Doctor Service's having access, day or night, winter or summer. Incidentally, this was the first visit to the town by a Premier since the Playford era.

All over my electorate are instances of self help projects with facilities at schools, hospitals and other community venues benefiting from community input through in-kind support and with money from fundraising. The Parndana Health Centre on Kangaroo Island and the boat ramp at Port Neill are further examples of this community spirit. Water resources are critical in the Flinders electorate, as they are in most other regions of South Australia. Better water supplies for Streaky Bay, Elliston and Port Kenny are needed to allow these towns to expand. The Kingscote District Council has been granted \$750 000 State and Federal funding to trial innovative water treatment technology developed in South Australia, to overcome water quality problems. It is hoped that similar funding can be provided for other towns in need.

Industry and manufacturing, with an emphasis on value adding, are being encouraged within the electorate. Funding assistance for development and expansion is being made available by the Government with grants of \$5 000 being offered to prepare professional business plans to companies involved in import replacements, new exports or value adding of agricultural products. The Tuna Boat Owners Association agreement mentioned earlier in my speech undertakes to develop a soft pellet for the production of food for the tuna farms, using local products. This project will take much effort but, if successful, will save a \$20 million import bill for fish food imported from foreign countries.

It will also provide additional jobs on Lower Eyre Peninsula and add value to some of our primary products. People must be given not only the opportunity to develop their ideas but the feeling that the Government supports them, rather than just seeing them as unpaid Government employees and a supplier of tax dollars. So many people say that, if it were not for all the form filling and red tape associated with employment, they would employ more people. It is unfortunate that so much effort has to be made merely to offset the actions of the Federal Government. While the Brown Government has limited resources to assist, it is encouraging and strongly supporting regional development.

Some initiatives I want to highlight and applaud are the new enterprise bargaining agreements, payroll tax and WorkCover rebate schemes, which amount to 10 per cent on existing staff who help to earn export income and 50 per cent for additional staff. These new schemes are all helping to encourage our businesses to expand. A reduction of 20 per cent in electricity tariff charges is another Government initiative that is appreciated, particularly in the country region where many of our costs tend to be so much higher than in the city.

Mr Speaker, I wish to draw your attention to the state of the Kingscote General Hospital, which is in urgent need of upgrading. In fact, I suggest that the previous Government pulled down better hospitals than this to build new ones. I have asked the Minister for Health (Dr Armitage) to keep the upgrading of this hospital at the top of his list. I am confident that the Brown Government recognises the need for a facility that fulfils its obligations to provide adequately for the health and welfare of the people of Kangaroo Island. While on the subject of Kangaroo Island, I point out that it was through the untiring efforts of the Minister for Primary Industries (Hon.Dale Baker) and his staff that finally we have been successful in gaining the services of an experienced and competent

livestock officer to service the island.

As the House is aware, education is of great importance in the country region and, with 33 schools in the electorate of Flinders, the Audit Commission's report caused a great deal of anguish amongst teachers, parents and students. This was fuelled by scare tactics from Labor and the unions. Fortunately, both the Minister for Education and Children's Services (Hon. Rob Lucas) and Premier Dean Brown have visited Flinders and undertaken to look after our country schools and protect the services they are providing, particularly in isolated areas.

I am encouraged that in private talks with respected and responsible school teachers the Government's initiatives in reducing the bureaucracy in the education area have been welcomed. One well respected principal said his workload would be reduced in proportion to the reduction of the bureaucracy. He said he would be able to spend more time in areas where it was important, with his own teachers and students. What a refreshing change and what a saving of resources. The retention of the music teacher for the Wudinna, Warrambo and other smaller schools in that region show the degree of compassion that this Government has for education. The Government has shown that it is committed to retaining and providing a good country education service despite the difficulties caused as a result of isolation and the added difficulty of lack of funds.

Council amalgamation is of great interest in Flinders. We have nine councils in the electorate trying to provide adequate services to local communities, with falling values of rateable properties restricting their ability to raise funds. Some councils are investigating amalgamation. These are difficult processes as they involve valid concerns about the effects on the community and strong loyalty within each council for the local community. I support fully a careful assessment by councils and local communities of the relevant benefits and potential problems and, in the end, a democratic decision by the people directly affected.

In conclusion, it has been a great eight months for the new Government. It would have been even better if the former Labor Government had left some money in the coffers instead of the debt that we have inherited. However, the people of South Australia have shown that they understand the problems facing the new Government. I am honoured that the people of Flinders chose to put their faith in me to represent them in the new Government, and I can assure them that I have been having a say on their behalf at all levels, including Government Party meetings and on the Primary Industry, Regional Development and Industry and Manufacturing Ministerial Committee meetings. Also, I applaud the willingness of Ministers to include visits to the electorate in their busy schedules. We have averaged more than one ministerial visit a month since the election. I support the motion.