

**Senator MAGUIRE**—When it does go below the national average, it will be the first time that that has happened, according to my research, since 1976 or 1977. So that will be major improvement in that State. I stress to Senator Messner that I am talking about the relative improvement in South Australia compared with the national average. I am sure he is aware, as are most honourable senators, that the community employment program is operating not only in South Australia but in all States. So there is no real validity in his arguments, unless he can demonstrate that the CEP in South Australia is well ahead of other States. He might be prepared to issue a statement on that matter. If he does, I will be pleased to read it. I stress that I am talking about relativities. I am hopeful that in the near future the unemployment rate in South Australia will go below the national average for the first time in seven or eight years.

In conclusion, I indicate that I am hopeful that the deficit figure in the Budget this year will be less than the most recent estimate. I understand that the estimate of the deficit outcome made by Minister for Finance (Mr Dawkins) is the product of these appropriation Bills and also revenues. I think the deficit estimate, as was recently estimated, will be reduced to below \$8.7 billion in the final figures for the 1983-84 year. I believe that the figure will be a little lower than that. I look forward to tax cuts in the next Budget in August. I believe that the Budget to be brought down in August will contain significant reductions in income tax.

**Senator Peter Rae**—They will be a bit like the 1975 tax cuts, I bet.

**Senator MAGUIRE**—I bet they will be better than the 1977 and 1978 tax cuts introduced by the previous Government. I believe that significant tax cuts will be introduced in the 1984-85 Budget in August. I believe they will be focussed on lower and middle income earners. These tax cuts will give a significant boost to economic activity and in that way will assist in the further creation of employment in the community. Most importantly, the tax cuts will ensure continued existence and further robust health for the accord between the Government and the Australian Council of Trade Unions.

Debate (on motion by **Senator Ryan**) adjourned.

#### SUPPLY BILL (No. 1) 1984-85

[COGNATE BILLS:

#### SUPPLY BILL (No. 2) 1984-85 SUPPLY (PARLIAMENTARY DEPARTMENTS) BILL 1984-85 AUDIT AMENDMENT BILL 1984]

#### First Reading

Debate resumed from 8 May, on motion by **Senator Grimes**:

That the Bill be now read a first time.

**Senator COLEMAN** (Western Australia) (12.45)—I use the first reading of these Bills to bring to the attention of the Senate once again the plight of people in other countries where human rights and civil liberties are not recognised. Honourable senators will recall that only a few short weeks ago we had a debate in this Parliament on a matter which was brought forward by Senator Missen, when the senators who participated in the debate represented not only all those political parties that are represented here but, I would suggest, all factions within those political parties. On that occasion Amnesty International had just released its report 'Torture in the Eighties' and I took the opportunity to express my concern for the women in the countries that were listed. I simply remind the Senate that listed was a total of 98 countries where atrocities not only were being perpetrated by the ruling authorities but were accepted by them as a permissible means of punishment. I put on record then and I put on record now that it is not acceptable; it is not acceptable and can never be acceptable to any humane society or to a society where there is even a smattering of democracy.

I want to concentrate today on the situation as it relates to Chile, because a few days ago I was given a letter which had been received by our Ambassador in that country, Mr Kevin Flanagan. It is a letter which was originally written in Spanish and has been translated—which is just as well because my Spanish is extremely limited. Unfortunately, the list of organisations that support that letter has not been translated and it is difficult for me to describe them except to say that those organisations appear to be what we in Australia might call domestic-type organisations, going through the whole range to what might be expressed as being militant, if anything could be considered as being militant in a country such as Chile in the present circumstances. The letter is dated 22 March and reads:

Dear Sir,

Through your means we want to bring to the attention of women of Australia and your country's public opinion in general, the plight of women and of the people of Chile. We deem it necessary to do so as part of our struggle for life in our country.

Who are we? We are Chilean women from many different sectors, professional and blue-collar workers, students and peasants, artists and homemakers; women of all ages who have survived more than a decade of a deadly government system whose clearest signs have been assassinations, exile, disappearances, secret jails, torture, banishment, repression of dissidents and all kinds of power abuse and arbitrary actions which hit the poorest sectors of the population.

We accuse the military regime of plunging our country into the most serious crisis in history, an overall crisis which goes beyond the political, economic and social crisis. In this crisis, the future and the life of our nation are at stake. We live in a generalized atmosphere of violence, of growing poverty and unemployment; there are hundreds of thousands of youths without any hope whatsoever in the future. This hopelessness turns many youths to drugs and prostitution, often at a very early age. All this explains our feeling of urgency when we fear for our fate as a people. We seek a future where life might have a chance.

We women have therefore declared a permanent state of mobilization, in order to confront what we consider is an inhumane government. We are not just women in pain, complaining about our country's tragedy. Last December, twelve thousand women met here in Santiago and made a pledge to struggle for life in Chile and to keep up this struggle until we put an end to this deadly regime.

The month of March was declared "Women's Month" and we made several peaceful demonstrations to publicize our purpose. On 8 March we suffered the Government's repression: 33 women were arrested; nine union leaders were held without charge for 5 days at the order of the Ministry of the Interior and one of them suffered an abortion as a result of this ordeal. Gross mistreatment by the police force was denounced in several cases.

The brutality of government repression has made it impossible to carry out other activities destined to denounce the violation of human rights, in general, and women's rights, in particular. Thus we decided to culminate this "Women's Month", addressing the women and the people of the world. Because what happens to the people of one country also affects the people of all other countries. It is to the conscience of Humanity—and to each man and woman—that we turn to denounce these crimes. Silence and indifference only condone these criminal deeds.

In a few days—on 27 March—there will be another Day of National Protest in which women will participate actively. We remind world public opinion of the recent massacre which took place in Chile on August 11, 1983, when 18 000 soldiers occupied the city of Santiago and there were 82 dead and hundreds of injured. Justice has not yet been done.

We know that those of us in Chile who want to put an end to this rule of death are a majority. We feel strengthened by both reason and morality in our struggle against the force of weapons, of greed and petty interests. We know that difficult and painful times are ahead in our struggle for life and democracy. We are, however, willing to run risks because that is what our conscience dictates.

We know also that the women of the world will understand us and that they would be willing to do the same: to struggle to regain freedom and leave the legacy of a decent country to our children and grandchildren.

We therefore request, Mr Ambassador, that you make the content of this letter known by sending it through your Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the President of the Committee on Foreign Relations in your country's Parliament, in order that it may be included as a document in the congressional record.

Some 21 organisations are listed at the back of that letter in support of it. I have no idea how many people that would represent, but it is certainly my intention to communicate with those organisations through our Embassy in Chile to provide them with the support that they have requested from us.

I could, I suppose, have got the Parliamentary Library to go back much further than I have to get information on Chile for me, but one of the reasons for not doing so was that I felt that over the last 10 years it could only be considered repetitious because nothing has changed since the Allende Government was overthrown in 1973. But I did get the Library to go back far enough to get an indication of what the media themselves were saying about the situation. Perhaps the article that most completely covers the whole sorry mess is that of the *Bulletin* of 27 September last year. It is written by Robert Low, who had spent two years in Chile under the Allende Government and went back after 10 years of rule by General Augusto Pinochet. I want to quote substantially from this because I believe it demonstrates the absolute despair of and for the people of Chile, particularly of the women in Chile. It is under the title 'Why Chile Has Grown Weary of Pinochet' and says:

In 1973 Allende was overthrown and killed a bloody coup. He was replaced by a four-man junta led by General Augusto Pinochet, which has just celebrated its 10th anniversary.

In those 10 years the Pinochet Government has acquired a reputation for repression which is almost without equal. Particularly in the aftermath of the coup, thousands were killed, or arrested and tortured. Tens of thousands more were sent into exile abroad or dispatched to remote corners of Chile as eternal exiles. About 2500 people simply vanished, introducing the sad word *desaparecido* into the world's consciousness even before the same thing started happening in neighbouring Argentina. Political parties were banned and the Press was muzzled.

In the capital, Santiago, everybody was talking about the economic crisis, the sharp rise in unemployment (said by the Government to be less than 20 per cent but reckoned by most to be more than 30) and the resulting monthly "protest days" which started in May.

When, last year, the government finally admitted what the critics had been saying all along, that the country was bleeding to death, it was too late. With the peso devalued,

salaries frozen, unemployment and the cost of living suddenly soaring, the protests from a hitherto cowed population began: demonstrations, stoppages, an unsuccessful attempt at a general strike and a haunting echo of the last year of the UP: the people of Santiago banging empty saucepans in protest at food prices.

The government has reacted in its usual fashion, breaking up demonstrations, leaving a total of about 35 dead (including several children), sacking strikers and jailing strike leaders and politicians who support them.

But these jackboot tactics are only fuelling the growing demands for a return to democracy.

I might add that Pinochet has said there will be a gradual return to some form of controlled democracy. He intends to have an election, but not until 1989. Suddenly, for the people of Chile, it is beginning to appear that that is too slow. The article by Robert Low goes on:

But the most obvious sign of the state of Chile was the children. Begging food or money, selling little items for a few pesos, they were everywhere. Outside the new post office they rushed up to parking motorists to open the car door or offer to clean it with a rag.

At every house where I was entertained, the meal or conversation was interrupted by a boy or a girl knocking on the door to beg for food.

They were never turned away empty handed, even by people themselves with money problems.

"There has always been some poverty in Chile," said a Belgian priest, 28 years in La Serena, "but never anything like this."

Later in the article, Robert Low quoted a poet in Chile:

"We are exiles in our own country."

He went on:

All over Chile you can see gangs of men tidying verges or engaged in some such public works project. They are on the PEM, the Minimal Employment Plan. It might be better renamed the Minimal Payment Plan. It is the Government's response to the unemployment crisis. Out-of-work bachelors get 2000 pesos a month (\$27) and heads of household 4000 pesos (\$54).

"It just about pays for electricity and water," said one of the two unemployed brothers . . . They preferred taking their chance digging up potatoes illegally or selling olives or shellfish.

The next quotation is from the January-February 1984 edition of the publication *Freedom at Issue*, which has a table showing the state of each country on a scale from one to seven in relation to both political rights and civil liberties. Seven is the worst. It is interesting that Chile rates a six for political rights and a five for civil liberties. In that edition Freedom House has this to say under the heading 'No Comfort to Oppressors':

We note that Chile, Poland, South Africa and Yugoslavia have been placed in the partly free category in the latest revision of the Survey.

It goes on to say:

We emphasise, however, that all four countries—Chile, Poland, South Africa and Yugoslavia—now appear on the bottom rung of the new listing of partly free countries.

It is not Freedom House's intention to give comfort to the four regimes that continue to limit severely the liberties of their people. Rather, we feel obliged to acknowledge that in each of these countries the limits of liberty are currently being stretched by irrepressible forces within the societies.

Mr Acting Deputy President, you and other members of this chamber would be well aware of my long association with the parliamentary group of Amnesty International. I joined that association shortly after I arrived in this place in 1974. I have served as secretary and I am at present an executive member. I believe that my credentials in that and other human rights and civil liberties associations are without question. My purpose in raising that matter in this speech is that I do intend that copies of what I am saying today will go to those organisations listed at the back of this letter through our Embassy in that country. I believe it is important for them to understand my concern for them, as I have a concern for others in similar situations. But the 1983 report of the Amnesty International organisation had this to say about Chile:

'Amnesty International's major concerns were: persistent allegations of torture of detainees by the security forces—ninety-five known complaints were submitted in 1982.

It goes on to talk about the 650 documented cases of disappearances since 1973. There are many more than that, of course.

I wanted particularly to quote from a couple of the newspaper articles that I mentioned earlier, but there is just not time. Suffice to say that a fact finding mission from this Parliament is going to Central America later this year. I had hoped that I would be a part of that fact finding mission but that was not to be. My colleague, Senator Maquire, however, has been appointed to it. I have his assurance, because of his concern in the area of human rights and civil liberties, that if it is at all possible to have that mission extended to Chile—I understand at the moment the intention is to go to Mexico and from there possibly into El Salvador—he will make contact with those organisations which supported the letter that was received by the Ambassador in Chile.

I hope that he will take to them the concern not only of myself, as expressed in this first reading debate, but also of this Senate, of this Parliament, of the Australian people, for the repressed attitude that is being demonstrated to the people of

Chile. I hope also that he will have the opportunity to meet with some of the representatives of those organisations so that in actual fact when he returns to this place we can have a comprehensive report on an outsider's determination on what the situation is and not constantly be reliant upon only information that is leaked through to us in a form similar to this letter.

It is most important that we who live in a democracy do everything that we can to enhance the prospects for democracy in other countries. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Hayden, has made two very stern statements on the situation in Chile, but I believe that as members of this Parliament we have a great responsibility on our shoulders to ensure that we raise the matter each and every time we can and advise the authorities from those other countries that we are not prepared to put up with that oppression.

**Senator PETER RAE** (Tasmania) (1.00)—I rise to support in general terms what Senator Coleman has said and to acknowledge her long-standing interest in human rights and her credentials in relation to the matters about which she spoke. The Opposition supports the expression of abhorrence to all forms of repression of human rights which takes place in a regrettably large number of countries throughout the world. I am particularly motivated to rise to speak by a conversation which I had several years ago with an Indian member of parliament who told me how much it meant to them when they were imprisoned to receive by various means a copy of the *Hansard* record of what had been said in this chamber in relation to their plight and the fact that they were supported in their time of trouble, in their time of great personal concern, when they were being subjected to totally unjustified political repression. Therefore, I believe it is important that this chamber should from time to time express its concern. When Senator Coleman indicated that she wanted to send back to Chile a copy of the remarks that have been made, I felt that it was as well if there were a wider expression of support of the general abhorrence of Australia as a democracy, as a parliamentary democracy, to all attacks on human rights.

I would like to mention just a couple of other countries and indicate our abhorrence of torture, which has become part of the system of government in so many countries. One would have hoped that by the twentieth century, by this stage when we are able to put people on the moon, man's thoughts—mankind's, personkind's thoughts—might have got to the stage of being able to exclude as a conceivable, permissible approach to government the use of torture; but not

so, regrettably. We have reports of the bloodbath in Matabeland. We have had a debate about Zimbabwe and what might happen, and how regrettable it is to find that there are repeated reports of political repression, of slaughter, of imprisonment, of torture and of actual physical defilement of people—I use that term in the broad sense—taking place in Zimbabwe.

As I have mentioned previously, according to a Scandinavian team which visited Vietnam and studied the situation there, and produced a film in relation to it, no fewer than 15,000—its estimate is that it is up to 200,000—political prisoners are still held without trial nearly 10 years after the completion of the war in Vietnam. I am sure that no one, whatever view he or she may have had as to the rights or wrongs of the Vietnam war itself, could conceivably support the continued detention without trial after this time of people who were on the losing side in that battle. We have the extraordinary, and I regard as lamentable, behaviour of the Ayatollah and his Government in Iran in relation to the Baha'ists. As I have said in this chamber before, one would have great difficulty in finding a religion which was more based upon peace and upon non-interference in government, non-interference with the processes of government, than the Baha'i religion. Yet its supporters are persecuted by that Government because they preach something which is more to do with love than hate and it does not suit the hate-inducing Government of Iran to have people in the community who might stir up any thought other than hatred as a basis for operation.

One could go on to talk about Argentina; one could talk about a variety of countries. Regrettably, almost certainly, the list of 98 countries to which Senator Coleman referred, which is set out in a report, is by no means complete. But it gives some indication of the enormity of the problem which we face in the world—that of trying to civilise government, to civilise the people of the world, and to improve standards of behaviour. If by any reference that can be made in this chamber people are heartened in their time of travail, if people are encouraged to stand up against this sort of behaviour and to stand for human rights, I think we ought to be saying what has been said this afternoon. I support Senator Coleman in what she said and compliment her on it.

**Senator JONES** (Queensland) (1.07)—I take the opportunity at this first reading to congratulate the Hawke Government on its initiative in investigating the feasibility of a kibbutz-style co-operative for young unemployed. It is a topic that is certain to encounter some initial resistance from some of the more entrenched conservatives with